“Cultural Leprosy”: The “Aboriginal Ethnology” of Ruth Landes

JOAN A. LOVISEK, TIM E. HOLZKAMM and LEO G. W AISBERG
Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research (TARR),
Grand Council Treaty #3

INTRODUCTION

Ruth Landes was a prolific writer who died in 1991.1 She was a student of Franz Boas and a contemporary and friend to Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict. In several publications including two books during the 1930s, Landes focused on the Treaty #3 Ojibwa at Manitou Rapids, the “Emo Ojibwa” in Northwestern Ontario. Her Ojibwa materials have long been considered “classic ethnography”, most recently by Laura Peers (1995:80) and praised for systematically studying the culture from a woman’s point of view (Cole 1995a, Hallowell 1938). Her writing became a focus in the 1960s discussions of the theory of particularity or “atomism”, generating studies among the Wisconsin and Minnesota Ojibwa and attracting ethnohistorical research (Hickerson 1967; Manson 1988; James 1970; Bishop 1974, 1978). Her work on The Ojibwa woman saw renewed interest during the 1970s, coinciding with the emerging interest in women’s studies (Landes 1971 [1938]).

1 This paper is a summary of a larger study in process which details the colonial, historical and anthropological context of Landes’s Ojibwa work. Research for this article benefited from assistance by Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research (TARR), Grand Council Treaty #3. We wish to thank James G. E. Smith, Edward Rogers, Anne Wilson, Willie Wilson, Tommy Medicine and Agnes Sadewasser, as well as many others, living and dead, who shared their views on Ruth Landes with us. We also wish to thank Ms. Nancy McKechnie, special manuscript collections of Vassar College for her generous assistance with Ruth Landes’s unpublished papers and Dr. James Harwood for providing access to the Ruth Landes papers at the Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution. We also wish to thank Dr. Mary Catherine Bateson for providing permission to publish from the Ruth Benedict papers which contains Ruth Landes’s correspondence at Vassar College. Opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors, and are without prejudice to Grand Council Treaty #3 and its member First Nations, including Rainy River First Nations.
Landes's work reveals many of the biases and preconceptions of colonial anthropology. She compromised her ethnographic portrayal by fabrications, by serious errors of fact and omission, and by questionable methodology. These weaknesses limit Landes's work as classic ethnography and as a source for gender studies.

ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY AND CONDUCT

Research into Landes's publications and correspondence at Vassar College and the anthropological archives at the Smithsonian, in conjunction with ethnohistorical research and Elder testimony, reveal major problems with her field work and her analysis of the Ojibwa. In her published works, Landes, who had trained as a social worker, demonstrated little appreciation for accepted standards of professional conduct (see Fluehr-Lobban 1994).

Despite being cautioned by her academic supervisor Ruth Benedict, Landes identified by actual name Ojibwa whom, she alleged, had committed incest, child abuse and infanticide, were illegitimate, deserted by spouses or adulterous, and she apparently had no understanding that such allegations might have had severe impact under the law (Ruth Benedict Papers [RBP], 4 February 1935). Her published work is filled with derogatory descriptions, cloaked in stories attributed to women (Landes 1971:33, 48, 86, 87, 108, 138, 165, 204–6, 212). Her unpublished work contains racist and degrading comments in which the Ojibwa were characterized as "atomistic megalomaniac paranoids", the Potawatomi "bitches and sneak thieves", and the Dakota "cretins" (RBP, 2 September 1935, 30 January 1933), further perpetuating the colonial myth that non-western peoples had mental inferiorities (RBP, 2 December 1937). By focussing on personality disorders and blaming Ojibwa culture, Landes asserted the universality of abnormal personalities and the 'superiority' of western scientific ways.

