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those flagrant in trading
themselves or their bodies,
those taking profit upon
their grandfathers, grandmothers (p. 143).

Because of the history of the Cherokee land cessions and those tribal leaders who, without the authority of the Cherokee Nation, sold out to the government at the people's expense, this is an especially poignant statement. As Arnett says in an earlier poem, "Blood Song," it is "a hard thing/to trust blood" (p. 113). The poet, fully aware of indigenous values that reflect a reluctance to waste any human potential, explains that to throw away something that truly needs disposal is not a waste:

It is done only with
those who waste.

They are not wasted,
they are thrown away (p. 143).

Language also should not be wasted. In our contemporary culture, which disregards the power of words to create reality, minimizes the connection between word and deed, and accepts, as a norm, constant chatter with little ensuing action, voices like Arnett's provide vital reminders of our responsibility to name the world truthfully. In another poem about academic jargon—a poem that hits close to home—he pleads, "[C]ome loud! come clear!/but at your very peril, SPEAK ENGLISH!" (p. 60).

Craig S. Womack

Objects of Myth and Memory: American Indian Art at the Brooklyn Museum. By Diana Fane et al. Brooklyn, NY: The Brooklyn Museum, 1991. 320 pages. \$60.00 cloth.

Strikingly beautiful, *Objects of Myth and Memory* is the newest Brooklyn Museum American Indian Art publication. A sumptuous visual treat has been produced by combining Justin Kerr's exquisite photography with Dana Levy's sensitivity to text. Not only remarkably beautiful, it is an insightful look at the customs and ethics of museum collecting at the turn-of-the-century. The well-written essays tell the tale of R. Stewart Culin in his role as

collector/curator for the Brooklyn Museum between 1903 and 1911. Despite its beauty and elegance, however, *Objects of Myth and Memory* raises a number of questions the authors never answer for us.

An itinerant collector, Culin traversed the North American continent seeking objects for the museum. The pueblos of the Southwest, the villages of northern California, the Northwest Coast, and northeastern Oklahoma were all visited by Culin as he raced with his competitors to assemble the "most complete" collection of ethnographic materials in a public or private museum.

His voluminous collection notes are the threads from which this tale is spun. In this time before radio and television, a museum was a showplace and curators were showmen. Like other institutions of the time, the Brooklyn Museum was building a collection. Culin was putting together exhibit halls to display the goods obtained on his expeditions, and he exemplified the turn-of-the-century curatorial role. His assiduous attention to the mood of the trustees funding his expeditions, coupled with his reliance on local white and indigenous agents, made his collecting efforts a model to which others aspired.

Herein lies the real value of this volume. It explicates turn-of-the-century attitudes about American Indian people and allows us to compare our own attitudes with those of eighty years ago. It also raises questions about the nature of Culin's endeavors. Was Culin a rescuer of cultural materials doomed to oblivion if left in the hands of the indigenous owners? Did he preserve materials for contemporary Indian people to rediscover, thereby reclaiming lost culture? Or was he a promoter of cultural depatriation, a predator scavenging from people forced away from economic independence into dependence on a cash economy?

The authors describe Culin's collecting behavior. Always eager to find a bargain, Culin wrote excitedly of hot tips from Grace Nicholson and other collectors. He also records his surprise at the "fair prices" charged by the Indians, as if to note his good fortune. He likewise is reported to have bought goods from people in tears, desperate for money, distraught at having to part with treasured objects. Did Culin's removal of cultural goods from indigenous people contribute to cultural loss? What was the cumulative effect of collectors from the American Museum of Natural History, the Field Museum, the Museum of the American Indian, Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, the United

States National Museum, and a host of others who moved goods from Indian people to museum displays and vaults?

The predominant attitude of the day was anti-Indian. It should be recalled that at this time in history a bounty was paid for killing Indians, at least in parts of California. The lives of individual Indians were not the concern of visitors to Culin's exhibition halls. Although recorded in his notes, the name of an object's maker was seldom included on exhibition labels. As Ira Jacknis wrote on page 32, "Culin was arranging Indian artifacts to stand as anonymous and timeless representations of a vanishing race." Culin's notion of discrete Native American cultures led him to write, "Zuni stands for the entire existing culture of the Southwest, and adequately represented, would do away with the necessity of exhibiting at least, much material from other less favored localities." Less favored by whom?

Culin may be guilty of what Jerry Mander describes in his new book, *In the Absence of the Sacred*. Mander says, "It is a way that we can skim the 'cream'—arts, culture, spiritual wisdom—off the Indian experience. We can collect it for our museums while discarding whatever we find that challenges the way we live our lives. We can make ourselves feel good about saving something Indian, as if it were meaningful support for living Indians." In this time of undiminished pressure on Indian people, the value of this catalog must not be measured solely in terms of the quality of the scholarly research or the beauty of the presentation. It must be measured also by the value of its service to Native American communities.

In the modern world there is room for both quality and service. It is the duty of museums that house major collections of Native American art to interpret collections not only from the culturally biased point of view of the collector but also from the view of those for whom these objects were created. Museums that can respond to this imperative will forge new, strong relations with Native American people and create a model of cultural repatriation that will set the pace in museology for the next century.

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