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## Reviews

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**A Study of Pueblo Architecture in Tusayan and Cibola.** By Victor Mindeleff. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989. 243 pages. \$19.95 Paper.

It is rare that a reviewer is asked to evaluate a book one hundred years after its publication, and almost as rare to find a technical book that is such an unequivocal pleasure to review as this extraordinary product of Victor and Cosmos Mindeleff. Fortunately, their classic work (and the word *classic* is not used lightly) on the origins and expressions of architecture in two Pueblo regions of the late nineteenth century has been reprinted by the Smithsonian Institution, with an excellent and enlightening new introduction by Peter Nabokov.

Victor and Cosmos Mindeleff, American children of Russian immigrants, began their nine seasons of fieldwork in the American Southwest at the unusual ages of twenty-one and nineteen, respectively. Their principal task, from 1881 to 1889—to measure Zuni Pueblo for purposes of the construction of a scale model—was accomplished as part of the second Southwestern expedition conducted by the Smithsonian Institution. Ironically, the United States Army, which had previously worked so hard to destroy Native American life and culture, not only provided the leadership for this expedition, in the person of Colonel James Stevenson, but, through the results of such earlier expeditions as those of Major John Wesley Powell, laid much informational groundwork for the efforts of the Mindeleffs.

Their work had its other forerunners, as well. Lewis H. Morgan had visited the region in 1878, and his book, published slightly later, *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines*, became (for brilliantly wrong reasons) one intellectual basis for Engels's concept of "communism"; Adolph Bandelier, another researcher

concerned with built form, went on from his fieldwork to write *The Delight Makers*, which, as one of the first books of "social science fiction" to appear in America, attempted to relate environment and culture by projecting the ethnographic present of Pueblo Indian societies backward in time, to characterize the pre-conquest Pueblo inhabitants of the American Southwest.

The Mindeleff book, which bore the name only of its senior contributor, was in some ways on a cusp of history; it was the last to refer to the Hopi (Moki) and Zuni areas as the "Provinces of Tusayan and Cibola," but one of the first to follow the completion of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railway through the territory of the western Pueblos. It was the first book, as well, to treat the pueblos as architecture, and the first truly *emic* comparative study of vernacular architecture. The *emic* aspect of the Hopi chapter is based largely upon material provided by the pueblo inhabitants themselves, as noted by Alexander Stephen. Stephen recorded the Hopi clan migration legends, resulting in the most complete account of the time, including the consequences for Hopi and Hano settlement of the 1680 revolt and the 1692 reconquest of the pueblos. Because no comparable information was available for Cibola, Mindeleff's Zuni account was necessarily less "complete."

The study was, in addition, a major forerunner of what in the mid-twentieth century were to become studies of the relationship of environment to behavior in general, and of built form to culture in particular. It reflected Major Powell's concern that accounts of houses and settlement should incorporate *more* than mere built form, however; at the end of a period when "amateur" anthropologists were still establishing the foundations for anthropology as a science, it laid the basis for *emic* treatments of vernacular architecture: Relying in considerable part upon Stephen's account of myths and traditional history, Mindeleff proceeded not just to provide a record of built form in Tusayan "Province," but to base his account in the creation myth and oral histories of the Hopi themselves (including the origin and establishment of Tewa-speaking Hano). Indeed, almost 40 percent of the Tusayan chapter is devoted to this traditional history. This unique aspect is supplemented by others. Mindeleff's nineteenth-century work is unusual, for example, in its recognition of the *dynamic* nature of vernacular built form, of how change occurs within the framework of a vital tradition, and of the nature of "improvisational architecture."

The book, profusely illustrated, as befits a treatise on architecture, contains 111 plates and 114 figures. The former consist of full-page photographs, drawings, and ground plans of both inhabited villages and a selected number of ruins, to scale; the latter are primarily drawings of architectural details, supplemented by several smaller plans and photographs. All but eighteen of the figures form part of chapter 4, entitled "Architecture of Tusayan and Cibola Compared by Constructional Details," which constitutes more than half the book, and from an architectural viewpoint contains some of the most interesting information, highlighted by a cultural and physical account of kiva-building in Tusayan. Other sections of this important chapter include an analysis of house interiors; of construction materials; and of such architectural details as ladders, steps, cooking pits, ovens, chimneys, doors, small openings (windows), roof openings, and out-buildings. Since the Santa Fe railway had just been completed, the Mindeleff study represents the last phase of western pueblo construction prior to large-scale introduction of factory-produced doors, windows, etc. Such Spanish innovations as hornos and adobe blocks had, of course, been incorporated much earlier. Finally, chapter 4 contains lists of families occupying Oraibi, together with their gentes; lists of names of Tusayan kivas and *mungkivas* (chief kivas); and architectural nomenclature in the Hopi language for Tusayan house and kiva constructional details.

