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Shepard KRECH III, (ed.), *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1984. 194 pages, \$28.95 (cloth)

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yeux de personnes familières de ce domaine de recherche. Pour terminer sur une note positive, les courts résumés des communications, placés en annexe, aideront les anglophones dans leur consultation documentaire.

Shepard KRECH III, (ed.), *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1984. 194 pages, \$28.95 (cloth).

By Edward S. Rogers
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For the 1981 annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory, Shepard Krech III organized a symposium on an *age old topic*, the FUR TRADE. The participants' papers delivered at that meeting, now published in this volume, examined the socio-economic history of several groups of Canadian Shield Subarctic Indians—Athapaskans and Algonquians—for varying periods of time from first contact until the twentieth century. The six papers published here, hopefully, as Krech writes, “provoke scholars to refine and delve more deeply into the issues which they raise, as well as suggest productive avenues for further research” (p. ix). No doubt he is correct, for many dissertations could be written exploring the questions implicitly raised but never answered in these papers. For as Bishop points out, “Because the evidence for change is often sketchy, many interpretations must necessarily remain conjectural” (p. 48).

The contributors to *The Subarctic Fur Trade* are four ethnologists, one historian and one geographer, a welcome interdisciplinary approach for a better understanding of the dynamics of the Subarctic fur trade. Ray leads off suggesting in Chapter 1 that the *modern welfare state* for Indians has antecedents that began in the early days of the fur trade when the Hudson's Bay Company began to support indigent Natives. In the following chapter, Bishop presents his interpretation of the *adaptive changes* that occurred among the Western James Bay Cree during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Morantz then counters in chapter 3 with her views of economic and social *accommodations* to the fur trade by the Eastern James Bay Cree. Judd in chapter 4 argues for a *dual-native tradition* that developed at the “bottom of the bay” within the first few decades of the

eighteenth century. While Bishop, Morantz and Judd address the Algonquians of the Eastern Subarctic, the last two chapters deal with Athapaskans of the Western Shield Subarctic. Krech, in chapter 5, explores the impact of the fur trade during the early nineteenth century on the Slavey and Dogrib who frequented Fort Simpson, on the Mckenzie River. Finally, Jarvenpa and Brumbach examine in minute detail the changes that took place during the last hundred years as the Chipewyan of the upper Churchill River became enmeshed in the fur trade.

It is a pity Krech did not write a final chapter in which he might have pulled together the varied themes expressed by the volume contributors. To be sure, Krech made an attempt in the *Introduction*, although in a most miniscule fashion, and without any breadth or depth. The topic cries for better treatment.

Other defects mar this contribution to fur trade history. One is the occasional statement based on conventional wisdom rather than on firm data. Ray, for example, writes of the “destruction through over-hunting” of moose and caribou (p. 6), and that pre-contact Indians often followed “extensive migration circuits” (p. 9); Bishop writes that caribou can be “more effectively exploited” by multi-family groups than small game (p. 29), that English goods “induced them” to trap more (pp. 31-32), and that although starvation may have occurred in prehistoric times it must have been “far less frequent and severe”. Judd states that there existed a core group with “authority” over other Indians, and Krech that powder, ball, shot, powder horns and the gun were “all related to the subsistence quest”. Yet no proof is provided for any of the above assertions.

Moreover, even though dogmatic statements are made without sufficient data to support them, Bishop defends such scholarship by stating that “interpretation may involve the selection of evidence supporting a priori assumptions” (p. 22), and “Reconstruction of baseline culture is facilitated if certain assumptions about prehistoric adaptive strategies are made”, but never spells out what the assumptions might be. He then goes on to assert that “Aboriginal reconstruction is to a large degree a function of one's understanding of how cultural systems function and how they change” (p. 22); but he has dismissed those who have conducted extensive and in depth field work (that he has never done), although such field work demonstrates “how cultural systems function and how they change”.

Perhaps a few final comments are in order. Ray's ending remark, in an otherwise stimulating

article, that “Indians became so evidently demoralized in this century” does not ring true to this reviewer who for four decades has observed much the opposite among the Indians of the Eastern Subarctic.

