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with reference only to its relation to the work of Black scholars and those concerned with the African American experience. However, this work can be understood as well as an important contribution to recent critical analyses of modern society and the subordination of minority cultures by such authors as John Ogbu, Zygmunt Bauman, and Joel Spring.

The uniqueness of this book, however, is that it builds on the cultural discussions of previous efforts which focused on the political and economic exploitation of African Americans. Drawing on the work of E. Franklin Frazier and Harold Cruse, in particular, the author reveals the importance of culture by illuminating how culture interacts with political and economic orders to create contradictions and dilemmas for Blacks in different historical periods. The theoretical framework informs substantive analyses of several key concepts and topics: The implications of legitimacy for mental health; cultural production, economics, and the media; the role of religion; health conditions and their effects on development; and cultural revitalization.

Several flaws distract from the contributions of this work, however. Greater theoretical clarity is needed in several discussions of culture and its relation to power and economics. Additionally, the lack of any visual aids (graphics, photographs, inserts), the type-face selected by the publisher, and the lack of breaks in the text make for tedious reading. Nevertheless, this book offers detailed, interesting discussions of the theories and research of early Black scholars as well as provocative analyses of African American culture and social dilemmas and potential solutions to develop problems. This book is well worth reading for these contributions as well as for its inspiration for the analyses of other non-White groups' experiences with the dynamics of assimilation in American cultural history.

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**Janet D. Spector. *What This Awl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village.* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1993) 161 pp., \$32.50 cloth, \$15.95 paper.**

Janet Spector has written a book which is enjoyable, enlightening, and thought-provoking reading. Those involved in anthropology, history, gender studies, and ethnic studies would do well to read this small volume carefully and ponder its issues. As she promises in the book's subtitle, Spector presents archaeological evidence pertaining to the Wahpeton Dakota (Eastern Sioux) within a framework which lacks the Eurocentric and androcentric perspectives which too often characterize the study of American Indian pasts.

The book pivots around interpreting an awl, a punch-like imple-

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ment traditionally used by women in working animal hides for clothing, containers, and tipi covers. The awl has a tip of iron derived from Euro-American trade. This fact provides part of the basis for placing the artifact in time and historical context. Of native manufacture, the antler handle of the awl exhibits patterns of lines and dots, some of which are filled with red pigment. Interesting sleuthing and utilization of “ethnographic parallels” allow Spector to interpret these lines and dots as signifying something more than mere decorative designs. In doing this she clearly demonstrates feminist and American Indian perspectives.

In chapter 1 (“Archaeology and Empathy”) Spector identifies her academic background in archaeology and candidly states her scholarly interests and personal biases in dealing with American Indians, past and present. Chapter 2 (“What This Awl Means”) is the kind of summary one might expect as a concluding chapter in a traditional site report. Spector weaves a tale which lacks formal citations and assumes the reader knows the archaeological evidence she excavated during four seasons at the Little Rapids site (the Wahpeton’s Inyan Ceyaka Antonwan) in southeastern Minnesota. She also assumes that the reader knows the intricacies of what archaeologists call the “direct historical approach” and the wealth of available ethnohistoric and ethnographic information on the Dakota Indians including the significance of the paintings and sketches produced by Seth Eastman, a soldier-artist stationed at Fort Snelling during the mid-nineteenth century. Eastman’s images accompany the text and vivify the story. As an archaeologist, I am generally familiar with these sources; I found this chapter to be a real gem. The non-archaeologist, however, should not think that all one has to do is pick up an isolated artifact and tell an authentic story about the past. Spector’s appropriate uses of documentary sources, oral tradition, and scientific controls are reviewed in chapters 3 through 6: “Other Awl Stories”, “Cultures in Conflict”, “Cycles of the Moon”, “First Traces Uncovered”, “Glimpses of Community Life Part I”, and “Glimpses of Community Life - Part II”. Lists of recovered artifacts and remains of plants and animals appear in appendices.

Regarding chapter 2, Spector honestly states that “I wrote the story of how the awl might have been used and lost” (18). She almost certainly steps outside the strict bounds of evidence in attributing the awl specifically to Mazaokiyewin, the grandmother and great grandmother of three informants and colleagues of Wahpeton descent. On the other hand, given the available evidence, we can assume that the awl was a woman’s implement; and, given Dakota methods of reckoning kinship and the important matter of cultural continuity, the awl’s owner would be considered a “grandmother” of living Wahpeton. Thus Spector’s putting a “face” on history is instructive and her observations in the Epilogue (“What Does This All Mean”) are socially meaningful and ethically challenging beyond the delightful pun.

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