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Paul Kane's Great Nor-West. By Diane Eaton and Sheila Urbanek. Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 1995. 158 pages. \$44.95 cloth.

In *Paul Kane's Great Nor-West* Diane Eaton and Sheila Urbanek retell the story of artist Paul Kane's travels across the North American continent from his home in Toronto to Vancouver Island in 1846–48. Kane's transcontinental journey was originally documented in his publication of 1859 *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again*, which was most likely ghost-written by the artist's wife, Harriet Clench Kane.

Eaton's and Urbanek's effort adds little to the general fund of factual information on Kane and his work. The definitive scholarly work on Kane continues to be J. Russell Harper's *Paul Kane's Frontier* (1871), which contains reproductions of the field sketches Kane produced during his travels, the oil paintings he executed after his return, and the full text of *Wanderings of an Artist*. Eaton and Urbanek draw on Harper's work and on the scholarship of I.S. MacLaren, whose transcription and publication of Kane's original journal has added much toward explaining discrepancies and inaccuracies found in *Wanderings of an Artist*. MacLaren's work also has facilitated a much clearer understanding of the artist's motivations and attitudes, despite the author's retention of Kane's phonetic spelling and awkward punctuation, which make the original text so hard to read. Previous to MacLaren's mercifully annotated publication of Kane's travel journal in 1989, the artist's written record of his journey was available to scholars only through viewing the original (which is housed in the Stark Museum in Orange, Texas).

Outside of the scholarship of Harper and MacLaren, little attention has been given to Kane and his work. Eaton and Urbanek tell us in their preface that they intend to change this. Recognizing that the contemporary audience for Kane's art and writing has been quite limited, they aim to make the artist's work accessible to a wider audience. They hope to do so not by providing any startlingly new or sensational facts, but by presenting the artist's field sketches instead of his more commonly reproduced studio paintings and by retelling Kane's story in a more contemporary prose style. Thus they believe they can make his work available to those unlikely to turn to more scholarly sources of information.

Kane is often viewed as the Canadian equivalent of American painter George Catlin. Both artists made North America's native inhabitants the major focus of their work, both traveled the wilds of North America in pursuit of their subjects, and both produced highly popular travel accounts which, in conjunction with their visual counterparts, are commonly regarded as of substantial ethnographic value. However, Kane's work differs significantly from Catlin's in a number of important ways. The most significant difference—and the one that causes many to value Catlin's work over Kane's—lies in the fact that Catlin's travels and the resulting artworks predated those of Kane by at least a decade. Long before Kane even entertained the idea of painting North America's native inhabitants in order to "save" them from their presumably certain demise, Catlin had produced his portrait gallery and was exhibiting it throughout Europe. Catlin's enterprise served as an example for Kane, who is believed to have met Catlin and viewed his work in London. Both artists made Native Americans their subject; but, unlike Catlin, Kane did not seek out the pristine "primitive" subject untouched by the influence of Western European culture. In addition, Kane represented a number of tribal groups with whom Catlin had no contact.

Kane took as his frequent subject the Red River Métis settlement and other "hybrid" communities existing in and around fur trading posts where French trappers, current and former Hudson's Bay employees, and the continent's native inhabitants mixed quite freely. Eaton and Urbanek do a good job of describing the varied cultural influences that make the hybrid communities generated by the North American fur trade uniquely interesting to the contemporary reader/viewer, and they do well in showing how central the native and mixed-blood wives of Hudson's Bay employees were to their husbands' and the fur trading company's success. For those interested in such cultural mixing, Kane's work provides an invaluable source.

Kane's work is also an extremely valuable resource for those interested in native Northwest Coast cultures. His documentation of the life and material culture of the Northwest Coast tribes is detailed and extensive. At the time of his visit, these groups were not untouched by European influence, but the integrity of their lifeways had been retained to a greater degree than that of many groups farther east. Kane's highly detailed drawings of house interiors, his documentation of weaving and other craft techniques, and his explanations of the customs of the Chinook,

Klickitat, Cowlitz, Cowichan, Klallam, and other native groups of the Northwest Coast provide a valuable picture of the daily life and traditional practices of these people.

