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AN D. PALMER
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ed for having the
t few Pacific histo-

rians have dared to do: to write a general book for a general audience. Like many other islands in the Pacific, Fiji has been studied in considerable depth, and many specialist publications examine aspects of Fiji's past. But this book is the first general survey of Fiji's history from prehistoric times to the present day.

Nonspecialists are led gently along a predictable enough narrative path—from the nature of pre-European Fijian society, early cultural contact with European traders and missionaries, European settlement, and American and British involvement in Fijian affairs to annexation by Britain, the introduction of Indians, the economic and political issues of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial rule, political independence in 1970, and, finally, the problems and prospects for a pluralistic society.

It would be too easy to point to issues or events that have been omitted in this short book, although I think it is fair to comment that readers may expect more than the six pages devoted to Fiji since 1970. And Indians, who for a long time have made up more than half of the total population of Fiji, certainly get less attention than their numbers may warrant.

Nonspecialist readers (especially high school students, who, in the foreword by Fiji's minister of education, are urged to read this book) may well find Scarr's rather elliptical and convoluted style of writing (which I myself quite like) rather difficult to follow. There are times when the richness and complexity of expression obscures some basic point. I imagine students seeking ready-made answers to basic questions—"Why did Fijians become Christianized?", "Why did Britain annex Fiji?", and "Why did Fiji gain independence in 1970?"—will not easily find them in this work. In this respect Scarr's book is more the story of Fiji than an analytical history of it.

These reservations aside, Scarr's efforts have been most worthwhile. We need more such books on Pacific islands to help introduce their history to a wider audience.

K. R. HOWE
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UNITED STATES

OLIVE PATRICIA DICKASON. *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press. 1984. Pp. xvii, 372. \$30.00.

Olive Patricia Dickason presents a searching overview of the many frontiers on which native Americans and Europeans first met. At one level, the study assesses the social dynamics that channeled the en-

counter. At another, it details the developing economic, political, and legal rationale for colonization. And Dickason frames her work with a fresh reexamination of the cross-cultural sources of what soon became the "Indian problem."

In the first section Dickason grounds the problem of Indian-white relations in the impressionistic anthropology of the sixteenth century. Christians viewed man as sinful by nature and urbane in culture. French culture, Dickason shows, was firmly rooted in an aristocratic and occupational stratification that duplicated the complex chain of being separating man from God. From the first contacts the French associated native Americans with a traditional, ambivalent symbol of nature: *l'homme sauvage*, the wild man of the woods.

Section 2 concentrates on the preconceptions and rationalizations that operated on both sides of the early frontier. Dickason reconstructs the relationship in fishing, trading, and diplomacy. Three aspects of these meetings especially stand out. She thoroughly examines the legal justifications for France's developing colonial policy in the light of European diplomatic rivalries, provides a provocative account of the critical Indian reactions while visiting Europe, and exposes the social values that informed both Indian and European responses.

In a final section Dickason examines the economic, political, and religious foundations of New France. Here, as throughout, her command of the ethnological record generates many new insights. Her view of the colony's development is particularly well balanced because she draws on an understanding of cross-cultural economics. For example, Dickason demonstrates that Indian redistributive economies were far more compatible with French commerce than is usually appreciated. Similarly, she not only relates French commercial pragmatism to the equally important missionary motivations but also shows that Indian sensibilities contributed much to the ideological agreement on which the religious alliance was grounded.

If much of this seems familiar, Dickason tells the story with revealing detail and comprehensive documentation. The book also reproduces many illustrations from contemporary sources that are, in themselves, invaluable for comprehending the encounter. All told, this is a major contribution.

KENNETH M. MORRISON
Arizona State University

KENNETH M. MORRISON. *The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-Euroamerican Relations*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1984. Pp. x, 256. \$24.95.

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