Coin, a column on etiquette for the eighties for the Fanfare section of The Globe and Mail.
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Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country

Jennifer Brown, University of British Columbia Press, 1980, 291 pp., hardcover $24.
Jacqueline Gresko

Jennifer Brown, an anthropologist, has used archival sources to study a long-neglected topic in the history of frontier North America — fur trade company family life in the 1700s and 1800s. Her discussion, although long and complex is of interest to general readers as well as university professors.

The title, *Strangers in Blood*, though puzzling in itself indicates the main themes of her work. The laws of Britain imposed a 10 per cent duty 'on the legacies of all heirs who were natural children or "strangers in blood" to a deceased party.' In North American fur trade territory, lack of religious and civil institutions meant that fur traders formed alliances with native women according to the custom of the country rather than by official marriage rites. Many of these country wives and their children had to go to court to prove their legitimacy in order to claim their inheritance. For Brown, 'strangers in blood' has a double meaning: this legal description of 'any relationship, even familial that the law refused to admit as legitimate [;]' and 'one way of characterizing the meetings of Whites and Indians . . . in the fur trade of North America.'

Brown's main points about these interracial encounters may be summarized as follows. Before 1821, despite 'their common British (and heavily Scottish) facade' the rival London-based Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and Montreal-based North West Company developed different types of social organizations in Indian country. Though men of both companies married Indian women 'according to the custom of the country', the HBC traders with their permanent residential posts formed stable social units and sought to bring education and civilization to their families. The North Westers were frequently transferred, had temporary arrangements with native women, and 'followed their personal inclinations with regard to their families.' After the coalition of the two fur trade companies in 1821, the traders and their families underwent the pressures of the reorganization of the fur trade by the economy-minded Governor George Simpson. Also armies of missionaries and settlers advanced into fur trade country. They, like Simpson, tended to denigrate native families. Brown contends that, within the new HBC, social distinctions between gentlemen and servants, between white and native, were 'strongly related to changing economic pressures'. Old HBC men, the traders with strong family loyalties and large kinship networks on the frontier, defended their country-born children. They tried to educate and place both their daughters and their sons in British or Canadian society. In the long run, they had more success in securing the positions of their married daughters, especially in the North-west where country-born women were still the majority of educated women of marriageable age. By contrast the old North Westers tended 'not to assume an active paternal role'. Their children remained in the Northwest as halfbreeds or Metis and 'emphasized their naternal descent.'

While *Strangers in Blood* is an important book, it will be a difficult one for the student or the general reader to follow. It is still too much in the form of the academic thesis. It is complicated by seemingly insignificant bits of anthropological theory. This is perhaps a function of the anthropological system of references used in the book. That eliminates the need for long footnotes but it transfers the clutter of scholarly discussion to the text.

Modern women fighting for Indian rights for Indian women are interested in the legal cases concerning Brown's strangers in blood. Though Brown does not mention the study Kathleen Jamieson did for them *Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus*, (1978), she, like Jamieson refers to the Connolly case of 1869. According to Jamieson it 'established the legal validity of such marriages and indeed was held as a precedent for establishing the validity of all customary marriages until 1951.' Perhaps Indian Rights for Indian Women and Jamieson and Brown could cooperatively edit the records of the case for publication. And, since one of fur trader William Connolly's country born children was Amelia, the consort of Sir James Douglas, father of British Columbia, the University of British Columbia Press should be happy to assist with the project.

Becoming a Mother

Ann Oakley, Martin Robertson & Co. Ltd.: 1979, 328pp., $19.95.
Judith Posner

Ann Oakley's new book on motherhood is a strange sort of academic text. In fact, one can hardly call it a sociological study or analysis in the traditional sense of the term. It is comprised almost exclusively of verbatim quotes transcribed from 66 in-depth tape interviews with urban, middle class and working class women in England. The book is structured around a variety of sub-themes such as the childbirth experience, baby feeding and domestic politics. Aside from its organization and a few sparing remarks by the author interspersed throughout, the book is true to the belief that socio-psychological issues are best understood if the participants or actors are permitted to speak for themselves. And, in *Becoming a Mother*, they do so quite eloquently.

> I think probably more and more I've realized how women do get taken for granted. For example, when Howard and I go out shopping and he wants a drink on the way home, we sit in the pub and he might meet a couple of friends and sometimes I get the feeling that they're not interested in me: I'm just his wife and I've got a baby and I'm not a person. p.271.

Perhaps their perceptions are even more powerful because Oakley avoids the addition of extended analytic elaborations, even though it is quite clear that she must have edited and organized her data with great care and *empathy*. (Oakley is married and has three children). In this respect, her recent study is quite similar to her