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Spirit Talkers: North American Indian Medicine Powers. By William S. Lyon.

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on these matrilineal and, in some cases, matrilineal peoples. Among other things, the Apache held celebrative female puberty ceremonies, but none for males, and by most accounts women held considerable authority within their kin groups.

One fundamental problem is that in stressing generic codes or cultures of honor and conscience, Herman places most of the emphasis on the ideologies and feelings of the various players involved at the expense of attention to material motivations. But at the most basic level, these were interest groups competing for material resources: land, water, minerals, and others. To a great extent their struggles, assertions of control, and attitudes toward one another grew as responses to, and rationales for, such motivations. One reason settlers "rose in one shrill chorus" in the late-nineteenth century at the prospect of troop withdrawal, for example, was not because Native Peoples constituted a threat, but because selling supplies to the army had become the mainstay of the Arizona economy (181).

At its core, this is a valuable contribution to our understanding of an important era of American history. Its main value, however, lies in the substance of much of the information that it offers, and to a somewhat lesser extent, unfortunately, in its analysis of that information.

*Richard J. Perry*

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**Spirit Talkers: North American Indian Medicine Powers.** By William S. Lyon. Kansas City, MO: Prayer Efficacy Publishing, 2012. 544 pages. \$24.95 paper.

Are indigenous medicine powers a substantive reality or a pleasant fiction that social scientists have both a right and professional obligation to debunk? In this book, William S. Lyon adopts the position that indigenous medicine powers simultaneously express spiritual and material realities and argues against theoretical perspectives that clearly demarcate personalistic from naturalistic forms of healing. *Spirit Talkers* presents contemporary understandings in quantum physics wedded to ethnographic and ethnohistoric examples of native medicine and ritual practices in order to advance the position that American Indians' historic and contemporary use of medicine powers are real events, with the capacity to bridge the worlds of science and art as well as worlds both seen and unseen.

While it is a stretch to accept the claim in publication promotional materials that *Spirit Talkers* is "the first-ever book designed to liberate our American Indian medicine people from the public stigma of simply being superstitious,"

it is nevertheless a valuable compendium of medicinal and ritual expressions from diverse indigenous ritual specialists ranging from the fifteenth century to the present and throughout the continent of North America. *Spirit Talkers* provides an introduction to the foundational concepts of North American medicinal powers among diverse indigenous populations and will be well received by general audiences and undergraduate students learning about diverse healing systems in Native American studies, sociocultural anthropology, medical anthropology, and perhaps comparative cultural and literary studies.

*Spirit Talkers* offers multiple historic and contemporary case studies that lend support for the general epistemic frameworks of integrative healing approaches. Aiming to “set the record straight,” Lyon dedicates significant portions of this manuscript to ethnohistoric and, to a smaller degree, ethnographic accounts, affirming the presence and efficacy of medicine powers. The more advanced student or scholar may enjoy the comparative lens used in this text that allows the reader to see parallel processes between and among indigenous ritual specialists from diverse indigenous communities throughout North America. There is, however, less to compel in terms of in-depth and contextualized analyses typically associated with more singularly focused ethnographic accounts.

Having received his PhD in anthropology in 1970, Lyon appears to be intimately acquainted with one of the then-driving forces of his discipline: to embrace a scientific approach and by proxy, to reject the subjective experiences of indigenous communities immersed in forms of knowledge not in direct correspondence to western models of reality. Sherry Ortner (*Comparative Studies in Society and History* 1984: 132) maintains that such sentiments represented one of the dominant theoretical trajectories of the time, that of cultural ecology, which further developed the theoretical foundations of materialist evolutionism earlier evidenced in the works of Leslie White, Julian Steward, and V. Gordon Childe. Other dominant threads of this era included structuralism and symbolic anthropology. Although throughout the 1960s acrimonious debates raged among symbolic anthropologists and cultural ecologists that alternately emphasized materialist or idealistic perspectives, Lyon claims that the discipline as a whole has a history of failing to wade deeply enough into the subjective waters of ritual experiences among diverse indigenous communities within North America and beyond.

