

Culture



Fraser TAYLOR, *Standing Alone; A Contemporary Blackfoot Indian*, Halfmoon Bay, B. C.: Arbutus Bay Publications, 1989. 332 pp., illus., paper

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The fourth chapter, written by Swartz, describes the manner in which Willier gathers healing herbs from "Mother Earth" and the importance he places on taking medicine plants in a spirit of reverence. The chapter goes on to extend the concept to hunting practices and ends with an appeal for the world at large to learn from the wisdom of those such as Willier to preserve an ecological balance.

The fifth chapter, written by Ingram, recounts how Willier doctored and healed an East Indian child who was afflicted by psoriasis. The chapter then describes the sweat lodge ceremonies in which Ingram participated and their impact on him, and ends with a poignant description of living with the Willier family and recording notes which they then asked to see. As Ingram points out, anthropologists are not used to having the subjects of one's study seek an active and equal part in the encounter.

Chapter Six by Swartz describes Willier's treatment of Western patients with psoriasis. However, the experiment was not conducted in such a way that one can be sure the patients who improved did so because of the specifics of Willier's methods. In the following chapter, Young describes two further case histories. The first is a Native woman treated simultaneously by Willier and an acupuncturist. The second case, which provides the dramatic climax of the book, involves Young's wife who was hospitalized with a critical illness and treated by Willier without the knowledge of the Western medical authorities.

The final chapter describes the impact of this mutual encounter, and plans for Willier to open a healing center. His wife opposes the idea: nothing could focus attacks on Willier more strongly. Should anthropologists advocate setting one man up for such a non-Native position? One hopes there will be an equally open and revealing sequel to this book to inform us of the outcome.

The book contains a wealth of information and examples which echo knowledge portrayed with less interest in many sources. It is perhaps because it is such good reading that the book is already in its second printing. Although *Cry of the Eagle* is naive in its attempts to study how or why Cree medicine works, it is an important expression of the fact that cross-cultural encounters can inform us in significant ways.

Fraser TAYLOR, *Standing Alone; A Contemporary Blackfoot Indian*, Halfmoon Bay, B. C.: Arbutus Bay Publications, 1989. 332 pp., illus., paper.

by Hugh A. Dempsey,
Calgary.

Pete Standing Alone is a man who has successfully bridged two worlds. A traditionalist, he has embraced native religion and is knowledgeable about the traditions and customs of his people, the Bloods of southern Alberta. At the same time, he is very much a part of the modern world. He has served on the tribal council, stressed the importance of education, and travelled extensively. He came to national attention when he provided much of the narration for the National Film Board production *Circle of the Sun* (1961), and the later production *Standing Alone* (1984).

The author, Fraser Taylor, met Standing Alone at a United Nations conference in the mid-1970s and a short time later he initiated a long series of interviews which carried over into the 1980s. The results are presented in the third person, with Standing Alone's first-person comments appearing as quotations which are scattered throughout the book.

Broadly speaking, the book deals with three aspects of Standing Alone's life. The longest is an account of his own experiences; another is his observations on the contemporary lifeways of his people; and the third provides an historical overview.

Of these, Standing Alone's personal biography is certainly the strongest part of the book. After his birth in 1928, Pete's early years at home and his experiences in the residential school are related in a matter-of-fact fashion, without probing too deeply into the positive or negative aspects of school life. When Standing Alone graduated, he began travelling, first to the sugar beet fields and then into the United States where he did everything from picking apples to working in the oil fields. Like many Bloods, he has a keen interest in rodeo and when he returned he competed in a few local events near his reserve. The author then discusses Standing Alone's involvement with the National Film Board, his participation in the sacred Horn Society and other religious groups, and his duties and activities as a tribal councillor. Scattered throughout the biography are sidelights on everything from education to oil and gas leases, and irrigation.

It is too bad that the whole book could not have been in Standing Alone's own words. Taylor comments that "While Pete is not as a great story teller as some of his peers, his commentaries were worth recording." We can only assume that the rambling nature of the interviews made an autobiographical approach impractical. However, there are enough direct quotes so that one gets some feeling about Standing Alone and his manner of speech.