A partial explanation for Landes's assault on the Manitou Rapids Ojibwa can be traced to her fieldwork experience. After finding that the

---

2 The question of Landes's use of potentially libellous data was also raised by Dr. Park in regard to her "Negro Jews" material. The publisher stated that Landes's work was hearsay, not science, and her use of actual names would expose the publisher to libel (RBP, 18 January 1938).
Ojibwa were not in a pristine aboriginal condition, she later adopted the term “cultural leprosy” to describe the dropping away of their culture. Characterizing her field work as “aboriginal ethnology”, she attributed the demise in religion and kinship, not to historical effects, but to the Ojibwa themselves (RBP, 29 June 1933, 2 September 1935). Not only did she depict the Ojibwa without political or social organization, she portrayed them as having little indigenous culture, having borrowed heavily from southern groups. Finding what she saw as an impoverished aboriginal culture, she chose to concentrate on what she considered was aboriginal — personality. This entrenched her interest in psycho-culture which would crystallize into a general application of atomism to the Ojibwa (Landes 1966 [1937]:102).

Atomism was initially widely and readily adopted in culture and personality studies including the writings of A. Irving Hallowell and Victor Barnouw. Landes’s mentor and supervisor, Ruth Benedict (Maslow and Honigmann 1970) used atomism in her cultural classifications based on the notion of synergy. One of the immediate consequences of the acceptance of atomism was intense interest in the processes of acculturation and psychological testing, which were particularly applied to the Wisconsin Ojibwa (Manson 1988:23, 88, 91). Students of psychoanalyst Abram Kardiner, which included Barnouw and Ernestine Friedel, were armed with Rorschach protocols. They provided Kardiner with data from which the Ojibwa were determined to have had “limited maternal care with often shifting parental surrogates conditioned a dependent, emotionally repressed personality with minimal expectations from the outer world.” Beliefs in the Windigo were linked to “oral frustrations” and related to seasonal scarcity of good and inadequate parental care and affection. Barnouw would report that Ojibwa “libidinal regression was conditioned by sexually repressed and ambivalent gender relations” (Manson 1988:89, 91).

Landes became committed to the view that environmentally determined cultural stresses on the Ojibwa (and Potawatomi) were so extensive that psychological abnormalities were rampant and normal. She described the Potawatomi, for example, as “hysteroid, nightmarish people” with whom she relished her research: “it’s a delicious lunatic journey to follow each Napoleon on his way” (RBP, 30 January 1933). Influenced
by Boas\textsuperscript{3} and his interest in culture and personality, and Benedict’s idea of cultural entrapment, Landes developed her impressions of the Ojibwa by adopting dream analysis and word association based on her readings of Carl Jung. This led to her characterization of Ojibwa shamans as megalomaniacs, paranoids, and exhibitionists who suffered from persecution reactions. Through a single nightmare episode reported by her informant Maggie Wilson, Landes concluded that sexual desire among Ojibwa women revealed “distorted homosexuality” (RBP, 30 January, 20 March and 16 August 1935). It is not difficult to understand why Paul Radin would later describe Boasian scholars as follows: “One gets the impression that the actual facts are being used as mere illustrative material for a psychological and philosophical position arrived at independently” (Kehoe 1983:62).

There are stark similarities between Benedict’s derogatory rendering of Reo Fortune’s “Sorcerers of Dobu”\textsuperscript{4} as a paranoid cultural type known for its “ruthless individualism” and Landes’s portrayal of the Ojibwa as atomistic. Landes had requested Benedict’s Dobu manuscript while in the field, but it is not clear from her notes whether she received it before Benedict completed her manuscript, whether Landes’s work influenced Benedict’s Dobu, or whether the ethnographies were the result of convergent thinking. Landes appears to have substituted the positive stereotype of the cooperative Samoans of her contemporary Margaret Mead with a negative stereotype of the Ojibwa as atomistic, as Benedict did to the Dobu. Through this comparison, she claimed to have captured the Ojibwa personality, in her words, “portraits of Indians... flourishing in states of social malaise” (RBP, 4 March 1935). This psychological portrait of the Ojibwa as atomistic was subsequently criticized as “racist” for its attribution of negative personality traits (Averkieva 1962, James

\textsuperscript{3} Boas did not support the culture and personality studies promoted by Benedict and Landes, and noted the bias of the observer and the simple reductionism involved in such studies: “The personality of the observer and its influence upon his interpretations play an important role in the result of these studies.” Boas (1939:671, 681) argued for the importance of historical context.

