

Raymond A. Bucko. *The Lakota Ritual of the Sweat Lodge* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). 320 pages, \$40.00 cloth.

This well-researched book presents an excellent anthropological discussion of the “ritual” aspects of the “sweat lodge” as practiced among some Lakota, while posing some very thorny problems in terms of treatment of religion, knowledge and spirituality among Native American people (Deloria, 1995).

Professor Bucko describes the ritual of the sweat lodge ceremony with great accuracy as an anthropologist, as a social-science researcher, and as a participant-observer, by studying the past and present as a “dialectic” involving social change and “tradition” reinvented for current uses. This presents its own problematic discussion in that it is not just “anthropology” but a philosophy of life that has survived: the ritual is not really observant of spirituality or of holistic social life, which is why many Lakota insist on not calling it religious much less religion (Young Bear, 1996). There is “openness” rather than “desire” to present Lakota culture. This is where the dialectic lies – observed on an Internet site maintained by the author, containing a “Declaration of War Against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality” and in the book’s discussion (242-50, 254-55)

A remarkable observation is clarification of “inipi” (36) toward understanding the cleansing of one’s spirit rather than a simple “sweat.” However, this indicates a greater tension that the author discusses but never resolves: in what ways are the “ritual” aspects not very meaningful in respect to the spirituality of Lakota practitioners, who tend to reject ritualization as meaning? Early on, this can be observed when the author mistakenly glosses Ni-Tunkashila as Grandmother Earth, rather than unci, in the four directions entering song (6). For many Lakota, this would only cause mild speculation as to why it happened or whether it was a mistake and understandable. Similar to questions such as why I might place a pipe during a SunDance with the stem pointed eastward, there is real desire to discover causat

Bucko sees the sweat lodge as part of a “larger ritual system” that includes other ceremonies that have at times

been outlawed or banned. Here is where Professor Bucko's analysis would benefit from incorporating cultural domination theory and discussion of secreted ceremonies as forms of resistance. These processes, occurring over the last century, also contributed to countervailing and contemporary understandings of "tradition" as well as what could or should be shared with non-Indian outsiders. Jesuit priests represent these "dialectical" processes well, being among the best early ethnographers, especially with language and custom, while also acting as the vanguard of religious oppression and socio-political conquest.

Professor Raymond Bucko has made a valuable contribution toward understanding sweat lodges and their place in a larger social system greatly influenced by adaptations and assimilation toward mainstream American life. Ethnic Studies needs to take this to the next level, and view changes occurring in the re-appearance of Lakota ceremonial life as indicative of less repressive American social systems and re-appropriation in addition to survival of religious ritual and deep spirituality.

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Ramsay Burt. *Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, 'Race', and Nation in Early Modern Dance.* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998). 222 pp., \$22.99 paper.

In *Alien Bodies*, Burt uses interdisciplinary methods to consider the issues of modernity and modernism in relation to the work of several makers of early modern dance. In nine chapters, he carefully examines the social constructions of nation, race, class, and gender as they were inscribed upon the dancing body. The Atlantic is the space and the period between the two great wars the time of this book's focus.

Overall, Burt makes many cogent and important points, not the least of which are his reflections on the figure of Josephine Baker, his analysis of the mass dance movement in Leni Riefenstahl's film *Olympia*, and his chapter comparing the