

Barker's essay on the New Age in Britain are among the many other articles of note.

These two volumes are recommended for research libraries and all serious students of new religious movements and occult history.

R. E.

Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact. By Vine Deloria, Jr. Scribner, 1995. 286 pages. n.p.

Vine Deloria, Jr., has been doing battle with the hegemony of materialist rationalism for nearly thirty years, an intellectual project that has led him through the fields of Indian affairs, history, religion, philosophy, law, political science, and education. His latest book breaks new ground yet again by taking on the high priesthood of secular spirituality—Western science—while relying on familiar weapons in his discursive arsenal: social critique, trickster humor, and an ample supply of common sense. Deloria wants to disrupt the epistemological authority of scientific orthodoxy and recover the historical insights of tribal oral traditions. His ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive and inclusive approach to understanding planetary history that investigates and incorporates the particular experiences of all peoples rather than subsuming them under a uniformitarian naturalism. “We do not know the real history of our planet,” he concludes, “because our scholars and scientists are wedded to an outmoded framework of interpretation and spend their time arranging facts and evidence to fit these old ideas” (p. 251).

Red Earth, White Lies is the first volume in a planned trilogy that will explore the three areas Deloria considers to be the most significant sites of misunderstanding and conflict between Indians and immigrants: science, religion, and government. As a lawyer, seminary graduate, and avid reader of scientific literature, Deloria is acutely aware of the ways in which these three areas intersect; it is not surprising, then, that he begins this book by highlighting the institutional context of scientific research and framing the philosophy and methodology of Western science as a type of religious theory and practice. Deloria does a nice job of recapitulating the rise of Western science and its challenge to Christian orthodoxy, and he argues that the institutionalization of science led it to take on the form and function of religion in an increasingly secularized society. This meant that “scientists would come to act like priests and defer to doctrine and dogma when determining what truths would be admitted, how they would be phrased, and how scientists themselves would be protected from the questions of the mass of people whose lives were becoming increasingly dependent on them” (p. 17). While it is not Deloria's purpose in this book to engage in a systematic analysis of

Western science as religious tradition, he consistently refers to scientific orthodoxies using religious terminology and clearly intends to suggest a more modest trust in scientific knowledge than is currently fashionable.

Much of this book focuses on two popular theories about the early history of the Americas: the Bering Strait migration theory and the Pleistocene overkill theory. The contemporary political implications here are obvious. The Bering Strait migration theory suggests that Indians did not originate in the Americas (which can be read as the latest in a long history of colonial attempts to invalidate Indian land claims), while the Pleistocene overkill theory blames paleo-Indians for mass extinctions of ancient flora and fauna (which might be interpreted as a more recent effort to discredit Indian environmental practice). Deloria points out that both theories rely on a very limited amount of physical evidence and a great deal of uniformitarian conjecture, and he examines how these theories are deployed in various scientific specialties to show that they are not used in a consistent manner across disciplinary boundaries. In short, comprehensive and coherent accounts of a Bering Strait migration or a Pleistocene overkill simply do not exist, and it would be much more scientifically useful to adopt a more cautious and open approach to interpreting archeological and geological materials.

This deconstructive move is only half of his argument, however, and it is unfortunate—if the early reviews of this book by devout scientists are any indication—that many readers will not get past Deloria's criticisms to the constructive proposals that make up the rest of his argument. Deloria wants to revalorize tribal oral traditions as repositories of historical knowledge; he intends to recover them from the folklorists and literary critics who see in them only naive supernaturalism and mythic symbolism. Using methodological insights from the emerging field of geomythology, Deloria shows how oral accounts that preserve the memory of unusual or catastrophic experiences can be correlated with the findings of experimental science not merely to confirm prevailing theories but to provide new data for consideration as well. Flood stories, for example, need to be "de-mythologized" so that the historical information about physical phenomena contained in their narratives can be analyzed. This is just the reverse of Rudolf Bultmann's approach to biblical accounts.

Unlike many modern intellectuals, Deloria is not embarrassed by religious experiences, but he believes they should be grounded in historical realities rather than imaginative fictions. His provocative interpretations of Western science as myth and tribal myth as science point the way out of "a strange kind of dark ages" and toward an inclusive historicism (p. 231). *Red Earth, White Lies* is ultimately a book about overcoming the false dichotomy of faith and reason, and allowing both the scientific and the religious significance of "mythological" events to be fully realized through a unified practice of observation, reflection,

and (creditable) interpretation.

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I Tell You a Mystery: Life, Death, and Eternity. By Johann Christoph Arnold. The Plough Publishing House, 1996. 153 pages. n.p.

I Tell You a Mystery is a short, non-academic, inspirational work by Johann Christoph Arnold, senior elder of the Bruderhof, one of America's most successful alternative religious communities. The group traces its roots to the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century, and in particular to the communal villages of Bruderhof ("places of brothers") established in Moravia by the Hutterites. The modern Bruderhof organization was founded in 1920, and, despite periods of persecution, has grown steadily into one of the world's largest alternative communities, with over 2500 members at eight sites (seven in the United States, one in England).

The Bruderhof follow a simple, pietistic type of Christianity and practice communal living. Though in many ways resembling the Amish and Mennonites, the Bruderhof are not opposed to the use of modern technology, as illustrated in their impressive website on the Internet (www.bruderhof.org). While living in their own communities, they have also become involved in some larger social issues not typically associated with traditional pietistic Christian groups. One such issue is the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a black activist and author whose murder conviction has attracted national attention. Abu-Jamal writes a brief foreword to Arnold's book.

The book itself contains twenty-three short chapters, each consisting of Arnold's account of how members of the Bruderhof have used their faith to interpret and deal with specific situations of suffering, tragedy, and death. Reading account after account of terminal cancers, infant deaths, and tragic accidents almost creates the impression that the Bruderhof are faced with more than their share of troubles. However, the cumulative impact of these descriptions of simple courage and strength in the face of adversity can be quite moving.

I Tell You a Mystery was not written as a scholarly book for an academic audience. Rather, it is an inspirational work for lay readers. While the book's short afterword contains a brief summary of the community's history and beliefs, this is not a work that would be useful to scholars seeking extensive factual information about the Bruderhof. On the other hand, this book could be very useful to anyone who is seeking insight into the nature of Bruderhof faith and its impact on members' daily lives.

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