

The habitat of the Central Coast Salish now includes a new cultural dimension — the political economy of white society. Resources in that environment are still predictable, if highly inadequate, in some cases — access to and availability of government transfer payments, for example — and highly unpredictable in others, where employment and unemployment are concerned. Poverty, in the form of restricted and unstable access to adequate income, housing, and other essential resources is well documented for modern Northwest Coast reserves. Kin still help each other out on a daily basis and in times of emergency. When unexpected sources of wealth become available, recipients can put down a new dancer in the big house and potlatch, thereby enhancing their prestige by redistributing both cash and food resources, and ensuring that reciprocity will continue.

Aside from this lapse into cultural determinism, Suttles' work is a joy to read. He writes elegantly and cogently, whether applying his ethnographic skills to an impressive and fruitful analysis of the Sasquatch debate (pp. 73-99) or to more traditional topics.

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Shattered Images: Dialogues and Meditations on Tsimshian Narratives,
by John Cove. Ottawa: Carleton University Press. Pp. 318.

Surprisingly, nothing formal had to be done other than a mental clearing. It was as if Cannibal was there to be reflected without any need to do visualizations or to engage in other beings. I experienced a pure emotion similar to an all-encompassing rage. The closest western metaphor I can think of to describe it would be like Freud's depiction of Id, so basic and indiscriminate that, if unrepressed, could swamp social and cultural overlays.

Rage and self were inseparable. (p. 273)

Thus Cove begins a description of his meditations on the Tsimshian Cannibal initiate, as known from texts collected by Henry Tate (and published by Boas) and Marius Barbeau and William Beynon (preserved in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa). Earlier in this densely written book he describes trips to a Tsimshian shamanic reality experienced during meditations on shamanic texts and a reconstructed shaman's mirror (so-called; that shamans used these handled ground slate objects is conjectural; that they are mirrors at all seems unlikely insofar as they are poor reflecting surfaces, even when greased). Cove wet the object he used with water which, as it evaporated, produced a tunnel image through which

he entered a shamanic reality in which he encountered fearsome beings and acquired spirit-helpers (p. 173 ff.).

John Cove also spent fifteen years reading the thousand known Tsimshian texts, and eight years working part-time for the Gitksan-Wetsuwet'an Tribal Council. In his fourth visit to the Gitksan, whose "traditions were alive in a way I felt unable to capture," a native friend exposed him "as a games' player whose orientation was one in which Gitksan culture existed for my pleasure" (p. 4). A resulting midlife crisis, and the literature of "philosophical and theological anthropology, which I had not known existed," opened up the possibility of "learning about oneself through other cultures" (p. 5), and Cove embarked upon a new course using Tsimshian texts, and later the shaman's mirror, as tools for self-exploration. "Six years after my first encounter with Tsimshian myths, I had something to ask of them for both professional and personal reasons. I wanted to learn how the Tsimshian defined being human . . ." (p. 5).

Even though his "own field-work among the Gitksan indicates that much of their oral tradition has remained unchanged," Cove decided to work on narratives collected earlier in the century in order to reach back to a pre-contact and pre-reflexive tradition of thought in the early 1800s, the time of white settlement in the region.

My feeling was that there are Tsimshian who could provide the kinds of interpretations desired, or who could evaluate them in a critical way. Assuming they could be found, years would probably have to be spent with them to arrive at any comprehensive view of what it means to be human. Both the time and money needed for such an approach was beyond my resources, and I was limited to checking key points whenever possible. (pp. 47-48)

And so Cove returned to his armchair and his meditations to seek the humanity of the Tsimshian within himself.

There have been two ways to comment on mythological texts since the late Middle Ages. The first, essentially theological, is to mine them for insights into the sacred reality to which they point; the second, essentially anthropological, is to translate the thought of their authors into current categories of Western academic thought. Competence in the original language of the texts is the accepted scholarly methodology for such translations, although fewer and fewer anthropologists practise such humble work. Cove characterizes his own practice as phenomenology, which he calls "active reading," and meditation, and it is the latter "which permits replication of shamanic type experiences" (p. 192). "The major difference between transpersonalism and phenomenology is the former's emphasis on the states of consciousness necessary to experience non-ordinary realities,

and how these can be understood and used scientifically" (p. 165). Transpersonalism, as Cove demonstrates it, is a theological anthropology (formerly two opposed terms) in which the old psychic unity of mankind reappears as mystical sight.

The first words in *Shattered Images* are "This book presents a lie" (p. 1). Among its last are: "this entire book might be seen as a personal, if not cultural, set of projections" (p. 283). It is, I suggest, a cynical (although increasingly popular) anthropology that foregrounds the anthropologist instead of the Indians. Although Cove found it out late, anthropology has always been *about* discovering ourselves through the culturally Other. In return for the privilege we have (I think) a moral obligation to submerge our own concerns when telling their story. This story is, for Cove, a "blend of individual and academic concerns which are for me indistinguishable" (p. 6). Unfortunately, they are also indistinguishable for the reader.

By the way, being human for Cove's Tsimshian turns out to be very like what being human was for the late Ernest Becker.

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Russia's American Colony, ed. S. Frederick Starr. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1987. Pp. 420, illus.

British and American sovereignty along the northwest coast of North America emerged out of a complex web of economic and political relations among the British, Americans, Spanish, and Russians that by no means predetermined victory for the former two over the latter. Yet British Columbians have tended to see this contest from a British perspective. While Spain's presence in the region has of late become more sharply etched in our historical consciousness through the work of Christon Archer, the same cannot be said of Russia's bid for coastal ascendancy. *Russia's American Colony* is to be welcomed, then, for offering much that will expand our understanding of the context out of which British and American control of the northwest coast emerged.

The book consists mainly of papers offered at an international conference held in 1979 at Sitka, Alaska, where scholars from the Soviet Union, United States, and Canada met to discuss Russia's presence in North America from 1741 to 1867. Edited by S. Frederick Starr of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, which organized the conference, the volume offers fourteen essays sorted into six sections: the opening of the Pacific