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human in certain aspects), and the otter for intellectual genius. When the two confront each other, neither emerges victorious; indeed, that could not happen, as they also symbolize complementarity, the hunter and the hunted. In Ojibway mythic terms, the discord is explained by the fact that Nigigwinini, Otter Man (who is only allowed to take one otter a day for his needs), is married to a wolf, whom he mistreats, thus inciting her relatives to her defense. Even in conflict, nature and culture are linked so closely, and with such complexity, that they cannot be separated.

Désveaux has acquitted himself well in his explorations and explications of this intricate structure. He has convincingly demonstrated that there is an underlying logic to the bewildering array of Amerindian myths, here exemplified by the Ojibway of Big Trout Lake, which to western minds have for so long seemed haphazard and even pointless. Although Lévi-Strauss has provided a key to this totemic, binary way of thought, he has by no means provided all the answers, as Désveaux is well aware. In the meantime, rich new fields have been opened up for investigation.

This well-organized and thorough work makes an important contribution to a difficult area. Its presentation is to be commended, with its use of illustration (colored as well as black and white), tables, diagrams, and a glossary, all of which help in finding one's way through the maze of binary mythic thought.

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**Living The Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology.** Compiled by Gay American Indians. Will Roscoe, Coordinating Editor. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1988. 235 pages. \$16.95 Cloth.

*Living The Spirit* is a compendium of embattled, passionate, tough and bleeding testaments to the twin isolations and alienations of being an American Indian and homosexual in a Dominant Culture which has held (and continues to hold) both identities in derision and contempt and which ignores, condones and commits acts of violence against their members, individually and collectively, in spite of (perhaps because of) the recent liberation movements which have arisen in both camps. Although the anthology's

subtitle proclaims it to be a "A Gay American Indian Anthology," this is a preference in nomenclature I do not share in the privacy of my own usage, as I find the term "gay" with its historic implications of the trivial and the licentious to be entirely inadequate to define and encapsulate that nexus of spirit and behaviors variously embodied in such historic figures as Socrates, Marlowe, Alexander the Great, Lawrence of Arabia, James Dean and We'Wha, the great Zuni berdache (or lhamana).

While it is difficult to posit a factor which brings coherence to such a series of figures, one might hazard that it is not so much their counter-Dominant sexual identity that is of primary importance, but rather the nature and depth of their personal response to that identity in terms of inner work: searching, visioning, healing, integration and transformation.

The most modern of the above personas, James Dean, is a figure absolutely seminal to the rise of the beats, hippies, anti-war and counter-culture movements. His dark and brooding beauty, his aborted but brilliantly developed talent, his powerful and ambiguous sexuality, his self created myth became a center of "otherness" within the universal bleakness of the Eisenhower Cotillion.

Clearly it was not (merely) the nature of Dean's sexual orientation which gave rise to his role as Cultural Transformer, but his intuitive and conscious exploration of his sexuality as a sign of power, identity and contradiction which sought resolution and balance in and through the deepest and most expressive chasms of the psyche and spirit. And through his thirst for such extremities of intense experience, this thirst became, paradoxically, a thirst for death. Ultimately, the culture could provide him neither sanction nor sanctuary. It is as a mythic and holy expressor of "forbidden" psychic and spiritual energies and values that the intense fire of Dean's shadow continues to bring us light and warmth. As rebel, outcast of Eden and as spiritual maverick he found no peace among us. Had he been an American Indian of the climax epoch, legends of him as contrary, shaman and warrior would still be told with reverence and awe and great delight. And he, as berdache (Man who gives birth to men), perhaps much less apparently anomalous and obscure than the notion of "Christ our Mother" in the *Revelations* of Dame Julian of Norwich.

I have gone through this apparent forest of indirection to find some sense of the notion of berdache through which the central Native meaning might be approachable through a congruent figure in recent American history who carries a similar symbolic weight.

The earlier section of *Living The Spirit* is a landmark collection of scholarship on this hitherto obscure figure in Native culture. The shocked and moralistic response of even the most sophisticated 19th century diarists/ethnographers depict only the most superficial and "reprehensible" aspects of a societally sanctioned (and often sacred) role. Since the exoteric aspects of the berdache role were so little understood by such figures as Caitlin, the likelihood of any knowledge or insight into the esoteric aspects of this role is clearly a longshot. In spite of the prejudiced limitations of their sources, Will Roscoe and Maurice Kenny most especially have given us rich and lucid accounts of an exhaustively mined and prudently considered historic record. All future research will be much in their debt. Midnight Sun's "Sex/Gender Systems in Native North America" is masterful, a precise model that all future researchers can afford to ignore at their gravest peril. One of her findings clearly establishes that Native cross-gender or berdache roles were "based on social identity and *not* sexuality" (reviewer's emphasis). "Alone, homosexuality or lesbianism was not enough to provoke gender reclassification . . ." Thus, although the contemporary Indian homosexual *must* look to the berdache as historic progenitor, he or she must also look at other and more important factors than sexuality alone, among them "economic interest . . . ideology, including religion . . ." These constituents, according to Midnight Sun, are more determinant of the berdache role, and the significance of the berdache like the significance of James Dean, becomes a matter not of (mere) sexual orientation, but of (inevitably) economics, ideology and sacral function.