\textsuperscript{4} McLean (1992:38) researched the unpublished papers of Reo Fortune and found that he considered Benedict to have abused his Dobu material but was reluctant to confront the issue during the “prevailing climate of the Mead hagiolatry”.
1970, Rogers 1974), but no attempts were made to question the veracity or validity of Landes’s data which led to her conclusion of atomism.

Although Landes claims in her published sources that she conducted field work for two summers, 1932 and 1933, and the fall and early winter of 1935, according to her papers, she spent approximately 12 weeks fieldwork on Manitou Rapids in the summer of 1932 and a few days in 1933 and 1935.\(^5\) Spending so little time on Manitou Rapids, one of Landes’s principal field work methods was a form of armchair anthropology, long distance letter writing. She paid Wilson $1.00 for 15 pages of stories which were translated by Wilson’s daughter and forwarded to Benedict (RBP, 11 June 1933). Predictably the letters were written on small pieces of paper, in large handwriting and contained repetitive themes (RLP, boxes 36–38).\(^6\) More importantly, Wilson, an experienced informant who had worked for Father John Cooper, Hallowell and Frances Densmore was instructed by Landes (and Benedict) what to write about: “She gets the real point of what we want. She will henceforth send a greater variety (as well as lustier!) of material both Cree and Ojibwa” (RBP, 15 August and 12 October 1933).\(^7\)

Although Landes noted that one of the main contributions of Wilson was her “gossip” and her “critical overtones”, Elders from the Manitou Rapids First Nation have dismissed Landes’s works as being “kitchen

---

\(^{5}\) Her last letter to Benedict was dated 5 August 1932 (RBP).

\(^{6}\) Unlike most ethnographic investigations which base analysis on traditional stories, Landes recorded contemporary “stories” which read more like “true confessions” describing incidents of desertion, incest and abuse. These were the major themes which Landes wanted to retrieve from Wilson’s stories: “woman deserted, mistreated, rewarded, shamed, combatté over etc. The theme is damned familiar to us now” (RBP, 20 March 1935). Subjects were identified by name and there is no evidence that Landes verified the stories or acquired consent from the persons she represented in text. Given the personal content of her descriptions, it is unlikely that she would have been given consent. It is also not known how the stories may have been interpreted by Landes through Wilson’s information, since field notes, if they exist, have not been recovered.

\(^{7}\) Several stories were clearly identified as Cree. In story 18 Wilson notes the freedom afforded to Cree woman who were not restrained by clan obligations, and in story 40 Wilson notes the importance of the Wahbeno in contrast to the absence of the Midewiwin (RLP, box 37). Stories 51 through 53 describe Winnipeg area Cree. Stories 59 and 61 describe a Cree woman on the White Dog Reserve, and stories 109, 114 and 118 also describe Cree women.
gossip and slander” and have stated that of the community members who have read Landes’s work: “They did not like the book” (personal communications to Leo Waisberg, 1994, and Joan Lovisek, 1995). This raises the important question of how representative Wilson was of the Ojibwa. Wilson identified herself to Landes as a Cree, and an Anglican in a community in which the majority of Ojibwa were adherents to a long established Midewiwin tradition (Lovisek 1993). According to another Elder, Maggie Wilson was confused about her identity as she was in the process of converting to Anglicanism when Landes arrived, and was rejecting her native background (personal communication to Tim Holzkamm, 1994). This cultural estrangement is critical to understanding Wilson’s “stories” which describe contemporary and sensitive family situations (see Landes 1971).

