

stellation of outback social relations she is describing. An assessment of outback social relations that recognizes the presence of a significant component of white settler culture critical of both racist ideology and government Aboriginal policy, and capable of setting aside racial ideology and interacting with Aborigines as equals and humans, would provide a more complete picture of Aboriginal-settler relations and allow Cowlshaw to situate herself more fully within the constellations of social relations she is describing. Indeed, Cowlshaw gives examples of these very processes, yet their theoretical importance is not fully integrated into her rather polemical model. This point aside, *Rednecks, Eggheads and Blackfellas* is a powerful ethnography that through its scope, methodological approach and rich ethnographic description not only succeeds in filling an important silence in Australian ethnographic tradition but will be of much interest to the comparative study of indigenous-settler relations in Canada and other settler societies.

Michael E. Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997, First Bison Books, 2000, xiv + 195 pages (paper).

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This is a welcome addition to the literature on the Heiltsuks (formerly referred to as the Bella Bella). As the author notes (p. 1), less is known (and published) about this group than about neighbouring Northwest Coast peoples despite the fact that they are located at the geographical and cultural center of the region.

While Harkin's statement that the Heiltsuks "... probably experienced the most rapid cultural transformation of any tribal group in the history of Western colonialism" (p. 2) could be contested, his discussion of Heiltsuk-Euro-Canadian interaction in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 is interesting. It is in these chapters that Harkin's "ethnohistoric dialogue" approach is employed. While noting that "oral traditions of neighbors on all sides point to the Heiltsuks as originators of many important ideas, beliefs, titles, and practices..." (p. 2), Harkin does not provide as much information on "dialogues" between *indigenous* groups. Questions concerning how the Heiltsuks influenced or were affected by neighbouring Northwest Coast peoples receive less attention than interactions with Euro-Canadians.

The book includes eight chapters and a conclusion. The material is not entirely new. Earlier versions of Chapters 4 and 7 appeared in *Ethnohistory* in 1988 and 1993, and Chapter 6 was published in *American Ethnologist* in 1994. Chapter 2, *Contemporary Heiltsuks Contexts*, pertains to the 1980s and early 90s and does not appear to have been updated for the 2000 paper edition.

Although Harkin states that his study focuses on "the half century after 1880" (p. x), the first five chapters concern primarily earlier and later periods as well as theoretical issues. The reader must weave back and forth through shifting time frames. Source materials included Heiltsuk narratives about their own history, archival, ethnographic and linguistic data, field notes and publications of Boas, Drucker, Hunt, Olson and others, as well as 12 months of fieldwork between 1985 and 1987 involving formal and informal interviews and participant observation. Harkin's fieldwork was based in the village of Waglisla (Bella Bella) on the Eastern Shore of Campbell Island (p. 23).

In Chapter 1, "The Nineteenth Century Heiltsuks," the culturally intermediate position of the Heiltsuks with respect to matrilineal groups to the north and cognatic groups to the south is noted. However, the intriguing question of when, why or how the Heiltsuk developed their particular blend of bilateral and matrilineal emphases is not addressed nor is it clear to what extent descent, inheritance and residence patterns varied *during* the 19th century. This may be a consequence of the sketchiness of available data on certain aspects of Heiltsuk culture to which Harkin refers (p. 3). The chapter title is somewhat misleading, as Harkin's reconstruction of "traditional Heiltsuk culture" applies principally to the first few decades of the 19th century (p. 3). In Chapter 6 he notes that drastic depopulation occurred in the mid-19th century. However, in his discussion of the Heiltsuk ranking system in Chapter 1, he refers to but does not elaborate on changes associated with depopulation and involvement in trade (p. 4), nor is there mention of the decline of slavery during the 19th century.

In Chapter 2, "Contemporary Heiltsuk Contexts," cultural continuity is addressed. With respect to the subsistence sphere, Harkin notes that local resources continue to contribute significantly to household food supplies and that sharing with other villagers including non-Heiltsuks is "a point of pride" and a traditional value. Continuities in subsistence practices serve also as "markers of ethnic identity" (p. 27). In the political arena as well there are continuities: "There is some correlation between elected office and high rank in the traditional name system... rivalry tends to follow tribal group divisions as well as family lines" (pp. 27-28). Holding of feasts and potlatches continues to be an important component of leadership (pp. 32-34). We do not learn however if matrilineality is still emphasized nor does Harkin elaborate on how and to what extent the "traditional name system" still operates although some information is provided (pp. 32-34). Elected and hereditary chiefs both are referred to on p. 33, but the nature of their respective roles (complementary and/or overlapping, conflicting...) is not explored. In the realm of belief and ceremony, both continuity and change are discussed. Seating arrangements at feasts for instance continue to reflect rank, "clan" and "tribal" affiliation to some extent (p. 32). Chiefly speech making at feasts inspires members of the community to contribute to those in need and

recalls "the traditional role of the chief in organizing ceremonial distribution" (pp. 31-32).