The term "berdache" most immediately derives from the French "bardache" where it carries the (pejorative) meaning of passive partner in a homosexual liason. The term ultimately derives from the Persian "berdaj." As it is distinctly not a Native term, the categories it assumes and carries have little to do with tribally specific terms such as "nadle" (Navajo), "winkte" (Lakota), "lhamana" (Zuni), "haxu'xan" (Arapaho) etc. Many of

these terms have their genesis among figures in the origin and creation myths of their respective tribes where as liminal figures of transformation they resolve tensions and differences among varying personas, subsistence systems and other institutions, and the radically varying psychic and spiritual energies which derive from them. Thus the berdache brings about unity, tribal solidarity and resolution/peace. They are, as Eliot would have it, emblems of "the still point of the turning world."

The bundle of mythic material gathered from a wide variety of sources in (presumably) Roscoe's "Ever Since The World Began: Berdache Myths and Tales" opens the flower of the reductionist and simplistic usage of the term "berdache" to reveal the hidden seeds of richness that lie within.

It is interesting to note that the Jesuit John J. McNeill in *The Church and The Homosexual*, attempting to discern and discover the intrinsic spiritual and social values and significance of the universal and persistent homosexual phenomenon with which to counter the received wisdom of the canonic and simplistic view of homosexuality as an "intrinsic evil," found himself silenced and subsequently driven from the Society of Jesus. Luckily for Roscoe, Kenny, Midnight Sun and Company, there is (as yet) no Native American Pope!

The second section of the anthology is devoted to contemporary Native American literature. Paula Gunn Allen's selections from her novel in progress, *Raven's Road*, are both lean and lyrical, funny and passionate, tender and restrained, earthy and contemplative in their moments of erotic exaltation. These latter passages are in no sense a self-conscious "celebration of lesbianism," but are masterful exercises in craft in which the varying sensibilities of the two central characters are revealed. There is no marketing of anger or self-righteousness, no attempt to create or anticipate or conform to "politically correct" attitudes, though an evocation of the McCarthy era zeitgeist is intrinsic to the setting and development of the novel.

Mary TallMountain's "Charleen Just Never Came Back" is a masterpiece of terror and understated comedy, a kind of American Indian "Rape of Europa." Ms. TallMountain's presence here (the only heterosexual writer in the anthology) testifies not only to Native openness and humor regarding sexuality, but to the absence of a rigid political dogmatism on the part of the compilers.

The design of the book is a triumph of subtle balances: spare, powerful, "unfinished," elegant. Profusely illustrated from historic sources and contemporary artists working in a variety of media, the overall effect is one of strength, love of tradition, lightness and joy. The psychological insight and lyric irony of Hul-leah Tsinhnajinnie's work is particularly notable. The tenderness, shy eroticism, warmth and gaiety (in the old sense of the term) of Patrick Mulvey's photographs are likewise welcoming and enthralling.

Among much fine work by younger and less well established writers, the single poem, "Horseshoes," by Joe Dale Tate Nevaquaya, demands special mention. Intense, compact, vulgar and sophisticated, creating an almost feral sense of relationship to the earth, Nevaquaya's politics, like Allen's, is a matter of implicitness:

"Evening radio static reports an icebox  
robbed of its glacial memory  
goes up in flatulent smoke."

No marketing of anger or self-righteousness here!

This is not to say that anger and rectitude are not legitimate responses to the manifest racisms/sexisms/genocides of the Dominant Culture. However, in literature these responses tend toward the rhetorical rather than toward living evocations of particular experience. There is an occasional tendency toward the rhetorical and didactic in the work of a few of the younger writers. But there is also a purity and clarity of voice, a power balanced by prudence, a deeply moved and moving discovery of identity, a thirst for wholeness and unity across the traditional lines and divisions of culture that, having had its origin in the berdache roles of the most ancient myths of the Americas, begin again to find expression and fulfillment here.

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**The Northern Navajo Frontier, 1860-1900: Expansion Through Adversity.** By Robert S. McPherson. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988. 133 pages. \$22.50 cloth.