As for hunter-gatherer religion, one might take issue with Berman's suggestion that trance is a religious phenomenon primarily of agricultural folk, occurring only "occasionally" among hunter-gatherers and showing merely "traces" among Palaeolithic ones. The work by Richard Katz and, more recently, by David Lewis-Williams, Thomas Dowson and Jean Clottes—to which Berman addresses himself critically in one of his lengthy endnotes—suggest otherwise, namely that ASC is an integral and pivotal element of the religion of the Bushmen, as of other hunter-gatherers, including prehistoric ones. Also contestable is Berman's suggestion that the trance experience is vertical, one of ascent, and that it is "unitive." The outer-body travel of a Bushman trance dancer is in fact as much lateral or horizontal—across a nocturnal natural landscape, on the lookout for game animals and humans in other camps—as it is vertical, up- and downwards. Regarding verticality, a dimension Berman ascribes to the cosmologies of agriculturalists, one might note that one finds the same also among hunter-gatherers, exemplified in a three-tiered universe (vertically traversed by some sort of *axis mundi*). As for its unitive aspect, the Bushmen's version of trance is one more of disassociation and disjuncture than of unity, as, at the experiential and phenomenological levels, aspects of the real world, of the living, people and animals, merge with those of the spirit world.

These objections notwithstanding, I am persuaded by Berman's depiction of the mental and cosmological patterns of hunter-gatherers, especially its key element of paradox (or ambiguity, which, as it happens, is the *leitmotif* also of my own recently published study of the religion of one such group, the Bushmen). These patterns are also radically different from those of non-hunter-gatherers, yet, at the same time, they continue to be linked to them, as ideological counter-currents to their distinctive mode of thought, one marked by clarity, certainty, dogmatism and authority. That hunter-gatherers are a distinctive, autonomous cultural type, today as in the past, whose ideas, beliefs, myths and world view are profound and relevant to our own, is the basic message I take from this fascinating study of human thought and consciousness. This sort of message has become highly controversial in the field of hunter-gatherer and Bushman studies. Because of the cogency of its argument and quality of its research, this book might well rekindle the controversy and elicit a new round in the "Great Kalahari Debate."

Yuen-fong Woon, *The Excluded Wife,* McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 1998, ISBN 0-7735-1730-8, xvii + 295 pages.

Reviewer: *Wendy Larson*
University of Oregon

When a professor decides to present her research in novel form, I always feel some trepidation. Nonetheless, I felt drawn to the portrayal of the "excluded wife"—the woman left behind in China when her husband left to find his fortune in Canada—by Yuen-fong Woon. Woon is a professor in Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Victoria, and began the research behind this book in the mid-1980s as part of an oral history project. Part 1 of the book covers the period from 1929 to 1952, when the Chinese Exclusion Act (in force from 1923 to 1947) prohibited wives from accompanying their husbands to Canada. This is the longest and most vivid section of the novel. Part 2 covers 1952 to 1955, when the main character leaves southern mainland China for Hongkong, along with thousands of refugees. The third and final part goes from 1955 to 1987 and takes place in Vancouver's Chinatown.

The centre of this novel is Wong Sau-ping, created to represent the "grass widow," or the wife left behind in Guangdong Province. To invent this character, Woon interviewed women who had joined their husbands in Canada, others in peasant households in Guangdong Province, and cadres in China. Woon's stated goal in writing about grass widows is to produce an ethnography that is "an accurate depictions of their lives and a truthful testimony to their bravery and endurance" (xi). I believe she has met this goal.

Wong Sau-ping is the wife of Leung Yik-Man, a grandson of the large Leung lineage. In focussing both on lineage, with its pervasive cultural meanings, and on a woman, Woon allows her quite evident feminist sensibilities to play upon this fictional historical record, for as she notes in the family tree she has constructed for Wong Sau-Ping, "A formal genealogy would leave out Sau-Ping's natal family, and the women would be there marginally if at all" (xiii). This move allows us to see one rationale behind Woon's decision to use fiction rather than present her research within conventional modes. Although it would be possible to represent the lives of women almost totally determined by patriarchal concepts of lineage, the women's subjectivity—their daily experience of these cultural structures—is expressed much more vividly in this fictional form.

The story is engrossing. Woon's ability to create living characters grows as she progresses through the narrative, which begins in 1929 when Sau-ping is an unmarried teenager moving into the "maiden house" with others like herself. As Woon notes, Sau-ping "had been trained as a modest daughter" and throughout the tale we find that Sau-ping in many ways is a conventional uneducated woman who lives by the dictates of patriarchy and ancestor worship that have been taught to her. She is afraid of becoming a grass widow but cannot question the idea, because "women were required to be strong in obedience" to avoid being turned into pigs or crazies and killed by the villagers (8).

Sau-ping is married in 1933 to Leung Yik-man. We hear Woon's scholarly voice infiltrating the narrative here and there; for example, when Sau-ping first sees Yik-man, she describes him as "tall and muscular by local standards" (32). Surely that added "by local standards" is Woon telling us that

he wasn't really tall and muscular at all if we are looking at him from our contemporary North American perspective.

