

Culture



Regna Darnell and Michael K. Foster, *Native North American Interaction Patterns*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1988. Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper 112, Mercury Series, viii + 229 pp.

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[See table of contents](#)

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of the population of the community migrated. Since his death, his three sons have replaced him in this role. By the late 1960s the requirements of leadership began to include the ability to acquire government-funded projects. To accomplish this, the son's founded a non-profit corporation, Ogoki River Guides Ltd., which is described in the preface as a "locally-operated tourist operation."

However, the text is not entirely clear on the corporation's activities in the tourist business. During the study period its main function appears to have been to receive government grants, provide jobs and promote community development, rather than run a business. Yet it apparently had some ultimate business aims. It is not clear what would prevent the leaders from turning it into a business-oriented corporation, and whether this would alter their roles as community political leaders.

Little effort has been made to bring the story since 1975 up to date, or to indicate whether the corporation has become a functioning tourist business. In a five-page postscript we learn of further grants obtained for a school, a community hall and a church, but little further relating to the tourist operation. The lodge owned by the corporation, the construction of which provides one of the book's main chapters, was leased to a competitor who operated other lodges in the area.

The author might also have pointed out that this case has more relevance to some contemporary northern Native communities than its rather special circumstances (particularly considering the unique biographies of the three main leaders) might at first make it appear. This is because of similarities with a number of Native corporations that have emerged from recent land claims agreements, designed to manage economic benefits not merely as businesses, but for the welfare and development of the Native communities involved.

The study includes much good descriptive material on the contemporary reality of a northern Native mixed wage and subsistence hunting and trapping economy, as well as some clear discussions of theory. Both these qualities suggest the book's potential use with students. For example, there is a good demonstration that a family's production of bush food varies directly with its cash income, rather than inversely as might have been expected.

Still, the study leaves many unanswered questions. For example, why would the electoral system of either an Indian band or a provincial municipality have undermined the community's accomplishments? We only learn that local sentiment was to avoid unhelpful outside bureaucratic meddling.

Electoral politics are supposed to ensure that, if leaders are seen as using their positions for private accumulation rather than community interests, or if they favour one or another faction, they can be replaced. In this study Collins leaders were apparently not prey to the temptations of mixing politics with private interest, but no explanation is given as to why this is so. Hedigan indicates that the structural basis for the kind of factionalism endemic to some Native communities does exist in Collins; less attention is given to why it did not develop so as to influence the political process.

Regna DARNELL and Michael K. FOSTER,
Native North American Interaction Patterns.
Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1988. Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper 112, Mercury Series. viii + 229 pp.

By E. N. Anderson
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This book reports the Conference on Native North American Interaction Patterns held in 1982 in Edmonton. Like many conference volumes, it is a collection of disparate papers.

The label "interaction patterns" can cover almost any theoretical approach to almost any social data. There is, however, a central tendency in this book. Most papers represent new approaches based on Dell Hymes' "ethnography of communication." Taken together, they present some important extensions of the approach. Most significant is the relationship of paralinguistic to linguistic communication, of text to context, and of written to spoken words.

A central theme of many papers is the difference between most Native cultures and most Anglo-American subcultures in expressivity. The Native peoples are quieter, with more silences and fewer emotional vocalizations. This tendency has been observed since the beginning of Anglo settlement. This book presents working notes toward several possible types of explanation: structural, functional, ecological, culturological and more. Missing, except in Foster's paper, is adequate consideration of the great tradition of Native oratory, equally striking to early Anglo settlers. More attention could also be paid to the skills involved in making every word count and thus communicating a great deal with few words, in song as well as in ordinary discourse.)

Following a brief introduction by Regna Darnell come twelve papers.

