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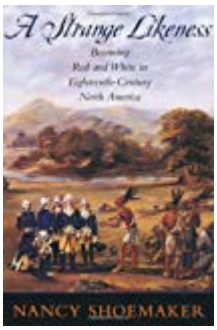

Nancy Shoemaker. *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. viii + 211 pp. $29.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-516792-4.

Reviewed by Daniel Mandell

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In *A Strange Likeness*, Nancy Shoemaker builds on her influential article "How Indians Got to Be Red" to show how "Indian and European similarities enabled them to see their differences in sharper relief and, over the course of the eighteenth century, construct new identities that exaggerated the contrasts between them while ignoring what they had in common" (p. 3).[1] Her book has a thematic structure, with chapters examining Indian-European "dialogues" on "Land," "Kings," "Writing," "Alliances," "Gender," and "Race." For each of these aspects of human society, politics, and culture, Shoemaker explores how Indians and Europeans met, discussed and disagreed with each other, and, in the process, fashioned distinct identities that overshadowed and even replaced more fragmented notions of tribe and nation. The result is an important work that manages to make sense of often-discordant voices and extends the trend of integrating European, Native, and settler experiences in North America.

Shoemaker's focus on the eighteenth century, after the establishment of English and French settlements as well as many terrible wars, is part of a growing trend of scholarship on Native and colonial relations.[2] Natives had learned and adapted (consciously and/or willingly, or not) and the colonists had formed creole societies with homegrown leadership and culture still connected to their "mother" countries. *A Strange Likeness* has connections to the long debate about whether Indian cultures were essentially different from or relatively similar to those of Europeans, and is clearly more sympathetic to the latter view, although it contains a nuanced emphasis on the dynamics of relations among Native and European peoples.[3] But Shoemaker's work follows a different path by showing how differences developed from similarities, as Natives and Europeans, driven by conflicts over power, resources, and their very existence, forged distinct identities.

Shoemaker begins with a chapter on "Land," showing that, even though only Europeans practiced individual landholding, both peoples conceived of land as sovereign territory, resulting in numerous struggles over which group controlled a particular area (p. 22). Both peoples also used marks on the landscape to commemmorate spe-

cial places and events that marked social memory and identity, although Europeans were far more likely to name or rename a place for an individual and to mark territory for its economic potential. The next chapter on "Kings" is more directly connected to the book's thesis, as Shoemaker discusses how the interaction of Europeans and Natives, particularly in visits by Indians to England, reshaped notions and expectations of leadership. The chapter on "Writing" is perhaps the strongest part of the book, as it shows how Indians and Europeans together made writing uniquely European and oral memory uniquely Native, even as each also accommodated and used the other's supposedly unique set of skills in diplomacy. In councils, Europeans held and offered wampum, and Indians knew they needed writing and regarded the deed or treaty as a sort of wampum. Indian and European notions of "Alliances" were similarly alike in some ways and distinct in others.

Shoemaker next focuses on "Gender," particularly the manner in which men were viewed by both Indians and Europeans as warriors, diplomats, and political leaders, and women as weaker makers of peace. She also looks at how sexual differences were used by both peoples to explain or understand diplomatic and social relations. Missing from this chapter, surprisingly, is the diplomatic confusion in which ***matrilineal*** Eastern tribes called the European king "father," which Europeans understood as accepting subservience in the ***patriarchal*** mode, whereas Native fathers were expected to provide sustenance without having the authority of the mother or the uncle. [4] Finally, Shoemaker revisits her article on race, which rejects the existing historiography by emphasizing that the notion of Indians being red began with Native color symbolism and with their discussions in councils with Europeans during the 1720s, rather than with Europeans' descriptions of Indians. By the 1760s, Natives throughout the east emphasized that differences in skin color explained and required clear distinctions between the two peoples, and served as a divine sign that the land belonged to them and that the whites were intruders.

Shoemaker's short and broad-reaching book is ambitious and rewarding. It turns a historiographic paradigm on its head, covers in a relatively brief work many different cultures and encounters, and grapples with primary sources as well as the deepening historiography. She provides a satisfying answer to the obvious question of why these strong differences emerged out of essential similarities: competition between the two peoples for land, and colonial treatment of all Indians as inherently inferior. Shoemaker emphasizes the nascent nature of European literacy and nationalism as well as the notion that, while initially "Indian" and "European" were contrived labels, by the end of the eighteenth century these were meaningful terms, in large part because individuals from the two groups had forged those distinctions. She is also careful to distinguish the fine line between European and colonial Anglo-American culture and politics, just as she points out differences over time and between different Native groups. In some ways, ***A Strange Likeness*** seems part of a recent trend among scholars of Natives in eastern North America to write broad, synthetic studies of the colonial experience.[5] But Shoemaker deals with just the eighteenth century, focusing on six particular aspects of Native peoples, and works more with primary sources.

As a result, the reader cannot but notice what ***A Strange Likeness*** does ***not*** cover. Despite its subtitle, it is not about all of North America: it is about the continent east of the Mississippi River and primarily south of the Canadian Shield. It does not deal at all with tribes and communities in New France/Canada (which were often made up of peoples from various tribes and groups) nor "behind the frontier" in the British colonies, as in southern New England or Virginia, where intermarriage with blacks was becoming common. But even more noteworthy by their absence are sig-

nificant cultural and social concerns, most of which (judging by other recent works) would enrich and probably support her interpretation. Religion seems a particularly important topic, and the unconscious incorporation of Christian imagery and concepts by prophets who, beginning in the 1740s, described a single creation for all Indians and the need to separate from European ways, certainly seems to support her thesis.[6] Trade and economics, along with issues of class and power (indicated in her chapter on "Kings"), also represent topics that are noticeably absent. Perhaps Professor Shoemaker should write a second volume?

Notes

[1]. Nancy Shoemaker, "How Indians Got to Be Red," *American Historical Review* 102 (1997): pp. 625-644.

[2]. Examples include Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Daniel Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996); James H. Merrell,* Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier *(New York: Norton, 1999); and Jane T. Merritt,* At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

[3]. Examples of works that emphasize essential similarities include Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonists, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975); and Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: Norton, 1999). Prominent works that emphasize dissimilarities include Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Christopher L. Miller and George R. Hammell, "A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade," *Journal of American History* 73 (1986): pp. 311-328.

[4]. See Patricia Galloway, "'The Chief Who Is Your Father': Choctaw and French Views of the Diplomatic Relation," in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, ed. Peter Wood, Gregory Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 254-278.

[5]. See particularly Gregory Nobles, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

[6]. See in particular Colin Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); and Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

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