This is a good book in that it is broad and diversified yet is concentrated on only one tribe. The Bloods have remained one of the more traditional tribes in Canada, and one gets the feeling of their conservatism in the interviews. Standing Alone would not discuss the workings of the secret society, nor would he talk about sex. Yet he was quite open in dealing with many of the social problems of today, including alcohol and drug abuse.

All in all, this is a worthwhile book. As I have known Pete Standing Alone for three decades or more, I find that it presents an accurate image of a very fine man.

Françoise HERITIER-AUGE et Elisabeth COPET-ROUGIER (Eds), *Les complexités de l'alliance. Les systèmes semi-complexes*, Volume I, Paris, Editions des Archives Contemporaines, Collection «Ordres Sociaux», 1990, XXII + 263 pages, cartes, diagrammes, 280 FF.

par Jean-Claude Muller

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Paraissant dix ans après le volume, devenu déjà un classique incontournable, de Françoise Héritier, *L'exercice de la parenté*, le présent recueil permet de faire le point des études et des tendances actuelles de la recherche concernant les systèmes semi-complexes de mariage. Françoise Héritier nous gratifie d'une préface dans laquelle elle précise certains points de méthodologie au sujet de ces systèmes et répond à quelques remarques techniques sur des aspects de son approche que quelques critiques ont soulevés à la lecture de son livre. Plusieurs "questions fonda-

mentales" qui découlent en partie de celui-ci ne sont pas débattues dans la présente introduction, l'auteur préférant, nous dit-elle, attendre une autre occasion. Elle a probablement raison de prendre du recul car il faudra du temps pour assimiler l'extrême diversité des situations dans lesquelles fonctionnent ces systèmes semi-complexes. Ce livre vient à point car il nous donne l'occasion de confronter le modèle samo avec plusieurs autres cas concrets et il n'est pas facile de les réduire à l'unité pour en faire une "théorie" globale; tout au plus peut-on énoncer quelques principes généraux valables partout se combinant avec des sous-règles qui apparaissent ou disparaissent selon les systèmes particuliers. C'est donc une excellente idée que d'avoir édité ensemble toutes ces contributions qui ont fait l'objet de discussions dans un séminaire, d'une durée de plusieurs années, organisé au Collège de France par Françoise Héritier. Leur confrontation permet, d'un seul coup d'oeil, de voir que le paradigme samo n'est pas mécaniquement répliquable. Quelques critiques en avaient déduit - ils pouvaient légitimement en faire l'hypothèse à l'époque - que le cas samo était une belle analyse en soi et pour soi mais non généralisable. Cependant, et c'est le plus important, le présent recueil montre aussi de manière éclatante que si le modèle samo n'est pas répliquable, l'inspiration méthodologique qui avait sous-tendu l'analyse de cette population particulière s'avère essentielle pour l'analyse des systèmes semi-complexes; tout simplement, on ne peut plus aujourd'hui l'ignorer. Les quelques principes directeurs et les quelques règles simples qu'avait isolés Françoise Héritier dans son travail se révèlent à l'oeuvre, en des combinaisons différentes, dans les systèmes présentés ici. Son livre a été une source d'inspiration méthodologique avant tout, source qui s'est révélée extrêmement féconde. C'est donc dire la prégnance de son approche mais aussi la sagacité de ceux et celles qui, s'inspirant de ces préceptes et de ses découvertes, les ont appliqués et confrontés avec succès aux sociétés qu'ils étudiaient.

La première communication ressuscite un débat ancien, jamais encore vraiment tranché à vrai dire, concernant les systèmes prescriptifs. Est-ce la classe qui est première ou les relations généalogiques? Serge Bouez s'est trouvé, chez les Ho du Bihar et de l'Orissa, devant une ethnie qui fait charnière entre les systèmes dravidiens du sud et les systèmes du nord. Les Ho ont plusieurs façons apparemment contradictoires d'expliquer leurs préférences matrimoniales. L'auteur nous montre bien, dans une très belle analyse "cognitive" comment, selon la référence