For many years Landes was troubled as to why Wilson insisted she was Cree. She eventually attempted to resolve this issue in 1984 by seeking historical information from Grand Council Treaty #3 and the National Archives of Canada concerning Wilson’s genealogy (RLP, box 2, 4 November 1984). One of her letters is plaintive and telling: “Why did she repeat that she was a Cree?” Unable to resolve the dilemma through historical records, Landes evidently misinterpreted information she had received from “Rogers and Preston” — referring to the eminent scholars Edward S. Rogers and Richard E. Preston — that there was no distinction between the Cree and the Ojibwa (RLP, box 2, 26 November 1984).8

Landes’s approach to Wilson’s stories and to anthropology is perhaps best expressed in her own words: “I prefer the great imaginative literature to anthropological interpretations of field studies where the writing is leaden... I find statistics and projective tests elusive... and often misleading, but amusing like astrology” (RLP, box 2, 4 September 1984). It is not surprising that Landes planned to develop Wilson dramatically

8 Correspondence in possession of authors and S. Cole, Landes to Waisberg, 19 November 1984. Landes also claimed in this letter that “the Manitou and Red Lake of Minnesota Ojibwa accepted all her versions... of Ojibwa life as authentic.” If Landes’s field notes are ever recovered, one might well assess the extent to which Landes employed verification procedures in interviews with other informants. Her field correspondence does not support these assertions and nor do Elders at Manitou Rapids.
as a fictional personality. In 1976, aided by a text entitled “How to Write A Story and Sell It”, she subjected Wilson’s stories to various literary themes including Joan of Arc. Her cryptic notes are revealing: “never allow oneself 2 tell a story exactly as it happened. It won’t come off” (RLP, box 36, n.d.).

Landes’s research interests were initially focussed on the Midewiwin and social structure. In this regard she held two preconceptions which influenced her research. Since her model for understanding the Midewiwin was limited to W. J. Hoffman’s late 19th-century description, not finding a similar version practised, she blamed the Ojibwa for its decline. Landes was also committed to confronting Hallowell with data which would prove cross-cousin marriage was a “symptom of breakdown” (RBP, 3, 5 August 1932, 25 July 1933, 15 August 1933). Landes provided no village plan or census of Manitou Rapids, no household data, and — with the exception of one or two midewiwin ceremonials (which were at the time illegal and subject to severe sanction) — no evidence of participant observation. She selectively ignored empirical evidence that was contrary to her main theme of societal atomism, such as evidence of communal wild rice cultivation or a rank system of political organization within the Midewiwin, in order to portray the Ojibwa as an atomistic society.  

FEMINIST CRITIQUE

Landes’s writings were, and continue to be, influential and have recently received attention in feminist scholarship (Albers 1989:150; Cole 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, Devens 1992; Green 1980; Leacock 1978:252, 1981:182). Landes’s portrayal of women, however, was unchallenged until the late 1970s by feminist scholars who found her work degraded women (Leacock 1978, 1981; Green 1980; Buffalohead 1983). Shoemaker (1995:3) avoids direct criticism but equivocally calls Landes’s work “controversial and multi layered”.

Landes responded to the criticism of Leacock’s interpretation by stating that they had missed her principal theme “societal atomism” (Landes 1981:180). This theme characterized the Ojibwa as atomistic

9 For example, story 25 (RLP, box 37) describes “the fine time we had” while other stories describe organized warfare and wild rice making.
individuals living in small mutually-hostile bands having no indigenous political organization, driven to disperse in a poor country. Ojibwa women were portrayed as culturally dispossessed and underprivileged. Besides misrepresenting her status as the first woman in the field, Landes referred to herself as a New Yorker compared to the poor Ojibwa and admitted that objectivity was impossible between persons “as disparate as they and I”. She also stated that she was perceived by the Ojibwa as “vicious, exploiting informants to sell a million-dollar book” and that she conducted her research in a “chronically shocked state” with “the chronic hysteria of Indian villagers” (Landes 1970:120, 121, 127, 1982:401).