Raymond DeMallie explores "Lakota Traditionalism," rising (but not resolving) important issues of culture and continuity. Resurgent traditionalism accompanies continuing acculturation to Anglo society, producing many new forms, which must be accepted (or not) insofar as they accord with traditional views and beliefs. However, these views themselves are hardly static. The stage is set for continual renegotiation. DeMallie examines three texts written over the past century, bringing out some of the changes.

Michael Foster, in "Iroquois Interaction in Historical Perspective," observes that Whites have seen Iroquois as silent and impassive, while Iroquois have seen Whites as overly voluble and expressive. Mutual noncomprehension results. There are finer grained differences: greetings are extremely important for the Iroquois, while leave-takings are not. Whites, dealing with Iroquois in making treaties, were bored by what seemed interminable stage setting rites and offended by what seemed overly abrupt good-bys. The Iroquois, of course, had the opposite experience.

Mary Black-Rogers, writing on "Ojibway Power Interactions: Creating Contexts for 'Respectful Talk'," produces one of the most exciting papers. The politics of talking respectfully about powerful beings are complex and difficult to manage. Safest is silence; hence much of the silence in Ojibway communication. No other paper in the book makes so clearly the point that Native American interactions tend to be premised on a view of society in which (1) society is not limited to humans and (2) all beings have power, often a tremendous amount of it, and must be treated accordingly.

Regna Darnell's "Implications of Cree Interactional Etiquette" continues the exploration of silence, power and respect.

Dennis Tedlock, in "Ethnography as Interaction," relates a long and fascinating account of his dealings with storytellers in Zuni, and how his presence and his tape recorder affected the stories. In all papers in this book, the footnotes are important, but this paper is especially prone to put its most important points in the footnotes (readers, be warned!). Here Tedlock cites phenomenological ideas and details his differences with Hymes' more text-based (less context-based) approach to literature.

Barbara Tedlock's companion piece, "Aesthetics as Interaction," describes the Zuni aesthetic and provides comparative notes. The study of the aes-

thetic philosophy and judgment of traditional peoples is rarely pursued, and this is a correspondingly important contribution.

There follow several shorter papers. Scott Rushforth studies "Autonomy and Community among the Bear Lake Athapaskans." Margaret Seguin briefly covers "Conversational Completion in Sm'alyax" (Coast Tsimshian). Susan Phillips, in "Similarities in North American Indian Groups' Nonverbal Behaviour and Their Relation to Early Child Development," argues strongly for a very early learning of paralinguistic communication and its localization in "primitive" parts of the brain. Here one must argue that (1) even poorly trained stage actors have little trouble in picking up a wide variety of gestures and imitating people of all backgrounds, and (2) the limbic system of a human is not a primitive survival, but a very different structural entity from those of simpler-brained animals. Obviously, more research is needed.

Richard Chalfen, in "Navaho Filmmaking Revisited," provides some new views on the famous (but all too little discussed) project of John Adair and others, in which Navaho people were taught to make films. Their different worldviews were thus made evident, not least in the speed and skill with which they learned to manage complicated equipment. Suzanne and Ron Scollon, in "Face in Interethnic Telecommunications at the University of Alaska: Computer Conferencing as Non-Focused Interaction," provide fascinating data. The Native peoples of Alaska love computer messages. They love to communicate by electronic mail. It suits perfectly their quiet style and disaffection for fixed-time or time-bound interaction.

Finally, a longer paper by Barbara Burnaby and Marguerite MacKenzie, "Reading and Writing in Rupert House," provides a thorough ethnography of the languages and scripts of a community where English, French and two Cree dialects are used for various purposes, and Cree is written with either syllabary or Roman letters. Each language and each script has its role, place and associated behaviors. This paper makes total hash of the simplistic distinction between "literacy" and "nonliteracy", and between "literate" and "nonliterate" societies. Code-shifting and script-shifting within one community can make more differences than "literacy" is sometimes thought to have made to the world.