Lyon indicates one consequence of an objectivist lens within anthropology is that by turns, writings about indigenous medicine powers have tended to be incomplete, to misrepresent, or to deprecate. Lyon's book seeks to go beyond these perceived theoretical constraints, maintaining that perhaps one of the greatest missteps in the anthropological study of religion and ritual has been the systemic emphasis of ritual form over function, which has left much

territory unexplained or unexamined. Furthermore, he argues that although many influential anthropologists have directly experienced the impact of medicine powers, there has been a tendency to omit this dimension of fieldwork from official accounts. Among early anthropologist participant-observers who may have silenced portions of their ritual experiences to fit classical views of objectivity, Lyon cites: Frank Hamilton Cushing (Zuni), James Mooney (Paiute, Sioux), J. Walter Fewkes (Hopi), Vilhjalmur Stefansson (Inuit), Alexander Stephen (Hopi), and Frank Speck (Seneca), among others. Edith Turner, who like her late husband Victor Turner is a symbolic anthropologist of ritual and religion, echoes this perspective, indicating at the 2007 national meeting of the American Anthropological Association that it has only been in the last couple of decades that the idea of writing about ritual from an intersubjective perspective has gained acceptance and momentum within academia.

Perhaps Lyon's greatest contribution lies in his effort to explore the margins of consciousness as expressed by ritual specialists systematically trained in such pursuits. Lyon opens this question up for examination in his effort to build a conceptual bridge between relativity theory and manners in which medicine powers reportedly manifest. In particular he seeks to identify key variables that underscore the medicine experience including the observer effect postulated by Erwin Schrödinger. In contrast to classical Newtonian physics, quantum mechanics presents the possibility of multiple possible realities that can be potentially triggered through the conscious intent of an observer. Accordingly, ritual specialists are reportedly trained to enter into a dimension of reality through focused ritual actions corresponding to specific states of consciousness that can potentially trigger outcomes in the material world.

Today, a growing body of literature evidences parallel efforts to advancing holistic and integrative approaches of healing that incorporate understandings from diverse fields, including anthropology, physics, philosophy, ecology, and shamanism. Some recent titles with similar themes include: Laurent Huguelit's *The Shamanic Path to Quantum Consciousness: The Eight Circuits of Creative Power*, a book that aims to integrate understandings from shamanism, quantum physics, and psychology; Larry Malerba's *Green Medicine: Challenging the Assumptions of Conventional Health Care*, another interdisciplinary read that pulls information from diverse fields including physics, shamanism, Jungian psychology, Eastern philosophies, and even biomedicine in order to propound a holistic healing perspective; Frédérique Apffel-Marglin's *Subversive Spiritualities: How Rituals Enact the World*, based upon her lifetime of work with Peruvian and Indian indigenous communities, puts forth the argument that the ideas, practices, and beliefs of indigenous peoples are valid and critical to our collective survival; and Alberto Villoldo's *Mending the Past and Healing the Future with Soul Retrieval*, an interdisciplinary book by a psychologist and

medical anthropologist who seeks to understand healing practices outside of the classical bounds of time and space.

In a similar fashion, Lyon has taken the courageous step in this manuscript to systematically uphold healing practices that fall outside of the purview of the biomedical models that shape dominant understandings of healing practices throughout much of world today. In doing so, he aligns himself with many anthropologists who are committed to the identification, maintenance, and revitalization of indigenous knowledge practices steeped in both ancient and contemporary cultural practices. Today many of the ritual practices emphasized in this text are disappearing; such losses often appear to correspond to the attenuation of indigenous languages. In order to keep this field of inquiry thriving, it is critical to explore how contemporary ritual specialists and the communities in which they live can be supported. Likewise, more in-depth systematic ethnographic studies rooted in particular societies and cultural contexts would help to increase collective understandings of such healing practices.

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**“That the People Might Live”: Loss and Renewal in Native American Elegy.** By Arnold Krupat. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012. 256 pages. \$45.00 hardback.

Elegy, derived from the Greek *elegeia*, translates as lament in a poetic mournful address of death and loss. Observing a lack of scholarship in Native American literary studies addressing this practice, the accomplished scholar Arnold Krupat has given us this significant critical inquiry to fill the void. With a highly distinguished record, Krupat is among the first to note the importance of ethnic inflection within Native American criticism, and his 1992 *Ethnocriticism* remains a primary guide to addressing ethnicity in literature. However, when addressing N. Scott Momaday’s notion of “memory in the blood” in his 1989 *Voices in the Margin*, Krupat suggested reference to an idea of “blood quanta” was “absurdly racist” (13–14, 177–187). To his credit, Krupat has largely pulled back from this essentialism and acknowledged a more figurative and poetic reading of such Native American expressions in oral traditions.

Indeed, as he opens *That the People Might Live*, Krupat references Bruce Robbins’s observation that “[western] genre categories impose an onerous and misleading set of expectations on national literatures that are not European. Non-European literatures are forced to compete in a marketplace whose values,