According to Landes, the Ojibwa personality structure was typified by severe anxiety neuroses caused by a shortage of food which manifested as “melancholia, violence and obsessive cannibalism”, culturally represented by the Windigo, an “Ojibwa orgy of anxiety” (Landes 1938:24–26). She then linked the Windigo to an Ojibwa male ethos and a game scarce environment where the Ojibwa, extremely individualistic and protective of private property, existed in small, isolated and hostile households. Landes characterized the Ojibwa as hunters of big game and fur animals which were “scarce”, forcing complete isolation of family households during an unusually long winter season. Landes argued that such winter isolation resulted in individualistic male behaviour, a point Margaret Mead, who was initially responsible for recognizing her work, had difficulty with (Mead 1966 [1937]:459, 494). Landes described the behaviour of women as “spontaneous and confused” (Landes 1971 [1938]:2, 9, 52, 1966 [1937]:87).

Recently Cole (1995b:5) has introduced a feminist interpretation of Landes, by asserting that the apparent conflicts and inconsistencies in her work can be attributed to differing story telling techniques. According to this view, Landes’s work, marginalized and ignored, was one of the first to theorize race and gender. Landes’s collection of stories are considered a textual innovation of engendered discourse in which Wilson is portrayed as an alter ego of Landes (Cole 1995a:168, 177). The ethnographic validity of the displaced texts, which were reproduced outside of normal ethnographic context, is not considered by Cole. Most disconcerting is Cole’s distortion of ethnographic data collected by Landes, and Ojibwa Elder testimony which is inaccurately interpreted to
promote a feminist agenda (Cole 1995b:7, 1995c:283). To allege that Landes was a victim lacking in power (Cole 1995b:12) is misguided when considered within the colonial context of anthropology (see Said 1989, Fabian 1992). It is our view that Landes’s work was not marginalized or ignored (see Peers 1995, Smith 1995), but if there is a victim it is surely the Ojibwa, not Landes.

Landes’s ethnography represents an example of colonial anthropology which was ahistorical and racist, in which she constructed a stereotypical view of the atomistic Ojibwa culture as “male” which she proceeded to repudiate for its perceived oppression of women. Landes appropriated and edited her one informant’s native stories, which were not and are not validated by Ojibwa Elders, nor is there evidence they were “well known in the local context” as proposed by Cole (1995b: 16). By this approach, Landes denigrated all Ojibwa, and ignored every historical source then available.

Much of the early ethnography of the Boundary Waters Ojibwa was conducted by female anthropologists before, during and after Landes’s fieldwork. The work of Frances Densmore and Sister Inez Hilger are key examples of works which differ radically in their findings from Landes (Densmore 1928, 1929; Hilger 1951:ix) and contradict Landes’s perception of herself as the “first woman in the field” (Landes 1976:349).

ETHNOHISTORY OF MANITOU RAPIDS

Although Landes asserted that her field work methodology always included “museums, libraries, other printed matter...” (Landes 1973: 44), she consistently ignored information provided by Wilson that over 15 years earlier, the government of the province of Ontario had forced the relocation of seven Rainy River bands to Manitou Rapids. She also

10 In an earlier version of this paper presented at the Canadian Anthropological and Sociological Association Conference in Vancouver in 1994, the authors referred to the testimony of a female Manitou Rapids Elder who described Landes’s work as “kitchen gossip and slander”. The comment was delivered by Joan Lovisek, a female anthropologist, and the paper containing these comments was provided to Cole at the conference. Cole (1995c:283) now attributes the “gossip” to “a senior male anthropologist”. Cole has also (1995b:22, n.7) stated that the attribution of “gossip” at the CASCA conference was the “usual” analysis whenever “gender is the ethnographic topic under discussion”. There is no evidence that Cole interviewed any Rainy River Elders.
ignored all published reports, of which a massive collection existed in the Canada Sessional Papers.

By coercion and threats of removal by the governments of Ontario and Canada, the Ojibwa had been obliged to abandon their other villages and relocate to Manitou Rapids. By this process, 89% of the reserve lands along Rainy River was taken for Euro-Canadian settlement. This left an 11% land base at Manitou Rapids for seven bands (Waisberg and Holzkamm 1993:195, 210, n.106–7; National Archives of Canada [NAC], RG 10, v. 7842, file 30124-4 [Chief and Councillors of Little Fork Reserve to R. L. Borden, Prime Minister of Canada, 2 June 1913], v. 7544, file 29124 [1914]).

