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of us in archaeology who are not suffering from postmodernist, postprocessual delirium.

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**Retelling/Rereading: The Fate of Storytelling in Modern Times.**

By Karl Kroeber. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992. 255 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

The message of *Retelling/Rereading* (to show that stories and narratives are initially told in order that they be told again and again) may prove to be limited in its target—unless its target is a tight band of critics of literature and other art forms. Although Kroeber has, with great precision, created excellent dialogue, his intent to bring the art form jargon to the surface, in order to find freedom in its expression, may prove to be elusive. Because of the exactness of the verbiage of this volume, the literary interest of the average college student and the curiosity of the academic may vanish, like a silver trout in deep blue waters that has just shaken the hook and, with a flash, disappears into the crystal depths. In addition, Kroeber's attempts to explain the original narratives—from the top down or from the bottom up, in linear motions—may leave some members of the native storytelling society (should they venture into these pages) wondering about Kroeber's intent.

Being neither an artist nor one who maneuvers in that genre, I can say that Kroeber has taught me very much concerning art and art language. This is not to imply that reading *Retelling/Rereading* would prepare one for a graduate program in art and art history. Rather, it means that one will emerge from this study (it rather noisily demands to be read many times, as the title suggests) much healthier in spirit and much better informed about the importance of art. This is because of the precise manner Kroeber employs in formulating his study and because of the value of his incisive language.

Kroeber has taken very wise council. His foundation is largely European, and, because of this, I will not dwell on the variety of important information he conveys regarding the works of European artists. The way in which he employs these artists to fulfill the purpose of his writing is a work of art in itself. Unleashing the imagination and the dreams of future generations of artists (as

Kroeber seems to want to do) requires a special formula: (1) Extract from the dusty cages of history; (2) place in the palm of the hand; (3) cast skyward to take flight over a spring rainbow. For this purpose, he has selected a stable of excellent expressionists to discuss—Ruskin, Hunt, Vermeer, Giotto, Bahktin, to name a few.

But Kroeber's interpretation of some of the narratives of the original native people should be discussed. Linear processes and time restrictions should not be employed as the means of interpreting such narration. Since original native narration is timeless, it cannot be "captured" simply because the intent of the lesson is to place events in straight lines and regiment them on paper. The meaning of original native narration cannot be trapped so easily. Much of its value, much of its purpose escapes like vapor when the "story" is told by other than one born into and trained for the totality of the experience. For example, Theodora Kroeber's *Ishi* attempts to capture the essence of his life and his struggle to maintain some semblance of natural freedom. This "story" has been told and retold—yet it remains a motionless shadow of Ishi's life. It never finds fulfillment, because those "capturing" this act of survival view life in linear sequences.

There is considerable merit in Kroeber's use of native narratives to portray the interconnectedness between original native lessons/legends and art in the postmodern/postcolonial world. Comparing the love of Ovid for his wife to the love of Coyote for his wife, as each vainly attempts to return his loved one from the dead, works to a great degree. (Ovid was the poet banished from Rome because of his interest in very young men and women and because he viewed love as physical desire. Coyote also approaches love and marriage as physical/sexual contact.) However, in nearly all native narration, the story of Coyote is designed to convey to the audience (in most cases, the audience has heard the story told and retold) the necessity of obeying the rules of society. Ovid laments, Coyote laments. Ovid violates the rules and pays the price, Coyote violates the rules and pays the price. Neither Ovid nor Coyote is successful in retrieving his love from the mystery of death, because each has weaknesses familiar to us all.

After his failed attempt to rescue his wife from Hades, Ovid turns his desire to children and becomes a study in linear thought patterns. Coyote also fails to retrieve his wife from the land of the dead. He knows the rules he must follow in order to succeed, yet he is overcome with sexual desire and, at the last moment, touches his wife, thereby disobeying the "law." Again he attempts to enter



the land of the dead and again he fails, finding himself alone upon the vast and silent prairie, wondering if his experiences are real. To the native, this narrative is a form of instruction in the necessity of adhering to the "law." Coyote and the negative consequences he manages to amass constitute a lesson in how not to be.

"Raw-Gums and White-Owl Woman" teaches a vivid lesson in how the native "sense" is employed in making decisions that are extremely personal yet extremely social. In this instance, an infant magically changes into a fiend every night, killing the chiefs and eating all but their bones. When he is discovered, his father calls a council to seek advice, but the council gives the father the responsibility for correcting the situation. Soon the village is deserted, and Raw-Gums and White-Owl Woman are the only remnants. White-Owl Woman transfers her wisdom to Raw-Gums and sacrifices herself (by his hand). Through this cleansing of Raw-Gums, the audience learns that out of extreme evil can come healing.

Kroeber wonders, "After all, if it is natural for the young season (spring) to do away with its elder (winter), is it also true that 'good' older people, leaders, chiefs, ought to be 'cannibalized' by younger elements in society?" He insists that the stories are fragments placed together, and he may be correct. However, what the viewer is not privileged to know is to whom these narratives are directed. Certainly, we all can agree that there are those steeped in knowledge and wisdom who move among us and narrate episodes of history and morality. These narratives, tailored to fit a particular native situation, often cannot be "captured" or contained by linear thought patterns.

Herein is the separation between the interpretation of the story and its intent. In the native tradition, the audience and the activities that the audience are engaged in are crucial elements to be considered. Who "gave" the narration of Raw-Gums, and what were the circumstances that ushered it to print? Was it offered by the native community to the ethnologist/anthropologist as a truth, or was it sold?

Raw-Gums seems to simply drop onto the page misinterpreted. In this state, it resembles my volume left on the table in the yard—not so delicately splattered by the robins and doves in their parting. "Blood-Clot Boy" and "Grasshopper in Love with Deer" ought to be carefully approached for the same literary reasons surrounding "Coyote and the Shadow People" and "Raw-Gums and White Owl Woman."

When a narrative is taken out of its original language, then out of the community, then is scattered in print into areas where it is foreign, it cannot be expected to maintain its original intent. The message becomes further eroded when the narrative is interpreted by someone other than those for whom it was designed.

Extracting a narrative from the complete text of all the narratives is like taking a single page from a volume. The page has no beginning and no end, yet the scholar may expect somehow to glean a complete impression. In this instance, then, it is far better to vanish like the silver trout than to seek fulfillment in an academic pursuit involving narrative.

*Retelling/Rereading* is a valuable link between the telling of the original narratives of the natives of the Western Hemisphere and the understanding of Europeans and Euro-Americans. And it does provide some necessary investigation into the time, the events, and the purpose of those narratives. Its deeper value may be that it vividly demonstrates how flexible these narratives are and how quickly they can be tailored to fit various situations—situations that must be viewed in totality. Narratives are not one-dimensional, although they are rendered such when “finalized” in print, which separates the linear from the holistic

I do look forward to studying more of the literary labors of Karl Kroeber. His interpretation of European-based expression is excellent, and I shall pursue that excellence in future literature. But, most of all, I anticipate a time when native scholars will return to their respective communities, glean what is good and true in their own narratives, and publish that material in its proper context of flexibility and meaning.

*Darryl Wilson*

**Sacred Land, Sacred View: Navajo Perceptions of the Four Corners Region.** By Robert S. McPherson. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, Charles Redd Monographs in Western History No. 19, 1992. 152 pages. \$8.95 paper.

This book grew out of Robert McPherson's experiences as a college English instructor at Montezuma Creek, Utah. He learned from his Navajo students and from many interviews with Navajo elders that the Navajo have a very different perception of their geography and environment than Anglos have of theirs. Following the