

ance on discussions with the elderly hereditary chiefs and their relatives has elicited a particularly "traditional" perspective, one which Boelscher extrapolated to all forms of symbolic and political life. Viewing any culture from "the top down" might also contribute to the emphasis on Masset culture as a forum in which claims to hereditary rank and lineage hierarchy are played out. The voices of the Haida Masset's young people and the descendants of commoners, slaves, and minor-crest groups are missing in this work.

The frequent use of Haida words in much of the book's analysis will daunt the general reader, as might some of the anthropological vocabulary. However, *The Curtain Within* is well worth the extra work. The various tables of kin terms, calendars, and names are excellent and the conclusions intriguing. Readers, moreover, will never be able to read or listen to a Haida story again without questioning its meaning or the message it conveys.

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Trail to Heaven: Knowledge and Narrative in a Northern Native Community, by Robin Ridington. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988. Pp. xv, 301. \$29.95.

How are we best led to understand the normal experience of radically different peoples? We may listen to what they say; but without a deep grasp of the premises they use to frame their experiences, we will miss the intentions behind their words. We need an interpreter of premises, and the interpreter needs an extraordinary ability to translate not words but an idiom of experience characteristic of the cultural "other" into our own idiom. Even more, the translation must speak to us in terms that will engage our interest, suspend our disbelief, and open up to a widened universe of human discourse.

It is no wonder, then, that this effort at translation is a very difficult book to describe in the brief compass of a review. Like the traveller's accounts of past centuries, it is a romance, written for a broadly educated reader more than for professional colleagues, inviting us to vicariously participate in their observational experiences. Unlike these earlier accounts, it is also an experiment in modern reflexive ethnographic *reportage*, with emphasis on the subjective experience of the author. It could be labelled post-modern, though this halo may not be helpful and is in any event

untrue, since it has very much in common with some twentieth-century books that antedate the launching of post-modernism.

The book is in four parts. The first is the account of a cosmopolitan young man from Harvard University stumbling into an exotic small world of Indian hunters, becoming occasionally useful, escaping hazards (“Come here, Robinson, you handsome son of a bitch”), and discovering the mythical dimensions of daily life — life experienced as an allegory.

In the second part, our pilgrim speaks with authority, not as an intellectual but as an aspiring singer of tales. Narratives recorded from hunters are given verbatim, and between these texts are interpretive sections, some in fairly ordinary prose, but gradually becoming a kind of chant of much shorter, grammatically simple sentences with choppy imagist juxtapositions, a mosaic of probes toward authenticity, to move us readers into mythic thinking.

The third part is a single conversation with one hunter, where we have the opportunity to try out our mythic thinking as a way to understand the man’s words.

The fourth part is an event analysis; how embeddedness in traditional religious commitment and action led a spiritually deep man to understand, accept, and reflect the frustration and violence of a younger, shallower one. And then let the anthropologist, no longer a pilgrim but somewhere short of a singer, buy him breakfast and remain somewhat mystified.

If we have travelled well through this book, we experience as our reward the feel of the hunter’s life and community, past and present. This is a subjective, and fundamentalist, description of cultural style and value. It was born in reaction to the objective and relativist descriptions of most monographs, was reared in the consciousness-seeking spirit of university life in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and came to maturity in the self-valuing 1980s.

We come away with much more exposure to the author’s personal genre and that of his hunter friends than are found in the early travel accounts. The approach is more personal and these genres of author and subject blur, and are blurred, more than we would expect even in a biography or novel. This is a double-edged matter; a solution to the problem of depersonalized ethnography and a problem for the enlargement of objective knowledge about humankind. We need those monographs, too, and more varieties of depiction and comparison than we now have.

I find instruction in comparing this with the account of a Yale intellectual, Cornelius Osgood, who went north to study Dene hunters near Great Slave Lake in the late 1920s. His sensitivity to personal nuance was surely

comparable to Ridington's, but his circumstances left him with little data and no texts, save an indelible visual memory. Like Ridington, Osgood eventually decided to write about his personal journey, but it was capped by a solitary epic trip by dog team around a region that denied his intelligence and challenged his very presence.

Ridington's journey is also ultimately solitary, detached, intellectually distanced, but travels a mindscape that challenges his intelligence, and denies . . . that final letting go into myriad intimacies that are tacitly demanded, and yet casually taken for granted by the people we know, but do not stay with. I too have made the twenty-five-year journey of depth ethnography in another northern hunting culture, and I feel the profound, mute tension between the writer of books and monographs and the persons we commit our academic careers to representing to a larger world. Native authors like Tomson Highway and Billy Diamond add much more to the mosaic, but no person is without their points of challenge and denial in speaking of humanity, to humanity.

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Environmental Ethics, Volume II, edited by Raymond Bradley and Stephen Duguid. Simon Fraser University: Institute for the Humanities, 1989. Pp. 215.

These are two soft-cover volumes. The first, *Environmental Ethics: Philosophical and Policy Perspectives*, is edited by Philip P. Hanson of the Department of Philosophy, Simon Fraser University. In the Preface Mr. Hanson explains that a research workshop on "environmental ethics" was convened in Montreal in December 1983. Lead papers were prepared and distributed in advance, as were designated responses. While some of the