

deconstructive in his analyses, with a wider range of nuanced responses. His study also addresses a broader range of television history, bringing readers all the way to 2010.

On the minus side, when the academic focus detours into dense prose, this can lead to some rough sledding, as when the author writes a ninety-word sentence on sitcom Indian-settler cooperative ventures (42). Nonetheless, the book belongs on university library bookshelves, and professors grounded in cultural studies will value owning it. It is certainly accessible enough for upper-level and graduate school seminars, but might not be a good match for lower-level introductions to mass media representation or cultural studies. This is a shame, because the book's many insights deserve dissemination. If at the lower level the book itself is a risky fit, its content still can and should be harnessed, perhaps by distilling its arguments into lively PowerPoint slides that are accompanied by video clips of the *Andy Griffith Show*, *Barney Miller*, and *King of the Hill*. Presented in this way, Tahmahkera will deliver much valuable food for thought to introductory classes.

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**Viewing the Ancestors: Perceptions of the Anaasázi, Mokwič, and Hisatsinom.** By Robert S. McPherson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 256 pages. \$34.95 cloth.

This book's title reveals the author's approach: Robert S. McPherson discusses the Ancestral Pueblo peoples of the American Southwest using the oral histories, traditions, and mythology of the Navajo, Ute and Paiute, and Hopi. These tribes call the ancient Puebloans the Anaasázi, Mokwič, and Hisatsinom, respectively. With his stated purpose "to give the Navajos' and other Native American tribes' oral traditions a new look" (14), McPherson's basic argument is that while archaeology can tell us with a fair degree of accuracy *what* occurred in the past, and *when*, one must use non-scientific data to understand and explain the *why*: that is, oral history, tradition, and mythology. This approach to understanding the past is not new: Jesse Walter Fewkes employed the technique in his "Tusayan Migration Traditions" (1900) and so did Edmund Nequatewa in his *Truth of a Hopi* (1936), both cited by McPherson. Others have followed the same path, including this reviewer in working with the Hopi story of Pata'kwabi, the "Red Land of the South" (1995).

Following a lengthy introduction titled "Defining the Limits: Oral History as Proof," McPherson makes his case, with considerable overlapping information, in seven chapters: (1) "Identifying the Anaasázi: Physical Proof, Evaluating Tradition"; (2) "Beginning Relations: Underworld and Emergence"; (3) "Abandoning the Sacred: Conflict and Dispersal"; (4) "The Great Gambler Icon of Destruction: Example for the Future"; (5) "Anaasázi Sites: Places of Power, Places of Contact;" (6) "Anaasázi Artifacts: Objects of Faith and Spirit"; and (7) "Traders and Archaeologists: From the Sacred to the Profane." Using Navajo oral history and tradition, reinforced by interviews with Navajo elders and additional materials from the Ute, Paiute, and Hopi,

McPherson repeatedly makes the point that Anaasázi cultures of Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, and elsewhere collapsed and sites were abandoned because the people failed to keep to the path of righteous behavior prescribed by their gods. They became greedy, quarrelsome, and consumed with hubris, committing adultery, gambling recklessly, and engaging in other misbehavior that led to their downfall. In the “End of the World” section of chapter 4, McPherson comments that, citing Navajo elders, what happened in the past is a guideline to the societal problems of today and a harbinger for the future. Like the Anaasázi, if we do not reform our ways, we too will destroy our civilization and disappear.

Except—contrary to McPherson—the Anaasázi didn’t “disappear.” They did abandon their sites at Chaco Canyon and elsewhere, but having overexploited their ecosystem to the point where it could no longer sustain their populations (an archaeological argument), they packed up and moved to the Gallisteo Basin and the Rio Grande valley, the Hopi mesas, the areas around present-day Acoma and Zuni, and other locales. The author suggests that just as we must learn lessons from Navajo, Ute, Paiute, and Hopi histories and traditions, we can and should learn lessons from the failed cultural ecological systems of the Ancestral Pueblos. One problem with the explanation McPherson offers is that the argument rests on religion, not science; the former requires faith, the latter empirical proof. The different traditions may recount similar stories and explanations for the past, but they are not subject to confirmation or denial using empirical evidence. They are accepted or rejected based on one’s faith.

As McPherson notes time and again, religion and science are very different things and operate in different realms of experience and understanding. One isn’t necessarily right and the other wrong; they are just different, and one must understand and accept this. For example, I don’t believe in witches, but when I’m working with peoples who do, and who behave consistently and in accordance with their belief in witches, I must accept that witches are real for them. It’s a matter of cultural respect. Similarly, it is clear that many Hopi, for instance, have a great respect and reverence for the ancient sites which surround and are interspersed among their present-day villages, and it behooves one not to behave in such a way as to violate the sanctity of such places. For the Hopi (or the Zuni, Acoma, and others), these sites are places of power, and the people behave in accordance with their beliefs about them. McPherson gives many such examples in *Viewing the Ancestors*.

The weakest parts of the book are those that focus on possible Navajo relationships with Ancestral Pueblo peoples, those whom McPherson prefers to call Anaasázi. The author believes the Navajo and ancient Chacoans probably resided together, even though he admits there is “scant” archaeological evidence for this. He bases his argument on the frequent mention of the Chacoan Anaasázi in Navajo oral histories, newer historical research, and on linguistic data. The scant evidence for early Navajo sites is explained by the Navajo hunting-gathering lifestyle which, he says, produced few remains and fewer permanent settlements. This is generally true, but negative data cannot prove his argument, and the traditions to which he refers for support aren’t datable. I have worked at Chaco Canyon, and while there is ample evidence for the Navajo presence starting in the eighteenth century, there isn’t for earlier Navajo

residence. The late David Brugge, in *A History of the Chaco Navajos* (1980), cited by McPherson, used Navajo tradition and historical references but found little evidence for the Navajo at Chaco before 1700.

There are relatively few factual errors, although a surprising one occurs early when McPherson refers to the three Hopi Mesas (13). Today, Hopi villages are mainly confined to the three mesas (although Upper and Lower Moenkopi are well to the west of Third Mesa). However, although McPherson discusses Awatovi at length (destroyed and abandoned in 1700–1701), it was not situated on one of the three mesas, but was the largest village on Antelope Mesa, east of and quite apart from the three mesas and their respective villages. Furthermore, Awatovi is a site to which some Hopi return for certain rites; it is still important to them, perhaps as a way to view and interact with their ancestors.

The book is well-written, with a wealth of information about Navajo, Ute, Paiute, and Hopi oral histories, traditions, and religious life. Those readers interested in these topics will be rewarded. Archaeologists looking to gain more insight into these subjects will likewise benefit from *Viewing the Ancestors*, although they are likely to have difficulty accepting McPherson's arguments that oral history and tradition have the explanatory power archaeologists seek. Nonetheless, as an archaeologist, and despite my reservations about and disagreements with some of McPherson's points, this book is a worthwhile read.

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