Although it may prove frustrating to anthropologists or historians, who are accustomed to footnotes, figure numbers, and other signifiers of "sound" scholarship, Eaton's and Urbanek's book does provide a new source on Kane that has the potential to generate a much wider audience for the artist's work. The authors' writing style is lively and compelling. They tell a good story, dispensing with the stilted, cultivated style characteristic of nineteenth-century travel writing, which can alienate the contemporary reader. This is the major advantage of their book over Harper's, which relies on the original text of *Wanderings of an Artist* to tell the story of Kane's travels. In addition, Eaton and Urbanek recognize and explain clearly how Kane employs European artistic conventions (citing his Italianate trees, his Ruysdael-like landscapes, and the classical river god poses of his subjects) to transform his field sketches into finished oil paintings that presumably transcend the status of mere ethnographic record and attain the level of fine art.

Eaton and Urbanek have chosen to concentrate on Kane's field sketches, which were used as sources for the finished paintings he produced much later in his Toronto studio. Because they are unfettered by those conventions of representation on which the finished works rely for their artistic value, the sketches supposedly provide more accurate representations of their subjects. This reasoning shows some naiveté on the authors' part, since the field sketches Kane produced on his trip drew on equally established conventions of representation. These less finished, and thus "minor," sketches rely on conventions essential to ethnographic recording that function to validate the authenticity of the objects represented. High realism, attention to minute detail, the use of materials such as pencil and watercolor (which are conducive to the quick production of images and can therefore catch fleeting impressions), and the lack of reworking of the image serve to produce the effect of direct, truthful representation, which is essential to the ethnographer's field sketch. Kane was well aware of, and adhered to, the dictates of a method and style that conveyed the impression of ethnographic accuracy. Eaton and Urbanek seem less aware of how the conventions of this mode of representation function in Kane's work as a visual rhetorical device.

But, keeping in mind the intended audience of this publication, this is a minor criticism. Perhaps the type of naiveté that allows a suspension of disbelief on the reader's part is conducive to a fuller enjoyment of Kane's work. Kane's words, translated by the authors into a contemporary idiom and viewed in conjunction with his visual images, conjure up such a fascinating and compelling picture that we want to dispense with any need to apply a more critical eye to the work.

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The Porcupine Hunter and Other Stories: The Original Tsimshian Texts of Henry Tate. Transcribed and annotated by Ralph Maud. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1993. 163 pages. \$12.95 paper.

Henry Tate served as Franz Boas's primary source of information about the Tsimshian myths that appear in Boas's monumental work *Tsimshian Mythology*. What was unique about Tate's manuscripts was that he provided Boas with interlinear translations of the myths that he collected, apparently writing them first in English and then translating them into Tsimshian. In *The Porcupine Hunter*, Ralph Maud used Tate's original manuscripts as the basis of his text because he felt "the acute dissatisfaction one experiences with Boas's published texts after one has seen Tate's actual manuscript pages. . . . [T]he aim is to present the interested reader with the best of Tate's texts as found in the original manuscripts" (p. viii). If Maud had adhered to this intent, the results would have proven more valuable to the reader. Unfortunately, several of Maud's editorial choices create even more interference than Boas's infamous literal translation.

One of Maud's editorial choices was to retain the majority of Tate's syntax and his misspellings of English words. Although the retention of the syntax was important in conveying a strong sense of how the myths are told, the misspelled words serve only to interrupt the flow of the text, causing the reader to pause and attempt to decipher them. Maud states that his intent was to slow the reader down so that he or she does not "skim along the surface of these texts" (p. ix); however, the result proves more of a distraction than an addition to one's understanding of the text.