

*Stolen from Our Embrace:
The Abduction of First Nations Children
and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*

Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey

Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1997. 250 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

By Gale Cyr

Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

USED TO THINK OF COLONIALISM as having many facets, from militarism, to the church, to contemporary justifications of legislation such as the Indian Act or, for that matter, globalism. Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey reaffirm the simple-minded view of colonization as a patriarchal form of divide-and-conquer politics, from the creation of *terra nullius* (to justify European invasion) to globalization's attempts to undermine First Nations self-governance, self-determination, and self-healing.

What the authors want to share, both from the past and from the present, is not only the consistent impact of the pervasive assimilationist policy of separating children and their families, but also the stories of resistance, healing, and renewal. If we let the blood flow between the mind and the heart we can see the pattern of broken relationships that are depicted in *Stolen from Our Embrace*. This pattern is revealed in the personal First Nations testimonies concerning people's experiences as children and adults, from initial contact to residential schools to the 1990s and the "scoop" of Canada's child welfare/child protection policy.

The first several pages introduce and explain a powerful Stó:lō legend. Although the legend is self-explanatory,

the authors use it in order to provide the context of Stó:lō experience. Of equal importance, this section reveals to the reader that this book is not only an academic exercise for the authors, but also a lived experience – as it is for the reviewer!

The first chapter begins with Ernie Crey's lived experience and includes the historical context of his honouring of his Stó:lō ancestors. This sets the pace for the ensuing stories of resistance. These stories, from resisting residential schools to surviving inter-generational abuse and/or fetal alcohol syndrome, are followed by community workers' and activists' accounts of their experience of the healing process. The text's conclusion provides a discussion of the barriers faced by today's youth, and it outlines the issues of AIDS, access to education, fetal alcohol syndrome, suicide, racism, and so on. Most important, this chapter stresses, once again, the effective use of personal testimonies, the success of individuals, and optimism for the future.

The interdependence of mind, body, and spirit is like the interdependence of past, present, and future. I believe we do not have to live in the past but that the past must be acknowledged within the present for the future. Our legends, our oral traditions, and our teachings will provide this, as I under

stand it now. I do not even like the word "history," for it implies that something is forgotten, as in "that's history – so, forget it," "he or she is history," or "if you don't conform, you're history." Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey may be criticized for portraying a utopian view of First Nations before contact and for being somewhat ethnocentric. I would only ask everyone to reflect that ethnocentrism, like reverse discrimination, may occur, but one must have power before one can be ethnocentric. Maybe it is a form of resistance, like the stories that the authors let individuals tell.

As well as providing a socially sensitive and responsible account of the experiences of First Nations children,

Fournier and Crey show that responsibility and accountability continue to be part of First Nations communities, individuals, and leadership. Much of the book is concentrated on the experience of British Columbia's First Nations children. Initial contact with First Nations is recent in British Columbia, and one-quarter of the residential schools were located in this province. The book can provide insight into the distinct BC First Nations experience with child welfare while providing a crucial overview of First Nations experience throughout Canada. *Stolen from Our Embrace* is a text for First Nations and non-First Nations interested in either collective or individual experiences.

Alejandro Malaspina: Portrait of a Visionary

John Kendrick

Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
200 pp. Illus., maps. \$34.95 cloth.

By Freeman Tovell

Victoria

THE FIVE-YEAR EXPEDITION (1789-1794), planned and carried out by the thirty-five-year-old Italian-born Spanish naval officer, Alejandro Malaspina, was designed to equal if not surpass the achievements of England's Cook and France's Bougainville and La Pérouse, and bring Spain the international prestige their expeditions acquired. Malaspina's purpose was not exploratory but scientific (in the spirit of the Age of Enlightenment) and political: to examine the state of the Spanish

vice-royalties in the Americas and the Philippines.

Malaspina chose his officers and scientists carefully. The mass of cartographic, ethnological, botanical, ornithological, and other scientific data they gathered related to the Pacific Basin generally. Important work was also accomplished on the Pacific Northwest Coast, including a fruitless search for the Northwest Passage in the region of Yakutat Bay, Alaska, and a two-week visit to the Spanish establishment in Nootka Sound.

Fournier, Suzanne; Crey, Ernie. A deliberate policy to separate and forcibly assimilate Aboriginal First Nations children into the mainstream has pervaded every era of Aboriginal history in Canada. Each era saw a new reason to take Aboriginal children away from their homes, placing them in residential schools, foster care, or non-Aboriginal adoptive families. In the words of individuals telling about their childhood, each chapter of this book focuses on a particular aspect of the history of Aboriginal children from the time of first European contact to the present. Chapter 1 relates the experi