Chapter 3, "Narrative, Time, and the Lifeworld," explores the idea that history is both universal and "culturally constituted" (p. 37), and that past and future are part of the present but in culturally specific ways (p. 40). Harkin argues that in Northwest Coast mythology generally, and in Heiltsuk "historical consciousness" specifically, a sense of *possibilities acted upon* and *options lost* figures prominently (p. 40). He does not elaborate on this point however, nor how it influences Heiltsuk thought concerning and relations with Euro-Canadians or neighbouring indigenous peoples.

In Chapter 4, "Contact Narratives," Harkin reproduces and analyzes an Heiltsuk historical narrative, *The First Schooner*, in light of two types of power relationships, "incorporation" and "opposition," and a related distinction between "contingency" and "timeless order" which Harkin says "... constitutes a central contradiction in Northwest Coast narratives and culture" (p. 57). Only one narrative however is considered in this chapter. It would be instructive to see analysis of Heiltsuk narratives relating to later events.

Chapter 5, "Dialectic and Dialogue," concerns the "internal dialectic" of the "traditional Heiltsuk system." The sacred winter season was associated with "centralization, hierarchy, and markedness," while the "profane life of the resource camps" was "... relatively free from hierarchy and the centralization of power" (p. 67). These "traditional" ideas affected relations with outsiders including Euro-Canadians from whom power was sought (p. 70) despite the fact that communication between Heiltsuks and Euro-Canadians became increasingly one-way (p. 74).

Harkin reports in Chapter 6, "Bodies," that the Heiltsuk population was reduced by 80 percent or more in the mid-19th century as a consequence of smallpox outbreaks (p. 78). Deaths were too numerous to count let alone commemorate even though "the most important responsibility for a Heiltsuk person was, and continues to be, to provide proper commemoration for a kinsman who dies..." (p. 80). Drastically reduced numbers resulted also in consolidation of tribal groups, loss of esoteric cultural knowledge and increased threat to the Heiltsuk land base that Euro-Canadians had their eyes on. Harkin outlines how Heiltsuk ideas concerning disease causation and curing led them to conclude that Euro-Canadian witchcraft was responsible for the high death rate. The Heiltsuk attempted to acquire Euro-Canadian "supernatural power" and to draw selectively upon western medical techniques while retaining some "traditional" curing methods. Also discussed are Heiltsuk and Methodist missionary ideas concerning discipline, desirable work rhythms, death and burial practices, clothing, body painting and ornamentation, arranged marriage etc.

Chapter 7, "Souls," is concerned with the Heiltsuk/mis- sionary contest over "ideas of life, death, and the person" (p. 107). Mortuary practices in particular were contested. For the Heiltsuk "the mortuary process... ensures the deceased

a reasonably pleasant sojourn in the underworld and possible reincarnation as well" (p. 107). Harkin states that "In general, mortuary practices exhibit greater continuities with 19th-century practice than any other contemporary beliefs or ceremonies" (p. 31) and that "... a central function of the potlatch was, and continues to be, the commemoration of the dead" (p. 21). Yet it is not clear how the Heiltsuk handled validation of names and commemoration of their dead from the 1880s when the potlatch was banned until the 1970s when according to Harkin, potlatching was resumed (p. 29). Some clues only are provided (pp. 97, 114, 122, 146).

In Chapter 8, "Goods," Harkin traces changes with respect to items exchanged, uses to which trade goods were put, changing relationships with fur traders, gradual undermining of the subsistence economy, and loss of title and usufruct rights to land to Euro-Canadian "enterprises" operating within an international market system (p. 147). Not emphasized are evolving trade relationships between the Heiltsuk and neighbouring indigenous groups despite the fact that trade, warfare and intermarriage all along the coast predated contact with Europeans and continued thereafter. The bilateral Heiltsuk kin terminology (p. 4) in conjunction with emphasis on matrilineal descent (pp. 4, 9, 19) may indicate spread of matrilineality from the north, perhaps associated with trade and intermarriage. While Harkin alludes to "the clear model of matrilineal descent" (pp. 3-4) provided by groups to the north, he does not pursue this issue.

To conclude, Harkin accomplishes the two aims of his book (p. x). First, he demonstrates the usefulness of a "dialogic" approach to ethnohistory by placing different forms of interaction between the Heiltsuk and Methodist missionaries in their respective cultural contexts. Secondly, he documents some of the history and "historical culture" of this lesser-known Northwest Coast people. It is perhaps no surprise that a relatively short book covering many topics and a long time span provokes interesting questions requiring further attention. Harkin refers to the efforts of the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre (founded in 1975 by the band council) to preserve as well as recapture some lost cultural heritage (pp. 34-35), and mentions revival of Winter Dances with the help of Kwagul expertise (p. 34). Questions concerning changing relationships with neighbouring indigenous groups during the period covered invite further treatment.

John F. Peters, *Life among the Yanomami. The Story of Change among the Xilixana on the Mucajai River in Brazil*, Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1998, 292 pages.

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The best ethnographers are often sensible, yet sensitive people, with a well-developed appreciation of the absurd. These are particularly valuable traits for a field worker engaged in