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In short, these articles suffer from the same self-invalidating epistemological problems as much of the ethnohistorical literature, and can be incorporated into that literature without questioning. Those familiar with the literature on the Northwest Coast will find little new here; those unfamiliar will find little of interest or relevance. These articles, like much of current ethnohistorical analysis, are scarcely more than curiosities of an antiquarian sort.

Big Bear: The End of Freedom. By Hugh A. Dempsey. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984. 227 pp., notes, bibliography, index. n.p. cloth.)

Raymond J. DeMallie, *Indiana University*

Big Bear is the story of a Plains Cree chief whose life spanned the period from the freedom of the buffalo-hunting days to the extermination of the buffalo and the confinement of the Indians on small reserves. It is at once a biography and an elegy for the vanished lifeways of the Indians of the Saskatchewan prairies.

Born about 1825, Big Bear was the son of an Ojibwa chief who led a mixed band of Crees and Ojibwas in the North Saskatchewan River region, a cultural meld of woodlands and plains, and of ethnic and linguistic identities: Cree, Ojibwa, Assiniboine. In 1837 Big Bear contracted and survived smallpox, experiencing a vision in which he foresaw the coming tide of whites and their ultimate purchase of the Indians' lands. Mysticism and religious power strongly colored Big Bear's life and ensured his success as a warrior. When his father died in the mid-1860s, Big Bear was recognized as band chief in his stead.

Dempsey portrays Big Bear as a Canadian hero (p. 201), a tragic figure whose success as a traditional leader did not carry over to relations with the whites. Although moderate and ready to cooperate with the inevitable, his political tactics failed and, ironically, the chief became a symbol of Indian resistance.

One strength of Dempsey's narrative is the extent to which it places Big Bear's political career within the religious context that the Cree people perceived as integral to it. In 1866 Methodist missionaries hauled away the Iron Stone, a giant meteorite near the Battle River, sacred to the Crees and believed by them to protect the buffalo and the Indian people alike. Disaster followed—the warfare of the Red River Rebellion in 1869, the smallpox epidemic of 1870, and the southern retreat of the buffalo herds that meant starvation for the Crees. During the early 1870s Big Bear was forced to lead his people south to live permanently on the plains in order to secure food.

Cree lands passed from the control of the Hudson's Bay Company to the new Dominion of Canada in 1869. With the westward progress of settlement

and railroads the government began systematically to make treaties with the Indian bands and settle each on a small reserve. With the buffalo fast disappearing, most of the Plains Crees signed Treaty 6 in 1876, selected their reserves, and began to attempt to farm like white men. Big Bear arrived after the treaty was signed. A meteorite seen flashing through the sky just before the treaty council was interpreted to mean that the Indians should not sell their lands. By refusing to sign the treaty, Big Bear became in the eyes of the government the leader of the opposition.

Dempsey suggests that in fact Big Bear wished only to obtain better terms for his people, but his late arrival precluded further negotiation. The chief's position emphasized the government's responsibility: " 'The Great Spirit has supplied us with plenty of buffalo for food until the white man came,' said Big Bear. 'Now as that means of support is about to fail us, the Government ought to take the place of the Great Spirit, and provide us with the means of living in some other way' " (p. 84). At the same time, Dempsey notes, Big Bear had little comprehension of what or who the person he called "Government" might be. Despite the government's honest intentions, the Indian people had only vague understanding of the process by which they lost their lands (p. 201).

Attempting to stall for better terms, Big Bear vowed to wait four years to assess the effects of the treaty before he would consider signing it. His leadership shifted, according to Dempsey, from a political to a mystical base. His followers, including his own sons, became restive with the aging chief.

In 1879 Big Bear led his people to the Milk River region of Montana to hunt the last of the buffalo herds. During this period, faced with the specter of starvation and the demoralizing effect of alcohol, Cree social structure disintegrated. When Big Bear returned to Canada in 1882 he found the Crees on the reserves destitute. To make matters worse, government officials refused all aid to his band until he signed the treaty. Finally he succumbed, after even his own sons had signed, and Big Bear himself put his mark on the treaty in December 1882.

Still the chief procrastinated, much to the discontent of his people, even his own family. Continuing to hope for better terms, he postponed selecting a reserve until 1885. As he prepared to move his people to a permanent reserve on the North Saskatchewan River, the younger men of his band became caught up in the Riel Rebellion and attacked the Indian agency at Frog Lake on April 2, killing nine whites and taking others prisoners. Then they moved against Fort Pitt. Leadership of the band shifted to Wandering Spirit, the war chief, and Big Bear was powerless to stop the hostilities, although he helped avert a massacre at Fort Pitt by convincing the inhabitants to surrender and overseeing good treatment for the prisoners. Defeated by Canadian forces at the Battle of Frenchmen's Butte on May 28, the Crees scattered, Big Bear's son Imasees fleeing to Montana with the main part of his father's band.

When Big Bear himself surrendered to Canadian authorities in July he was treated as the villain, the symbol of the Indians' defiance. Again the victim, he was sentenced to three years in prison. When his health deteriorated in January 1887, he was released and returned to the Little Pine Reserve on Battle River. His band had dispersed, never to receive a reserve of their own in Canada. Abandoned by his wife and his sons, the old chief was cared for by his daughter until his death on January 17, 1888. Then she, too, left for Montana.

Under the leadership of his son Imasees, the remnant of Big Bear's band roamed in Montana for more than thirty years until 1916 when they were at last given land of their own, Rocky Boy Reservation. Appropriately enough, it was while Dempsey was teaching there in 1974 that he met a grandson of Big Bear and determined to tell the chief's story.

The volume is eminently readable, well-researched, and is supplemented with helpful maps. It is an ethnohistorical model of the creative integration of written and oral historical source materials. As biography it is a noteworthy success. From a critical perspective, the reader would be helped by a fuller discussion of historical Cree cultural and social patterns to serve as background for the narrative; much can be inferred from the text, but the roles of leaders, the meaning of religious activities, and the principles of social structure are all taken for granted and are not explained in the book. A broader perspective relating Big Bear's people to the other Crees, and placing him more precisely in relation to other leaders—many of whom are mentioned by name—would allow for a more realistic understanding of his historical place and its significance. Finally, the emphasis is so exclusively on Big Bear's role in Canadian history that little detail is provided concerning contemporaneous events in the United States, even those in which Big Bear's people were directly involved. This skews the portrait and gives an incomplete picture of the historical events that shaped Big Bear's tragic career as a leader.

These criticisms aside, this is an excellent study which reveals the author's deep knowledge of the Indian history of the Canadian prairies and exemplifies his commitment to presenting that history in human terms accessible to a broad readership, both scholarly and popular.

The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History. Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, Steven Lukes (eds.). (London, Cambridge, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne and Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1985. viii + 309 pp., preface, notes, biblio., index, n.p. cloth.)

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The *Année sociologique* school led by Emile Durkheim was remarkable for the intensity of scholarly collaboration among its adherents. That spirit of