*A Study of Pueblo Architecture* is, as Nabokov's introduction indicates, supremely interdisciplinary:

Mindeleff's study seemed to intuit the spectrum of interpretations to which Pueblo architecture would be subject. . . . It touched upon the mythic origins of built forms, the contribution of archaeology to architectural morphology, the role of women and ritual in house-making, the possible significance of language in interpreting architecture, the linkages between the past and the present in the evolution of Pueblo material culture, the ties between social organization and spatial arrangement (p. xxxvi).

Cosmos Mindeleff's monograph, included at the end of the book as appendix 1, was originally published as pages 635-53 of J. W. Powell's *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1897-98* (Part 2). Entitled "Localization of Tusayan Clans," it is concerned in

large part with the "dual residence" hypothesis: that the large pueblos (which, for the most part, had been located on mesa tops only since the Spanish conquest) were complemented by outlying "summer" farming settlements. The author further noted that

home villages can be distinguished from the summer places by the presence or absence of the kivas. . . . For as practically all the rites and dances take place after the harvest is gathered and before planting time in the spring—that is, at the season when the men have some leisure—they are performed in the home pueblos, and only such villages have kivas (p. 644).

What are the flaws in this excellent work? Although the table of contents is detailed, an index would be helpful—but that is a minor matter. As Nabokov notes in his introduction, however, Victor Mindeleff fell short of providing an "anthropology of architecture," seeing vernacular architecture, instead, as a "window into culture." Mindeleff's emic approach, while on the one hand a major virtue, was tied to his acceptance of the notion of a cultural continuum—that one level of culture may be decoded from another—and to the dynamic nature of vernacular architecture and settlement. This leaves the reader with both the possibility of "ethnographic fallacy" and a potential paradox: What, architecturally, represents change *within* cultural continuity and what indicates *actual*, fundamental, cultural change? Further, Mindeleff was writing during a period in which "environmental determinism" was enormously popular; he therefore can be excused for making the influence of physical environment upon both Pueblo architecture and culture seem more important than it probably was. Finally, there is the question of territoriality, of defense, and the role it may have played in Pueblo architecture. Certainly, the coming of marauding Navajo and Ute, and the oppressive Spanish, played a role in site choice among the builders of new villages. Yet it seems unlikely that, as Mindeleff claims, this could have been the determining cause of "the rectangular form of rooms" (since preconquest pueblo ruins also exhibit rectangular rooms).

But even these issues cannot detract from the value of this work as, in Nabokov's words, "an enduring landmark in the study of vernacular architecture." In fact, it is more: Mindeleff's contribution will endure as both a "window into culture" at the

time of significant transitions in Pueblo Indian society, and an important precursor of interdisciplinary research.

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**The Faithful Hunter: Abnaki Stories.** By Joseph Bruchac. Greenfield Center, NY: Greenfield Review Press, 1988. 61 pages. \$7.95 Paper.

**Navajo Coyote Tales.** By William Morgan. Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1988. 49 pages. \$7.95 Paper.

**Secrets from the Center of the World.** By Joy Harjo and Stephen Strom. Tucson: Sun Tracks and the University of Arizona Press, 1989. 75 pages. \$12.95 Paper.

In the middle of the last century, a chief named Owhi asked, "Is the earth before the day or the day before the earth? The Creator was before all things, and he looked one way and then the other and made these lands for us." Owhi revered the earth where his ancestors had lived since the beginning of time, and he shared his view of the land and its bounty with thousands of Indians. Over one hundred years have passed since Owhi made this statement, but his song of the earth is sung throughout the Americas by Indians and those who share the Native American oneness with the earth.

*Secrets from the Center of the World*, by Joy Harjo and Stephen Strom, is a testament to the earth's living spirit. The volume is a book of beauty, pleasing to the ear and eye. It is *Nashone*, as Navajos say, offering moving prose and colorful photographs that originated in the heart and speak to us of the center of our being.

The old stories reflected the belief that the earth and all its creation followed the Beauty Way. The plants and animals, buttes and rivers were a part of the grand creation, and the stories speak of the relationship of the earth-surface people with the animate and inanimate beings of the earth. Several stories in *Dinetah*, Navajo Country, involve Coyote, the trickster, changer, the positive and negative one. William Morgan collected and translated six coyote stories that have been preserved through the rich oral