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Marianne BOELSCHER, *The Curtain Within: Haida Social and Mythical Discourse*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988, 234 pp.

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Marianne BOELSCHER, *The Curtain Within: Haida Social and Mythical Discourse*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988, 234 pp.

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This book arises out of a doctoral dissertation presented at Simon Fraser University in 1985, and is based on fieldwork in the Queen Charlotte Islands between 1979 and 1983. Boelscher's first intent was to make a structuralist analysis of Haida symbolic classification and mythology, although the project shifted quite rapidly into another theoretical perspective (discourse analysis). This is the kind of shift many ethnographers have experienced, usually for an array of reasons. Boelscher's new intent was to focus on " the importance of individual competence over schemes of social and symbolic classifications" and to employ Bourdieu's Practice Theory. Ethnographic fieldwork was combined with previously collected ethnographic, archival and ethnohistorical data.

The introductory chapter reflects on a variety of theoretical issues (e.g. of rank, politics, exchange, and symbolic meaning in Northwest Coast societies) and perspectives (e.g. descent, exchange, legitimation, and structuralist theories). Boelscher emerges with a decision to follow Bourdieu's Practice Theory, and proposes to analyze with its aid certain phenomena of symbolic capital and symbolic domination in Haida cultural practice.

Chapter 2 sketches, very briefly, and in pretty conventional terms, "The People and the Setting" covering tribal and linguistic distributions and affiliations and a brief survey of key cultural elements.

Chapter 3 examines, in fairly rich detail, "the principles of moiety division and lineage segmentation, and the practical logic underlying their categorization". Moiety and lineage origin myths and their "management" and manipulation are explored. Chapter 4 focuses on concepts of rank within lineages, and explores how the verbal and nonverbal rhetoric of rank exemplifies symbolic domination, while Chapter 5 identifies "the negotiable character of kinship categories".

Chapter 6 explores the connection between symbolic and material property and pays particular attention to "the management of symbolic property, in particular totemic crests and names". Chapter 7 goes on to explain ambiguities in Haida mythical thought, with its attendant capacity for manipulation of these symbols. Particular attention is paid to symbols of transformation between Haida categories of animals-humans-supernatural beings, with special attention paid to Raven, the Trickster/Transformer.

Chapter 8, "Afterthoughts", consists of barely three pages attempting to indicate some of the connections between Haida ethnohistory and cultural practices and current sociopolitical problems and issues. The scant three pages tacked on to the end of the book to point out the work's connections to contemporary sociopolitical issues is quite inadequate. It may have been better simply to leave it out than to give it such short shrift. It does seem odd, however, that these issues get so little attention from one who was a student who had collaborated with Mary Lee Stearns, whose own Haida Culture in Custody (1981), appeared while Boelscher's own field work was in progress.

While I very much enjoyed reading the rich and complex data on Haida society and culture, and found Chapters 3 to 7 informative and engrossing, I have a number of problems with this book. First of all, given that this is a basically ethnographic work begun in 1979 and published in 1988, it seems almost inconceivable that there is virtually no allusion to the problematization of ethnographic practices which has preoccupied so many ethnographers of that decade. Even if one were to give little legitimacy to that broiling critique, it would seem to be impossible to write an ethnographic work now without addressing the issues, even if only to dismiss them.

For example, the issue of reflexivity, in my reading of it, has so compromised traditional ethnographic practice that it cannot be ignored. This work is completely unreflexive, and presents its data and theoretical discussions in an arms-length, third-person, authoritative, and "objective" manner that must be deeply problematic within our current ethnographic practice. The ethnographic reportage of this work is stiff — I would say almost lifeless, because while much of it is about meaning, ambiguity, practice, and discourse, the voice of the ethnographer

remains very dominant (with all its claims to authority) and the voices of the Haida are muted, homogenized into generalizations, or are even non-existent in much of the book. The irony is that Boelscher proposes to root her work in Bourdieu's Practice Theory, which is not just a locus from which to analyze the practices of the "ethnographic other", but also provides the means to assess the ethnographer's own *praxis*.

Another serious problem is the almost complete disconnection of the proposed theoretical frame, which is discussed intensively only in pages 8-10, and is mentioned explicitly only four more times in the remainder of the work. The proposal to examine Haida cultural discourse via Bourdieu's work is an exciting and enticing possibility, but it never materializes. This by no means renders the work without value, but the proposed theoretical connection of Bourdieu's Practice Theory to Haida practices and discourses is simply not made. We are left with the feeling that an obligatory theory chapter for a dissertation has been tacked on to the front of a work carried on by other, largely implicit, theoretical means.

The implicitness of the theoretical frame is the problem. Bourdieu's powerful concept of "symbolic domination", which could be a wonderful asset in analyzing Northwest Coast ranking and political rhetoric is explicitly mentioned only three times outside the theory chapter. It really is very difficult to see how Boelscher's work is substantially directed or informed by Bourdieu's work, despite her claim that it is.

Jerome H. BARKOW, *Darwin, Sex and Status: Biological Approaches to Mind and Culture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989, 435 pp., $45.00 (cloth).

by Pamela R. Willoughby
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In *Slaughterhouse Five*, Kurt Vonnegut (1968:8) writes that he once "was a student of Anthropology. At that time, they were teaching that there was absolutely no difference between anybody. They may be teaching that still". A tenet of anthropology is the basic unity of humans: an infinite diversity of cultures in a single biological subspecies. But along with anthropology came another paradigm which stressed both biological and cultural differences between groups and explained their presence using the latest "scientific" criteria. In the 19th century, differences in human body form were equated with intelligence and success, in the 20th, genetics took this role, and both provided justification for repressive social policies. Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981) and Daniel Kevles' I*n the Name of Eugenics* (1985) present good reviews of science in the service of social Darwinist ideology.

To some extent social Darwinism persists today under the rubric of sociobiology. Defined by E.O. Wilson, it attempts to explain animal social behaviour in terms of reproductive fitness and individual competition. It has had mixed results when applied to human behaviour and many social scientists feel it has no role to play here at all. A more common assumption is that, while biological factors were important in hominid evolution, once modern humans appeared, cultural adaptation becomes paramount. In this book Jerome Barkow tries to synthesize information from psychology, sociology, primatology, anthropology and biology to come up with a general Darwinian model for human behaviour, emphasizing the continuity between biological and social sciences. It follows a general sociobiological line, despite repeated protestations to the contrary by the author.

When confronted with this approach, I must declare a personal bias. I am a specialist in the archaeology of the earliest human societies operating within the framework of paleoanthropology. As practiced, this discipline is a long way from Barkow's, even though we are discussing similar issues. While they are (in)famous for popularizing origin models, some of which are analyzed here in Chapter 13, most paleoanthropologists would insist that hard facts are needed before any one viewpoint can be accepted unequivocally. The facts are composed of fossils and archaeological sites in time and space, and they give a clear picture of what happened, if not why. But we are dealing with a subject where the facts have never been adequately mixed with the theories. Remember that models of human origins, such as Darwin's T*he Descent of Man* (1871), preceded the recognition of any fossils, and many more recent ones still ignore them.

What then can we say about Barkow's approach? Few paleoanthropological facts are included here; indeed, the fossil record of human evolution is almost completely ignored. Instead, Barkow relies on information from modern groups, both human