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many of us will go to this well of wisdom, and we may find what Ponce de Leon was seeking when he searched for the Fountain of Youth."

Mails addressed the well-to-do Western art buying public in that last sentence. Anthropologists do not directly address that public in those terms, so the sentence further distinguishes Mails' book from anthropology. It is too hyperbolic for anthropology. Two questions arise, however. (1) Whether the "background" of the statement (on Pueblo history, philosophy, and world view) is an accurate rendition of the anthropology of the Pueblos (I think it is), and (2) Where contemporary Indian artists stand in their works and manifestos both in regard to the background and the prediction or prophecy (I think many would like to agree). In short, these books challenge those two groups, who might like to dissociate themselves from Western American art.

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Blackrobe: Isaac Joques. By Maurice Kenny. Saranac, New York: North Country Community College Press, 1982. 69 pp. \$14.95 Cloth. \$8.95 Paper.

Maurice Kenny has long been known not only as an exemplary poet, but a true mover and shaper of contemporary poetic literature. The founder and proprietor of Strawberry Press, he has overseen the release of initial chapbooks by some of the best emergent poets in the country and has had much to do with returning the broadside to its rightful place of importance among the forms of American letters. This role of running a small press has for some time been amplified and enhanced by service as co-publisher/co-editor of New York's influential poetry quarterly, *Contact/II*.

Kenny's own work has been published in a wide array of periodicals and anthologies, as well as in a series of personal collections such as *Only as Far as Brooklyn* (1979), *Kneading the Blood* (1981) and *The Smell of Slaughter* (1982). The body of poems thus revealed are individually honed to a degree of balance and linguistic precision which can only be termed remarkable in an era littered by general indulgence and lyric flabbiness. The man has

proven himself possessed of a craft ability and integrity so rare as to have nearly lost meaning in modern times.

Given that the subjects of Kenny's poetry have ranged from historical vignette to topical commentary and onward into notations of his private recollection, his thematics have often remained superficially obscure. Closer inspection, however, indicates the bulk of the work yields an inner unity centering in persistent articulations of his own sense of Indianness (he is Mohawk) juxtaposed against perceptions of the elemental mendacity and ruthlessness of encroaching Euroamerican culture. Overall, this makes for a tough and uncompromising sort of verse, as consciously political in its implications as any presently in print.

Still, the broad range of Kenny's consideration and the very subtlety of his handling have seemed at times to combine in blunting the thrust of his insight, leaving his essential intellectual coherence inaccessible to all but those who already shared at least a portion of his sensibilities before the reading. To summarize crudely, Kenny has lacked the aspect of overtness marking the poetry of, say, Simon J. Ortiz or Paula Gunn Allen; his work has consequently not evidenced the popular "hook" necessary to make it as effective a communicative (as opposed to aesthetic) vehicle as its author undoubtedly desired.

This was perhaps not the furthest thing from Kenny's mind when he set out to pen the material contained in his latest book, *Blackrobe: Isaac Jogues*. For the first time he has approached assembly of a collection of his poems, not as a grouping connected subliminally, but systematically, as a means of conveying various aspects of his critical perspective within the framework of a given, readily comprehensible storyline.

Poem by poem, *Blackrobe* unfolds the story of Jogues, one of the first Catholic missionaries to contact and penetrate the six nation Iroquois confederacy. Having first sketched the lifeways of the people this priest came to "save" (and finding them rather lacking in need for such assistance), Kenny proceeds to trace the man's preliminary overtures, his professions of good will and friendship, his avowals of commitment to the salvation of savage souls. Such rhetorical posturing is contrasted not only to the actual situation of the Mohawks among whom Jogue settled, but to the reality of the business in which he was engaged.

Historically, there is little doubt that Isaac Joques was primarily preoccupied not with the inculcation of Christian faith per se, but

with furthering the imperial ambitions of his master, Cardinal Richelieu. His concern was with the riches of the fur trade, the conversion of heathens was merely a tactic within a broader strategy designed to extend French hegemony over tribal resources. His mission was not the fostering of peace (the Iroquois, after all, had already developed their confederation around the notion of perpetual peace), but the secret stockpiling of arms and munitions in remote areas, the better to eventually equip his "children" as mercenary fodder, in order to tip the New World balance of power away from France's British competitors. Toward these ends, he deliberately sought to undercut the vitality of traditional Iroquois culture, spreading confusion and discord as a means to render the Indians malleable. That Jogues was the polar opposite of all that he claimed is patently apparent to anyone who cares to view his performance honestly.

What is less immediately obvious, but which Kenny brings out with compelling firmness, is that the priest may not have been at all cynical in doing what he did. Rather, the probability is that he was entirely sincere, believing fully in even the worst and most transparent of his hypocrisies. While this would hardly alter the impacts and outcomes of his conduct, it went far in constraining the nature of the Mohawk response to it. As Jogues was so thoroughly, even pathologically blinded by adherence to a garbled and self-serving faith, he remained quite impervious to such normal forms of Indian persuasion as parable and counter-example.

Hence, he had to be killed, surgically excised from Mohawk society, not as an act of vengeance nor violence but as a curative measure, an unpleasant necessity to *forestall* the spreading violence of totalistic warfare that Jogues insisted upon precipitating. That the remedy ultimately failed and the "French and Indian War" nonetheless occurred should be construed neither as an indicator of Iroquoian error or a negation of Kenny's thesis. There were, after all, many Jogues: the priest becomes emblematic of the whole of Europe's invasion of America, the war a proof both of his intent and the accuracy of the Mohawk apprehension of his meaning.

The Mohawks of the 1640s, then, are projected allegorically as being representative of all Indians in their interactions with Europeans, at all places and times. This symbolic transcendence of space and time allows Kenny to remain true to the particulars of

his chosen story while simultaneously providing not only a keener understanding of those events, but also a keener understanding of the fundamental sweep of Indian/white relations *en toto*. Kenny's vision of intercultural dichotomization thereby extends both an approach to historiography and a basis for topical analysis.

As a book, *Blackrobe* succeeds admirably on two distinct planes. First, in remaining true to itself and offering an explanatory power well beyond its literal capacity, it links itself to the Native American storytelling tradition from which Kenny (and, arguable, all Indian poets) draws sustenance, and maintains Kenny's unquestionably high standard of artistic completion as a poet. Second, and perhaps even more importantly, the book provides a virtual roadmap by which readers may begin to follow the trails of *eros/thanatos* conflict threading through the entirety of Kenny's earlier output; he has finally placed the tools of arriving at this deeper logic into general circulation.

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Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians. By Hilary Stewart, with foreword by Bill Reid. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984. 192 pp. \$24.95 Cloth.

Cedar: Tree of Life to the Northwest Coast Indians describes the diverse and complex ways that the peoples of the Northwest Coast used products from the red and yellow cedar trees in the lush Pacific rainforests. Hilary Stewart, an author with strong interests in botany and ethnology, began exploring plant uses of the Northwest Coast peoples because she was intrigued "that people lived so well and for so long using almost exclusively the materials of their environment. . . ." Her deep admiration for the resourcefulness of these peoples makes *Cedar* an animated study as well as an informative one.

In *Cedar*, Stewart presents a detailed description of the objects the Northwest Coast Indians made from cedar products, and the technologies they developed to make them. Her text documents the physical appearance of the objects, how they were made, and the role they played in the lives of the men and women who used