

provide land. The chapter also outlines how specific claims in the late 20th century were processed and more recently, the 21st century process to specific claims.

Chapter five discusses Aboriginal Rights, the constitutional context and the historical documents informing much of that constitutional context. Chapter six talks about the role of the courts in Canada including how the courts view or interpret Aboriginal Rights as well as residual issues relating to fiduciary duties and breaches of trust. The final chapter outlines external and internal organizations. Perhaps this is one of my major critiques of this text, in that these organizations are more appropriately described as lobbying organizations in some instances. These organizations provide a unified voice to help bring about change, which from my perspective is a type of lobbying activity; however, I would not go so far to describe them as a social organization in the sociological sense. These organizations are relatively new creatures in Indigenous governance and do not represent the diversity of Indigenous communities in Canada. However, these organizations can play a limited but meaningful role in advocating on behalf of Indigenous groups or communities.

In the end, the book tops off with a gentle reminder about what reconciliation and resilience may look like in the twenty-first century. Frideres reminds the reader of the important work done by other inquiries or commissions leading up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into Indian residential schools. Frideres provides an overview of what decolonization means in this context together with the role of courts in reconciliation, moving forward. At the end, Frideres reminds the reader of the ultimate goal for Indigenous peoples, including building their own industries and institutions.

I often wonder where people like my great-grandfather would be or what kind of life my ancestors would have lived if they and their communities had been allowed opportunities to prosper. Now, and today, as Indigenous communities move forward developing their own industries and institutions, the space needs to be provided to recognize and honour the past out of which our communities are rising.

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M. Max Hamon, *The Audacity of his Enterprise: Louis Riel and the Métis Nation That Canada Never Was, 1840-1875*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019. 432 pages. ISBN 978077359370. \$39.95 paperback.

I was somewhat skeptical when I was first asked to review yet another biography on Louis Riel. But I must admit to being particularly impressed with Max Hamon's *Audacity of His Enterprise*, which actually pulls off the near impossible. To be sure, while Hamon is a historian, the emphasis is nonetheless on political history and is bound to interest students not only of Canadian and Métis history, but also of Canadian and Métis politics and political thought.

Coming in at 272 pages and 87 pages of endnotes, *Audacity of His Enterprise* is a thoroughly researched book that delves into archival material that has – astonishingly – not been previously consulted. The book is divided into thirteen chapters built around four themes: “family, education, political culture, and networking” (7). While the author begins by reconstructing the family ties Riel was born into, the first three chapters are essentially a biography of Louis Riel's father, Jean-Louis Riel. To my knowledge, this is the most elaborate attempt to reconstruct Jean-Louis Riel's political involvement in Red River. Hamon also brings out Métis concepts of *wahkohtowin* and *otipemisiwak* to better understand the worldview that would have underpinned Riel's agency (I would argue it's more a matter of his *subjectivity*). The following three chapters begin with an overview of the institutional context of the Collège de Montréal before looking at Riel's education and role in this institutional setting. Again, no other work on Riel has explored in such detail his education. Another three chapters are dedicated to Riel's role in the Resistance in 1869-70. The final four chapters focus on Riel's political activities following the end of the Provisional Government in 1870, and notably the issue of his own amnesty, until his exile in 1875.

Hamon's study ends in 1875 rather than 1885 in order to avoid reading the Uprising in Batoche backward into history, and thereby fall into the trap of historical determinism. Riel's education and the period from 1868 to 1875 show a Riel in full possession of himself. Hamon's work is also a contribution to an important question that Métis authors Chris Andersen, Adam Gaudry, and myself have been reflecting on – how did the Métis go from family kinship ties to people? Although the emergence of the New Nation can be traced back to 1916, for Hamon, Riel's role in essentially creating a State during the Resistance is a major piece in when and how this transition happened. To be sure, while not disagreeing that the Métis are a Resistance people (11), Hamon nevertheless insists that “Louis Riel did not simply resist Confederation, he shaped it” (4). In this regard, while it is well known and generally acknowledged that Riel is the founder of Manitoba, Hamon looks at Riel's contribution to Canada all the while carefully avoiding making him into Canada's Riel. While Hamon's biography may seem to fall into the “in-between people” trope, he nevertheless plants Riel firmly in a Métis world and attributes his ability to slide between different worlds to his education and not to his biology.

As mentioned, I was particularly impressed by Hamon's research into Riel's years in the Collège de Montréal. While primarily a historian, Hamon mobilizes social science theories and concepts. For example, Hamon has recourse to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *field* and *habitus* as well as various forms of capital (social and cultural), which are also later applied in the section on network analysis. This section in particular allows Hamon to debunk some of the theses on Riel that have been put forward. For example, far from being despondent, Riel's involvement in student associations increased after his father's death and he did in fact finish his *certificat*. While Riel did leave the Collège the following year, this was not unusual for those who did not wish to go on to the Grand Seminary. Hamon's findings debunk some of the previous notions about Riel's life, such as reading "Riel's spiritual awakening, or madness, back into the years he was at school as previous biographers Thomas Flanagan and Gilles Martel have done" (13). Contrary to Gehard Ens' contention that Riel was not a natural leader for the Métis in 1869, Riel was in fact a member of the *Milice Angélique*, a volunteer militia, and "likely practiced drilling and marching" (119). As the buffalo hunt formation was partially based on the militia in New France that was revived under the British, Riel would have been familiar with its command structure.

What is bound to raise some hackles among some readers is Hamon's claim that "Louis Riel cannot be understood without a careful study of the political, cultural, and social context in Montréal and in Québec more broadly" (16). Hamon's study makes it clear that, without his education in Montréal, Riel would not have accumulated the necessary social capital among the French-Canadian political and business elites that he was later able to mobilize to pressure the federal government into granting Lépine and himself an amnesty. Hamon uses Riel's own writings show the extent of his attachment to Québec in particular and French Canada generally. The petitions, massive demonstrations and fund-raising give the impression that by 1874 there was a veritable Rielmania in Québec. This section in particular may help readers outside of Québec understand why the name "Louis Riel" still resonates in Québec today to the point that the Bloc Québécois sought to have Riel's guilty verdict annulled.

All in all, *Audacity of His Enterprise* is a well-written, well-researched book that corrects some of the misperceptions of Riel. Moreover, its publication is timely as the 150th anniversary of the founding of Manitoba is a unique occasion to reflect on Riel's role and lifework.

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