The population of the Rainy River Ojibwa declined by over 50% between 1875 and 1915, attributed to infectious diseases and dietary changes resulting from the destruction of resources such as sturgeon and rice (NAC, RG 10, v. 9355, 9360, 9365, 9370, 9375, 9380, 9385, 9390 [Treaty Annuity Paylists, 1875–1915]). Outbreaks of smallpox, syphilis, measles, whooping cough, tuberculosis, influenza and other infectious diseases played a role in the decline. Increased rates of disease occurred simultaneously with dietary changes resulting from the destruction of resources such as sturgeon and rice (Canada, Sessional Papers 1883:41, 125; 1884:xli, 66–67, 129; 1886:128; 1888:67–68, 165; 1891:36; 1895:190; 1909:xxiv, 83; 1910:87, 270; 1912:85; 1913:88).

This historical data adds a different interpretation to that proposed by Landes who viewed the Ojibwa preoccupation with sickness a curious phenomena and termed it “obsessive”, with everyone “ridden with anxiety about his[her] health... a rather hypochondriacal self-preoccupation” (Landes 1971 [1938]:178). According to T. Kue Young (1988:40, 142, n.12, 13) crude death rates at Fort Frances and Kenora agencies in some years reached 50/1000, “exceedingly high... compared to Canadian national rates”.

Some Ojibwa migrated to northern Minnesota communities as it became clear that Canada would not honour its treaty promises to build schools, develop farms and protect off-reserve resources. The remainder were crowded onto Manitou Rapids, surrounded by Euro-Canadian settlers (Waisberg and Holzkamm 1993).
This was a traumatic change for the Ojibwa who, before 1873, controlled key economic locations in the region, such as fishing stations, wild rice fields, garden islands, maple groves, which seemed to assure an economically viable future (Densmore 1928, 1929; Holzkamm 1986; Holzkamm, Lytwyn and Waisberg 1988; Waisberg and Holzkamm 1993). Reserve locations chosen after treaty included many traditional production areas, but also valuable mineral and timber lands. The Ojibwa maintained elaborate political and religious structures in the Grand Council and the Midewiwin (Lovisek 1993).

Specific work was typically associated with one sex, but both women and men were providers and producers. Gender domains frequently overlapped within the same activity; men and women had complementary roles in canoe building, gardening, wild rice harvesting, hunting and fishing. Management and direction of tasks devolved to experts in their field, women as well as men, and women had an important voice in the distribution or sale of the various harvests (Densmore 1928:119–123, Buffalohead 1983).

There is no doubt that colonial impacts were brutal and intense after 1873. In contrast to the economic prosperity envisioned in Treaty #3, the ensuing 60 years saw a host of adversities afflict the Ojibwa. The first casualty was agriculture. The federal government by an amendment to the 1881 Indian Act asserted control over Indian commercial agriculture, by prohibiting sales to non-Indian consumers without a license. The size of cultivated lands declined and commercial farming was replaced by small gardens. The Ojibwa responded by increased hunting, trapping and wage labour (Waisberg and Holzkamm 1993). This colonial condition was accepted by Landes as the basis for the aboriginal economic system.

The decline of Ojibwa agriculture was followed by devastation of a major fishery. By 1920, a decade before Landes’s arrival at Manitou Rapids, the sturgeon harvest was at its lowest point in a century (Holzkamm, Lytwyn and Waisberg 1988). Provincial wardens commenced to enforce game and fish laws against the Ojibwa, despite clear assurances given in Treaty #3 to allow resource rights off reserve. Trapping grounds were appropriated, and Indians driven off. Commercial fishing grounds were allocated to Euro-Canadians (Tough 1991; Canada, Dept. of Indian Affairs 1909; NAC, RG 10, v. 6771, file 420-303 [Chief
John McGinnis, Organizer, Union Council of the North West Angle Treaty #3 to King George VI, ca. December 1937, and numerous letters from Indian Agent Frank Edwards). By destroying the economic base of the Ojibwa, new lands and resources could be opened for Euro-Canadian settlers.

