

first as introductions to edited collections of the authors' works. The main axis of Kaye's criticism is typically the extent to which the author in question followed a Gramscian as opposed to a Leninist theoretical line.

Indeed, in his introductory essay, Kaye is concerned both to outline what he considers to be the essence of the Gramscian approach, and to argue that it was largely Gramsci's influence that led the English historians towards social and people's history, towards focus on hegemony and contradictory consciousness. It is somewhat ironic that Christopher Hill remarks, in the collection's preface, his inability to recall the work of Gramsci being discussed in the Historians' Group.

This book is well written and well endowed with incisive socialist aphorisms (even if several of them are quoted repetitively). It addresses both the important enterprise of exposition and recovery, with respect to the authors' work discussed, and the increasingly bitter confrontation between socialist historiography and right-wing propaganda in the wake of the failure of the "Lenin experiment."

And yet, this collection is unabashedly cobbled together out of bits Kaye couldn't place in other books for reason of length, and out of glued-together occasional pieces. There is a good deal of repetition, in consequence, and such writers as Christopher Hill and Eric Hobsbawm receive a treatment that can only be described as cursory (perhaps they were treated in the bits that were not too long for inclusion elsewhere?). While Kaye frequently raises extremely important issues—the danger present in "history

from below" of romanticizing the experience of the defeated, for example, or the ways in which these historians practically reconstructed the concept "class struggle"—such issues also receive cursory treatment.

These are demoralizing times for a disorganized left. If this exposition of the work of the English Marxist historians is also disorganized, at least it reminds us of the vibrant struggles for a better future these writers both reported on and pursued.

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Georges E. Sioui. *For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic*, translated from the French by Sheila Fischman. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992. Pp. xxv, 125. \$29.95 cloth.

Dr. Georges Sioui's intriguing essay is a wampum. "At the beginning of a speech or negotiations, north-eastern Natives, particularly the Wendat-Iroquois, almost invariably offered several wampums, the effect of which was meant to 'call reason back to its seat'" (p. 5). The offering of a shell belt or collar as a preliminary to serious discussions was based upon the Aboriginal view "that to attain reason, one must first treat the emotions with honour and respect" (p. 5). *For an Amerindian Autohistory* is conceived as just such a wampum; its purpose is to "treat

the emotions" between Native and non-Native "with honour and respect" to prepare for discussions of common problems and shared objectives. For Sioui, treating the emotional divide between indigenous and immigrant populations requires the expression of his people's feeling about what newcomers have done to and with Native history.

If any Native person has the right to require a non-Native audience to "treat [his] emotions with honour and respect," it is Georges Sioui. On his first morning at school at the Huron settlement of Lorette, near Quebec City, "the imposing mother superior who taught us history" informed the class that his people were ignorant savages on whom the good king of France had taken pity and sent Christian missionaries. The six-year-olds were told that they "must ask God's pardon every day for the sins of your ancestors, and thank him for introducing you to the Catholic faith, for snatching you from the hands of the Devil who kept your ancestors in a life of idolatry, theft, lying, and cannibalism." Having got the class's attention, the good sister then instructed: "Now get down on your knees, we're going to pray to the blessed Canadian martyrs" (p. ix). In due course, young Georges grew up, earned a doctorate from Laval University, and between 1982 and 1990 was a principal in the Sioui case that helped to establish in Canadian law the validity of eighteenth-century treaties guaranteeing Huron Aboriginal rights.

Sioui's "wampum" is intended to deal with the emotions that stand in the way of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people understanding both the past and

the present. There is the danger that Native anger and non-Native guilt will combine to perpetuate the misunderstanding that creates a gulf between the communities. Sioui does not want to concentrate upon the story of his own harsh history at the hands of unsympathetic Euro-Canadian educators and legislatures. Rather his objective is to persuade the rest of us that a new approach is required for the study of Native history, a novel way of seeing the Aboriginal peoples' past that will have the beneficial effect of establishing a healthier relationship between Native and non-Native on the one hand, and between Euro-Canadians and the environment on the other. This new approach to the Native past he calls "Amerindian autohistory." What he means by that term is the interpretation of the past, not in the light of the European's linear view of the unfolding of history, but according to the values and aspirations of Aboriginal society. "The goal of Amerindian autohistory is to assist history in its duty to repair the damage it has traditionally caused to the integrity of American cultures" (p. 37).

