



# 'Being Alive Well': Health and the Politics of Cree Well-Being (Anthropological Horizons)

*Naomi Adelson*

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"Being Alive Well": Health and the Politics of Cree Well-Being is a critical medical anthropological analysis of health theory in the social sciences with specific reference to the James Bay Cree of northern Quebec. In it the author argues that definitions of health are not simply reflections of physiological soundness but convey broader cultural and political realities. The book begins with a treatise on the study of health in the social sciences and a call for a broader understanding of the cultural parameters of any definition of health.

Following a chapter that outlines the history of the Whapmagoostui (Great Whale River) region and the people, Adelson presents the underlying symbolic foundations of a Cree concept of health, or *miyupimaatisiun*. The core of this book is an ethnographic study of the Whapmagoostui Cree and their particular concept of "health" (*miyupimaatisiun* or "being alive well"). That concept is mediated by history, cultural practices, and the contemporary world of the Cree, including their fundamental concerns about their land and culture. In the contemporary context, health - or more specifically, "being alive well" - for the Cree of Great Whale is an intimate fusion of social, political, and personal well-being, thus linking individual bodies to a larger socio-political reality.

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