These papers, focally the ones by Darnell, Foster, Black-Rogers and the Tedlocks, display a common attention to thorough recording of data. Communicative events are recorded in detail, with sensitivity to factors such as audience, timing, place,

purpose and even weather. The "ethnography of communication" school provides an extreme contrast to much current writing in symbolic, semiotic and humanistic anthropology, in which the goal seems to be to present the minimum of data with the maximum of free-association theorizing. Even more important is the careful attention paid in Darnell and Foster's collection to the dialectic between structure and practice. These papers are well ahead, conceptually, of the current French attacks in the name of "practice" on the old "structuralist" agenda. Since Boas, the American text-and-context tradition has been aware that practice must be structured and that structures are negotiated, and must be constantly renegotiated, in practice. Add to this the direct concern with experience as primary, most explicit in the Tedlocks' phenomenology, and we have a sophisticated body of theory, method and approach that is far too little recognized

Wayne SUTTLES. *Coast Salish Essays*, Vancouver: Talonbooks and Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1987. 334 pages, \$29.95 (cloth).

By James McDonald
Royal Ontario Museum

Coast Salish Essays represents a remarkable accomplishment, a retrospective look at the professional life of one of the premier ethnologists of the Northwest Coast. The sixteen essays presented in this volume, most of which were previously published, are a self-portrait of four decades of ethnographic observation that significantly revised our understanding of the area.

The collection is consolidated by the common theme of cultural change and adaptation, both pre-historic and historic. Suttles identifies three specific concerns that unify the essays (xii). The first is for rigorous ethnographic description that presents the insider's view as well as the total picture. The second is for the reconstruction of cultural history, but as something determined by more than cultural influences. Suttles left the Boasian tradition in favour of a cultural ecology that emphasized Salish adaptations to their physical as well as their cultural environment. The third concern is the heterogeneity of Coast Salish cultures and languages, which Suttles defends as being as vigorous and as worthy of admiration as any developments further north. His clear and exacting treatment of this complexity demonstrates his command of the Salish material and his grasp of the entire Northwest Coast. .pn2

The book has four sections. The first deals with models of historic social systems. In an essay on private knowledge, morality, and social class, Suttles suggests the Salish had distinct classes. He explores the relationship between their class system and Salish notions of morality. He postulates four operative factors forming the lower class: private ownership of resources, limitations in inheritance, slavery, and the social function of private knowledge and moral training.

The second essay examines the nature of the potlatch in the context of Northwest Coast social structure as a total socioeconomic system. By looking at the integration of affinal ties, subsistence and prestige, especially between communities, Suttles reveals the crucial adaptive role of the potlatch as a regulating mechanism redistributing wealth. This paper questions our understanding of the variation in habitat and culture on the Northwest Coast. He addresses this subject further in another chapter, to demonstrate that the coast is not uniformly rich and dependable, but characterized by a variety of types of resources, local diversity, seasonal variation in resource availability, and year to year fluctuation in resource abundance. He discusses the environmental adaptiveness of the most important features of the culture, and examines the correspondence between cultural and environmental differences along the coast.

Taking another approach in a chapter on coping with abundance, Suttles argues the richness of the coastal habitat is not sufficient explanation for the cultural development. He isolates other necessary conditions, including features in the technology and labour organization, social mechanisms for the redistribution of people and resources, and mechanisms in the value system for the motivation of the people. Extending these interpretations, he suggests the value placed on prestige distinguishes the Northwest Coast from other nonagrarian societies following a hunting ideology or nomadic lifestyle.

The second section focuses on knowledge, belief and art in the historic culture of the central Coast Salish. A conference paper on Halkomelem modes of classification examines Salish linguistic categories and discusses implications for thinking about and speaking about time and space. Next, Suttles goes on the cultural track of the Sasquatch, as he presents regional data on Salish beliefs concerning this creature. This chapter again looks at Salish categories for the world around them, to examine why they have a belief in the Sasquatch, and what that belief can tell us about the Salish. Another chapter discusses productivity and constraints in