Most of the *Amerindian Autohistory* concentrates upon sixteenth-century contact and seventeenth-century relations between the Huron, whom Sioui prefers to call Wendat, and European newcomers. He contends that it was Wendat, not Iroquois of the Five Nations, who occupied the St. Lawrence valley in the sixteenth century when Jacques Cartier arrived. The "St. Lawrence Iroquoians" whose identity anthropologists and historians have long debated, he argues, were his people. In talking of the seventeenth

century, Sioui is at pains to emphasize the unintentionally destructive impact of European diseases on the Aboriginal population, the cause in his view of the near-extinction of Wendat by 1649. In other words, it was losses to disease, not European-induced commercial ambitions, that led the Five Nations Iroquois to assault Huronia in hopes of incorporating captives into their depleted ranks and restoring their own strength. “[M]icrobes, not men, determined this continent’s history” (p. 40). The attraction of this interpretation is that “putting the microbes on trial instead of their carriers has the great advantage of removing the burden of guilt from humans who are merely the victims of these pathogens” (p. 4). However, if Sioui exonerates Europeans from the destruction of his people by emphasizing the role of disease, that does not mean that his essay is “an attempt to absolve the first European immigrants to American soil of the physical, moral, and spiritual atrocities committed against Native peoples” (p. 3 n).

Rather than concentrate solely on the negative role of the Europeans, however, Sioui prefers to use history, or “Amerindian autohistory,” to point out to non-Natives the benefits that are still to be derived from embracing and emulating Aboriginal values. This approach he calls “Americity” or the “Americizing” of all of us (chap. 5). The study of this worldview he terms “Amerology” (p. 105), and he suggests “that Amerindian intellectual and spiritual masters should be the leaders of such a science” (p. 106). What non-Natives will acquire from adoption of this Americized outlook on life is a

healthier relationship to their environment, and also to one another. This is because “Amerology attributes to circular societies (formerly called savage) a spiritual and moral ascendancy over the others, which may be divided into two conventional categories, this time in reverse order: ‘barbarian’ societies (semi-sedentary, agricultural), and civilized (those who have cut themselves off from natural laws)” (p. 105). *For an Amerindian Autohistory*, then, argues for an ethical interpretation of the past that substitutes Aboriginal values and attainments for the old and discredited assumptions of European and Judeo-Christian superiority. One wonders what mother superior in the grade one classroom back in Lorette would have thought!

Though not without its shortcomings, Sioui’s argument is important. For one thing, his approach sometimes verges upon Wendat (or Huron) ethnocentrism. This is especially obvious in his attribution to all Aboriginal peoples in North America of a matriarchal approach to life and governance. It is true that he qualifies his references to “the Amerindian matriarchal social system” (p. xxiii) by arguing that not all Native groups held the same attitude as Iroquoian peoples did, but throughout the work runs a tendency to depict all Aboriginal societies in terms remarkably similar to Huron or Wendat patterns. A second problem is reliance on non-Native interpretations, some of them dubious, to bolster his contention that the social ethics of Aboriginal Americans are superior to those of European newcomers. So, for example, he quotes at length Felix Cohen’s contention that the founding fa-

thers of the American republic were heavily influenced by their knowledge of the governing structures of the League of the Iroquois (pp. 99-100, 106), even though ethnologist Elisabeth Tooker has persuasively demonstrated that there is little or no evidence of direct borrowing from the Iroquois by Franklin, Jefferson, and the rest. Similarly, Sioui treats as valid the environmentally friendly speech attributed to Chief Seattle (p. 108), although that, too, has been shown to be a fabrication by a non-Native.

Such critical comments are not meant to suggest that *For an Amerindian Autohistory* is unimportant or grievously flawed. In fact, Dr. Sioui's shortcomings are merely the occupational hazard that any historian faces: reliance upon a particular body of evidence that is congenial to the historian's interpretation. As with any history, the remedy for the defects that flow from such an approach is the multiplication of histories written by people of different viewpoints. Now that Georges Sioui has broken the path, it is to be hoped that it will be explored by other Aboriginal writers from various ethnic communities. In particular, one looks forward to an Amerindian autohistory of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries written by an Iroquois, preferably a Mohawk, scholar. It will be fascinating to see what such a historian will say in answer to Sioui's contention that the sixteenth-century occupants of the St. Lawrence valley were in fact from the Huron or Wendat community. The Mohawk of Kanesatake, Kahnawake, and Akwesasne invested a great deal of time and effort in the 1970s mounting a comprehensive

claim to a large portion of southwestern Quebec and the lower Ottawa River valley based on their tradition that it was members of the Iroquois Confederacy whom Jacques Cartier "discovered" in the 1530s.

For an Amerindian Autohistory is more than a "wampum." It not only confronts and resolves many of the emotions that cloud both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples' relations. It also provides students of Canadian history with a novel and attractive reinterpretation of previous centuries that has profound implications for the present and future of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this land. That in some respects it is culturally bound and limited is not the issue. What is significant is that Dr. Sioui has pointed the way to new and valuable ways of perceiving and understanding the significance of our—both Natives' and non-Natives'—past. We are all in his debt.

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Robert A. Pratt. *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia, 1954-1989.* Richmond, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1992. Pp. xvii, 134. \$22.95.

Robert Pratt's study of the political and legal battles over school desegregation in Richmond, Virginia in the years following the U.S. Supreme