Yik-Man soon leaves to join his father working in a Chinese restaurant in Vancouver, and troubles begin for Sau-ping. Bandits, rumours, the constant worry about money coming from her husband, war, famine, illness and finally the communist revolution all beset Sau-ping, who gives birth to daughter Fei-yin and adopts son Kin-Pong. When the PRC is established and a former lowly day worker given a prominent role in ferreting out anti-revolutionaries, Sau-ping finds her house, property and family in danger. Furthermore, the remittances are no longer allowed to enter China, and those with overseas connections become suspect. Taking her daughter and adopted son, she flees to Hongkong. The colony, however, is flooded with refugees like herself, and Sau-ping can barely support herself selling vegetables on the street.

Eventually Sau-ping gets the opportunity to join her husband in Canada, although her daughter must be left behind (Kin-pong already has left for Canada). She has learned that her husband sold Fei-yin's birthright, an act she finds hard to forgive. In the end, however, family loyalty wins out and she finds herself working hard in a restaurant with living quarters above it—a far cry from her beautiful house in China.

The family almost loses the restaurant to Leung Kin-tsoi, the unscrupulous grandson of the lineage chief. Kin-tsoi has been the beneficiary of Fei-yin's sold birthright, a fact which angers Sau-ping continually. With the help of Mr. Chau, their lawyer, however, the restaurant is found to belong to Yik-man and his family. Fei-yin eventually makes her way to Canada and the group is reunited. Yik-man dies and Sau-ping moves into a facility for the elderly. While my retelling may be bland, the story proceeds with lively conflict.

One of Woon's goals is to take the actual lived reality of Chinese families in the diaspora and show how it was and is formed by legislation, by common attitudes in both China and Canada, and by the peculiarities of cross-cultural living. Issues of the "paper son," explaining the complex rules of kinship and relations to foreign authorities, manipulating what is a prejudicial and unfair system to reach common goals such as letting families live in peace together—all of these things are represented. Evil characters appear within the Chinese ranks, showing that Woon is consciously avoiding romanticization. She understands a great deal about how the grass widows lived and felt, and she translates this into the mind of Sau-ping.

Rather than thinking of this book as pure fiction, it should be regarded as a hybrid form, a mixture of history, fiction, imagination, and ideas that is backed by years of research. As I mentioned, a feminist sensibility underlies the character of Sau-ping, yet the overall impression I get is that this is a story of families, not of women or even individuals. In this regard, Woon has accurately injected a worldview almost totally determined by lineage into the story, creating an experience for the reader that would be difficult to come by in scholarly work.

Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (eds.), *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory,* New York and London: Routledge, 1996.

Reviewer: *John Leavitt*
Université de Montréal

The last several years have seen the rise of a new Canada-centred cross-disciplinary discussion of memory and trauma. Key players include the philosopher Ian Hacking and the anthropologists Paul Antze and Michael Lambek, their students and collaborators, all based in Toronto, and some scholars from other places. This multidisciplinary volume is the first to give an idea of the importance and scope of the reflections of this strongly anchored and loosely bounded group. The book represents a milestone in studies of memory in giving a much-needed cross-cultural perspective on the field, in a way at the same time is sensitive to psychological and historical approaches.

The book begins with a wide-ranging and sometimes inspired introduction by the two editors. The remainder is divided into three parts. The first contains papers on memory and trauma in the lives of individuals; the last papers on collective memory and the handling of collective trauma. Between these the editors have appropriately put papers on explicit expert theories of memory and trauma, reflecting the recent increase of scholarly interest in experts" discourses. In more classical anthropological terms, it's as if Griaule had put data on individual Dogon in a first section, Ogotemmêli's version of Dogon cosmology in a second, Griaule's own reconstruction of the collective Dogon world in a third.

The first section of the book contains three papers on cases of traumatic memory and how individuals deal with them. Paul Antze draws implications for our assumptions about identity from his participation in a self-help group for people defined as having multiple personality disorder resulting from repressed early trauma. Donna Young and Glynis George each presents women's histories of trouble and their efforts to conceptualize and deal with them, both from Atlantic Canada. These two papers show the link between individual trauma and social conditions, as well as the sometimes vast implications of turning private trauma into public disclosure.

The second part, "The Medicalization of Memory," takes critical views of what are often unquestioned professional readings of memory. Here the guiding spirit (or sprite) is Michel Foucault, whose work on medicine, psychiatry, and the penal system created a field of critical scholarly discourse about scholarly discourse, particularly as it is used to justify the existence of institutions of treatment and constraint. The first chapter in this section, "Memory Sciences, Memory Politics" by Ian Hacking, is a memory manifesto which to some degree anchors the whole book. Hacking's purpose, following Foucault, is to identify unspoken assumptions ("depth knowledge") behind expert discourses ("surface knowledge"). Depth knowledge, the "knowledge" that there is something to know in a given domain, differs from period to period and among societies. Its source is more likely to lie in general social con-