In July 1932, the year in which Landes commenced fieldwork, a Fort Frances warden threatened to arrest Manitou Rapids Ojibwa for harvesting and selling fish. By 1933 provincial regulations were tightened, and treaty rights further eroded. Traditional trapping, hunting and fishing were either occupied by settlers or appropriated by non-Indian trappers and commercial fisherman (NAC, RG 10, v. 7938, file 32-124 [Indian Agent R. Spencer/Secretary, 4 July 1932]; Landes 1969 [1937]:98).

By the time Ruth Landes appeared at Manitou Rapids Reserve, the economic situation was desperate. "Starving" was reported, not for lack of resources but lack of access. According to a description of an Indian Affairs official in 1929: "I have seen many Indians practically starving on the shore, whilst they watched whitemen fishing commercially in the bay adjacent to their reserves" (NAC, RG 10, v. 1912, file 2563-2). The Manitou Rapids Ojibwa responded by organizing political resistance. Protests and petitions were facilitated through the "League" of Treaty #3 Indians, or the Union Council of Treaty #3 (NAC, RG 10, v. 8865, file 1/18-11-13, part 1 [1939]). The Ojibwa did not dissolve into mutually hostile apolitical atomistic groups as Landes would have us believe.

CONCLUSION

For Landes the effects of colonialism were symptomatic of "cultural leprosy" which she blamed on the Ojibwa. Dedicated to her pursuit of aboriginal ethnology, she chose to invent the Ojibwa through personality

11 According to a petition from Long Sault political representatives: "We feel the conditions of our times are not known as they really are here, at Ottawa. We are not seeking anything new but only want our dues agreed between us our fathers and this Government at North West Angle in the year 1873... We also wish to Fish for ourselves all the year and no reserve seasons for us. Its our daily food. We dont want to be stopped and game inspectors cutting our lines and taking our nets it is in our Treaty Papers and you are not right to take our privilages away. We do not molest your interests only want to live... We may not kill moose without someone interfering and being stopped" (Canada, Dept. of Indian Affairs 1909).
studies, elaborated and rationalized into a theory of atomism. Landes's field work methodology, bias and conduct, cast a heavy and disturbing shadow over her ethnography. Recent attempts to portray Landes's Ojibwa work as marginalized and representative of women's narrative style are founded on Landes's questionable field work, which she transformed into psycho-cultural ethnographic "truth".

The attitude and methodology of colonial anthropologists is reflected in the method and data generated by Landes, which contributed to the development of atomism. Its association with psychological abnormalities was speculative, pejorative and defamatory. The application of poorly conceived speculations based on a spurious and amateur psychological foundation to Ojibwa society has not only distorted Ojibwa culture but diverted attention from those aspects of colonialism which did persecute Ojibwa practices. Although the legacy of Landes's aboriginal ethnology provides a venue for the exploration of the effects of colonial anthropology, its negative portrayal should not be perpetuated without critical assessment. The Ojibwa continue to struggle not only with the effects of colonialism but with the distortion of their society and culture perpetuated by anthropologists.

REFERENCES


———. 1884. *Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs*. Sessional Papers, 1884, no. 4.
CULTURAL LEPROSY

177

—. 1886. Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs. Sessional Papers, 1886, no. 4.
—. 1888. Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs. Sessional Papers, 1888, no. 15.
—. 1891. Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs. Sessional Papers, 1891, no. 18.
—. 1909. Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs. Sessional Papers, 1909, no. 27.
—. 1910. Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs. Sessional Papers, 1910, no. 27.
—. 1912. Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs. Sessional Papers, 1912, no. 27.
—. 1913. Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs. Sessional Papers, 1913, no. 27.


RBP. Ruth Benedict Papers. Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.


