

BC Minister for Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation reads book to make sense out of the last 150 years

Vancouver – George Abbott, the newly appointed Minister for Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation in BC, is racing through a copy *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* by John Sutton Lutz (UBC Press) to help him better understand the hostility between Aboriginal groups and the government over the last 150 years.

In a September 5th Globe and Mail article, Gary Mason writes ‘Mr. Abbott, a former college professor, has been cramming on his aboriginal history. He’s been greatly influenced by the book *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations*.’ He quotes Abbott as saying, ‘we’re attempting to bridge gaps that have been created by 150 years of history.’ Abbott is going to need a solid foundation of knowledge about these relationships if he stands any chance of reviving the proposed Recognition and Reconciliation Act, claimed to be dead by over 200 wary first nations’ representatives.

Why is it taking so long to resolve these relationships? In *Makuk*, John Lutz helps us to understand the root of the problem by tracing Aboriginal people’s involvement in the new economy, and their displacement from it, from the arrival of the first Europeans to the 1970s. Lutz proposes that for true communication to occur, we must recognize the fundamental misunderstanding that lay at the heart of native-settler interactions, where “what was given may not be what was received,” and where something as fundamental as language contributed immeasurably to the impoverishment of Aboriginal peoples.

In exposing how this misunderstanding has been compounded into over a century of discrimination, *Makúk* gives us the knowledge we need to start a new conversation that makes space for the differences in meaning, values, and culture that takes place in cross-cultural exchange.

John Sutton Lutz teaches in the Department of History at the University of Victoria. He is editor of *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact* and co-editor of *Situating Race and Racisms in Space, Time, and Theory*.

To find out more about the book please contact Kerry Kilmartin at kilmartin@ubcpres.ca or 604.822.8244. Interviews with the author and review copies of *Makuk* can be arranged.

To buy a copy of the book please visit www.ubcpres.ca.

MAKÚK

A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations • John Sutton Lutz



Makuk A History of Aboriginal-White Relations

John Sutton Lutz

January 2009
\$34.95 Paperback
ISBN: 9780774811408
448 Pages, 8" x 10"

Reviews Quotes

It's a pivotal work, because it explores the nature of business between whites and aboriginals. That is a different way of approaching our shared history, and it is revealing. It enables us to get a better understanding of why matters between aboriginals and whites went so badly off track...as we continue to deal with treaties, housing woes, addictions and unemployment on and off reserves, Makúk should be seen as essential reading we cannot fix what ails our shared society without knowing how we got here -- and what was, sadly, lost in translation.

- Dave Obee, *Times Colonist*, 15 March, 2009

Called one of the most important books on aboriginal history written in Canada. Lutz provides a fresh perspective on Canada's history of Aboriginal-newcomer relations by focusing on makuk, roughly translating as 'exchange' in a trading, cultural, linguistic, and religious sense, and various resultant misunderstandings.

- B.F.R. Edwards, University of Saskatchewan, *CHOICE*, December 2008



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