Bishop as usual fails to provide sources such as for death by starvation (p. 39) or for the “Great gang” (p. 35), although one can infer it is the “great Gang” documented but without folio on page 34. How can Bishop “surmise that Northern Algonquians practiced levirate...” and then in the next breath say “nothing is known of their system of kinship nomenclature”? It is a distortion of reality on his part in an attempt to maintain his unsubstantiated assertion for matrilineal residence (pp. 29-30). Finally, *wapos* is the term used for hare by the Indians of northern Ontario and has been for several centuries—not Plains Cree *misstapooos* as Bishop would have us believe (pp. 35-36).

Morantz in her contribution brings a needed corrective to the sometimes rash statements made by others. Her insistence on the use of archaeological data is well taken. As for Judd, her argument that *home guard and interior groups* trading at Moose Factory, though closely connected by friendship and kinship networks, “developed separate and distinct life ways” (p. 95) is unconvincing. Any distinctions that might have existed are not explored, and the rise of a Metis Cree population is ignored.

Krech, in a scholarly fashion, addresses several critical issues when investigating the fur trade in the Subarctic. For one, he questions the feasibility, with the limited data available, of discerning an aboriginal baseline (p. 101). Furthermore, he comes to grips with the “dependency” issue by seeking to define the problem before trying to answer it. By so doing, he does not find the Slavey and Dogrib very “dependent” (p. 137); his position has been advocated for some time by Morantz, contrary to the views expressed by Bishop. Jarvenpa and Brumbach in the final chapter concur with Morantz on the need to take archaeological findings into consideration (p. 147); but they have done so in a most cursory manner. Nevertheless, they, like Krech, provide the reader with considerable quantitative data for the “microeconomics” of the southern Chipewyan.

In spite of the above comments, Krech is to be commended for having organized the symposium and for having seen into print the papers presented. They indeed contain many bones of contention upon which future scholars can chew.

Pierrette DÉSY, *Trente ans de captivité chez les Indiens Ojibwa. Récit de John Tanner*, Paris, Payot, Collection «Bibliothèque historique». 1983. XXIV — 312 pages.

Par Jean-Claude Muller
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Voici, pour la première fois commenté en français, le récit de la vie de John Tanner, capturé par des Indiens ottawa à l'âge de neuf ans et qui décida, quelque trente ans plus tard et après avoir oublié sa langue maternelle, de retourner chez les siens qui, dans leur grande majorité, le rejetèrent. Des quelque deux cent quarante-trois récits de captivité réédités par Garland à New York, celui de Tanner est, de l'avis des spécialistes de cette littérature, le plus riche, le plus complet et aussi le plus impartial, jetant un regard pénétrant et sans concessions aussi bien sur les Blancs que sur les Indiens de l'époque de son séjour chez eux, entre 1789 et 1819.

Le livre, dont la couverture est illustrée d'un magnifique ours sacré du peintre ojibwa Norval Morrisseau, s'ouvre sur un essai très fouillé de Pierrette Désy traitant des Indiens blancs, ces Blancs capturés par les Indiens pour des fins diverses mais le plus souvent, comme dans la région où se passe le récit, pour être adoptés comme fils ou fille en remplacement d'un Indien de la famille capturé ou décédé. Pratique commune entre les diverses populations indiennes, celles-ci inscrivent tout naturellement les Blancs dans ce schéma d'adoption forcée. Ces Blancs devenaient rapidement indiens, surtout s'ils avaient été capturés jeunes, comme ce fut le cas de Tanner. Destin exemplaire que celui-ci qui nous brosse une vaste fresque des relations entre les diverses populations indiennes et entre Indiens et Blancs dans une période passablement agitée qui obligea bien des autochtones à changer de territoire devant la pénétration blanche d'une part mais aussi à la suite de famines résultant des massacres inconsidérés de gibier incités par les représentants des compagnies de fourrures. Ces pérégrinations ont amené Tanner à parcourir des distances incroyables qui ont été scrupuleusement mises sur cartes par Pierrette Désy. Malheureusement, pour d'obscures raisons, les éditions Payot n'ont pu les inclure dans le texte; cette déficience est aujourd'hui partiellement comblée puisque l'auteur les enverra à quiconque en fera la demande¹.

Capturé à Tanner Station, le jeune homme est aussitôt emmené à Saginaw où il reste deux ans. Son groupe adoptif s'en va ensuite à Mackinaw puis