

A Reply to Woodcock

We had hoped that Woodcock's reply to our review article would attempt to defend or justify, or at least explain, some of the very many points in the book which we found partially or totally inaccurate. Instead, his "counterblast" largely consists of accusations — we and our article are said to be "dishonest" and "scurrilous"; we practise "deception"; linguistics is said to be "only a shade more exact than astrology"; the social sciences are attacked for "tribal jargon" and so on. All of this invective seems rather beside the point, which is that Woodcock offers no serious challenge to the validity of our criticisms. The intensity of his anger has led him to dwell on several small points in which he feels that we have distorted matters, and we should like to offer the following comments on these points:

- (1) Bill Holm was the source of all of our information on the critique he wrote; indeed he himself first brought to our attention that he had written such a critique. We apologize to Hurtig for the confusion of the two publishing houses in our article; our remarks apply, unchanged, to Woodcock's American publishers. Holm's critique does exist, and focuses on errors in Woodcock's treatment of coastal art and his identifications, and if Woodcock's publishers never sent him a copy they have done him a considerable disservice. Holm read the pre-publication version of our article and agreed wholeheartedly with it, as Woodcock can verify for himself.
- (2) Woodcock complains that we conveyed a misconception of the content of MacDonald's review by referring to it as critical. We leave it to the reader's judgment to decide whether or not the following may be fairly described as critical:

It is further apparent that two years of library research were still not sufficient to acquaint the author with the current state of research on various aspects of Northwest Coast studies, such as the archaeology, the mythology or the social and economic structures of coast Indian soci-

eties. The author is acquainted often with only one authority in each of these specialized fields, and provides to the reader a narrow and sometimes distorted view of thinking in each subject area.

Several examples follow (*Ottawa Citizen*, 18 February 1978). MacDonald's review is certainly milder than ours but the above passage and others in his review pretty well speak for themselves.

- (3) Woodcock complains that we seem to have expected him to know about unpublished material, especially in regard to Haida and Na-Dene. But Krauss' 1969 and 1973 articles, which were and are the state-of-the-art reports on Na-Dene, were easily available to Woodcock, and both cast very serious doubt on the Haida/ Na-Dene link. For the rest, Woodcock could have consulted Suttles and Elmen-dorf's 1962 article on "Linguistic Evidence for Salish Prehistory" from the proceedings of the 1962 AES meetings, which he clearly did not.
- (4) According to Woodcock, he never claimed that the Hole-in-the-Sky pole was carved in the 1890s, but rather dated the pole as carved no later than ninety years ago, i.e., it was made at the latest in 1887, so that we are supposed to have seriously misquoted him. We direct the reader to the following passage on page 25 of *Peoples of the Coast*: "Fine poles were still being carved by the isolated Gitksan on the Skeena in the 1920's, *though the best of them — like the famous 'Hole-in-the-Sky' pole which still stands at Kitwancool — were probably carved in the 1890's.*" (our italics). This, we expect, is sufficient to establish that we did not misquote Woodcock in the least.

In general, it is a pity that it was necessary to dignify *Peoples of the Coast* with so detailed a factual critique, but because of Woodcock's reputation in other fields, and the wide distribution of the book, such a critique seems necessary to document our case and counteract at least some of the misinformation the book contains.

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