

state of “self-annihilation” (*fanā*) in God and the equally paramount state of “self-subsiding” (*baqā*) in Him (i.e., continuing one’s everyday life while spiritually abiding in divine presence). Rustom does acknowledge that ‘Ayn al-Qudāt’s approach was deeply influenced by the “inebriated” spirituality of al-Hallāj (d. 922), the controversial Sufi mystic who was executed for his ecstatic utterances that were interpreted by many as blasphemous (pp. 4–5). However, he does not fully explore how this approach compares with more “sober” traditions. Contrary to the impression frequently conveyed by ‘Ayn al-Qudāt (e.g., pp. 108, 153, 156, 183) and occasionally by Rustom himself (p. 52), the subject-object distinctions within ordinary human perception are not necessarily or inherently “illusory.” To disregard these distinctions risks diminishing not only the reality of the everyday world but also the fundamental differentiations such as *worshipper* and *worshipped*, *law* and *lawgiver*, and *created* and *uncreated*.

Albert Frolov

Regis St. Michael’s College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

William Acres, ed. *Documents of the Mohawk Institute: The Journals and Reports of Robert Ashton, 1872–1876, and the Diary of Alice Ashton, 1877*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Church Historical Society (CCHS), 2022. Pp. 375. Paper, CAD\$25.00. Published as volume LIX (2021–2022) of the *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, ISSN 0008-3208.

In 1872, the Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario, became the first “modern” Indian residential school (IRS) in Canada. This is one of the important suggestions of William Acres, a professor of history at Huron University College, in his 182-page introduction to this volume. The transformation was effected by the school’s newly appointed principal, Robert Ashton, who had just finished ten years as a schoolmaster at Middlesex Industrial School in Feltham, England, a reformatory of Dickensian character for London’s worst young offenders. Acres shows in detail how Ashton imported the Feltham system to Brantford. In his former job, he had sought to change the culture of rude delinquents; now his project was to erase the culture of First Nations kids.

Ashton wasn’t entirely the mastermind of this dehumanizing project of social re-engineering. He was implementing the vision of the five or so “wealthy, white, upper-class Victorian males” (p. 127), predominantly Unitarian-Universalists, who controlled the English charity known as the New England Company (NEC), which owned the Mohawk Institute. The NEC placed their full confidence in Ashton and only rarely placed checks on his authoritarian zeal.

Before Ashton, the Mohawk Institute had been an old-fashioned missionary school, managed casually, if not sloppily, by the Anglican clergy who lived among the Six Nations of the Grand River, among whom the Mohawk nation had embraced Anglican Christianity a century earlier. These clergy saw themselves as pastors to the people and allies of the people’s leaders; they typically opposed the colonial government in its repression, pauperization, and exploitation of the Six Nations; they fully recognized that the Haudenosaunee were not an “uncivilized” people requir-

ing amelioration; to a considerable degree, they respected Haudenosaunee languages and culture. Their schools seem to have been pastorally oriented, multicultural, non-ideological, and only thinly disciplined.

Ashton deprecated the missionaries' approach and instead created an industrial school with a large-scale agricultural enterprise on what Acres calls the "British imperialist militaristic/boarding-school vocational model" (p. 88). Ashton's reports seldom mention academics; he was more interested in harnessing his students' free labour to draw full profit from NEC lands. His "modern" approach denigrated both community traditions and "sectarian" Christianity, obsessed about economizing and financial accounting, prized efficiency, and involved lots of statistical charts to measure students' progress. He enforced a militaristic culture that included uniforms, rigid daily schedules, punishment and shaming of difficult children, and a strict English-only rule. He did not have the least curiosity about the culture of the Six Nations, if indeed he even recognized that they had one, and he had no real relationship with the Six Nations community. He commonly met the legitimate criticisms of the Haudenosaunee with attacks on their character and understanding. Within months, he had antagonized missionaries, students, families, and chiefs.

At least First Nations children weren't yet required to attend school. Enrolments were still small, and runaways could not be forced to return.

Ashton's ruthless "successes" impressed not only his NEC overseers but also the Canadian colonial administrators of "Indian" affairs. Although it is common today to trace the origins of the Canadian IRSs to the Davin Report to Parliament in 1879 and its references to the Indian boarding school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Ashton's project at the Mohawk Institute preceded both of them.

This volume includes two original documents. Ashton's journals and reports for his first four years focus predictably on operational matters such as the NEC's properties (land sales, boundaries, disputes with neighbours), farming problems, building issues, personnel, student admissions and discipline, budgets, and sanitation. He is always very sure of himself. The 1877 diary of his wife, whom Acres describes as the administrative mainstay of the school, takes a greater and more compassionate interest in student health. Especially because of the Ashtons' little recognized influence on the whole later IRS system, Acres has made a signal contribution in making these documents available.

Acres' extremely valuable introduction reflects a truly impressive mastery of the primary documentation—most of it unpublished, and much of it guarded from public view until 2012—as well as the secondary literature. As a kind of bonus, he investigates some of the extremely complex and frequently irregular land transactions in the territory of the 1784 Haldimand land grant to the Six Nations.

Publishing this book as a volume of the *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* has brought it to the public quickly while still giving it an academically respectable pedigree. However, the introduction would have profited, in tightness of organization, proofreading, and overall lucidity, from the kind of vigorous editorial scrutiny that university presses supply.

Alan L. Hayes

Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada