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Cree Legends and Narratives from the West Coast of James Bay. By C. Douglas Ellis.

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national milestones by many people. Life on the reservation just marched to a different beat.

A final contribution comes from an insider's view of what it meant to be a Paiute during very trying circumstances. It was a difficult life and one that, some would argue, was wasted. To a public that strives for "political correctness" and "cultural sensitivity," this work is unsettling. For romantics who fantasize about Native American culture, it is a bitter pill to swallow. And for those who want to escape the demands of today's life for a more perfect world in the past, this is not the book to read. It is, in a phrase, stark reality.

*Corbett Mack* is an honest accounting of a man's life. Although it may not be the type that one would seek, it is still a part of the human experience and should be recognized for its value. On the other hand, Mack's struggle, to Hittman, represented that of an "Everyman" in the Paiute tribe (p. 8). Based on my experience in working with a Southern Ute/Paiute faction, I can only partly agree. True, there may be many who live a life similar to Mack's, but there are also many who rise above the fray and lead a happier life. This is not to suggest that writers should fabricate life history, but only that there are better examples upon which to place the title of Everyman. There has to be a more even ground—somewhere between Sarah Winnemucca and Corbett Mack—that spawns hope for the future from pride in the past.

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**Cree Legends and Narratives from the West Coast of James Bay.**

By C. Douglas Ellis. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1995. 554 pages. \$75.00 cloth; set of six cassette tapes \$65.00.

The last decade has seen serious efforts on the part of linguists involved with Algonquian languages to provide published versions of oral literature. In particular, the University of Manitoba has provided high-quality bilingual versions of Plains Cree and Ojibwe texts, for instance those edited by Freda Ahenakew and H.C. Wolfart. In addition, the journal *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* has introduced a new series of publications dedicated to literature in an aboriginal language without translation. As part of the Manitoba series, Douglas Ellis

has produced a tour de force of texts for the Ontario dialects of Cree. This book of legends and stories complements Ellis' previous work, *Spoken Cree* (1983), a course in west coast Cree for speakers of English. A set of six cassettes of the narratives is available separately for those who wish to hear the narratives in their original oral form.

The west coast of James Bay in Ontario, Canada, is home to two dialects of the Cree language. Cree dialects are often sub-grouped according to the reflex of the Proto-Algonquian (PA) sound \**l*, which may occur in daughter dialects as either *y*, *th*, *n*, *l*, or *r*. The collection consists of three sections, one each for the Swampy Cree *n*-dialect, spoken in the three northernmost villages, the mixed *n-l*-dialect community of Kashechewan, and the southernmost *l*-dialect of Moose Factory. The Cree language is fairly healthy in the relatively isolated coastal communities, and there is a strong tradition of translation of legal, medical, and administrative documents, as well as newsletters and regional newspapers. Little, however, of the traditional oral literature has appeared in print; a few books of legends which have been printed in simplified versions for use in school language programs are the exception. Like many minority languages, Cree is under threat of being lost by younger speakers, particularly in the Moose dialect and in newer communities established to the south of James Bay near roads and railway lines. The school programs for teaching literacy in the syllabic system are far less effective than those in, for instance, the neighboring province of Quebec. Here the Cree of the east coast of James Bay have implemented their language as the medium of instruction in most primary schools, following years of teaching as a subject only. This collection of narratives by speakers of previous generations is therefore an important contribution to the maintenance of these dialects.

The sixty-eight texts by sixteen speakers—all recorded between 1955 and 1965—are presented in facing page format, the Cree in standard roman orthography on the left and a fairly free English translation on the right, with numbered paragraphs to facilitate matching the two languages. The introduction gives details of the recording, transcription, and translation situations, the dialects, and thumbnail biographical sketches of each narrator. This is followed by a discussion of literary genres in Cree, which outlines categories of traditional and popular discourse. The distinction between two basic types of stories, *âtalôhkâna* and *tipâcimôwina* has long been rec-

ognized by those working with Algonquian texts, but Ellis has introduced a much more diversified system of categorization.

Traditional discourse includes *âtalôhkâna*, mythic tales set in a time when men and animals interacted freely, as well as *tipâcimôwina*, which record historical events and songs. Within the group of *âtalôhkâna*, cyclical tales may deal with culture heroes such as Weesakechahk and Chahkaabesh, or they may appear as *pâstâmwina*, with themes that are the equivalent of fables which teach lessons for living. The non-cyclical tales may be single episodes about a hero figure or folktales.

The *tipâcimôwina* also appear in the category of popular discourse, as accounts of personal experiences, events, and reminiscences; even some *pâstâmwina* are explicitly labeled as *tipâcimôwina* by speakers. Each genre is identified by characteristic setting, themes, division into stages, and beginning and ending formulae. Other types of popular discourse include recipes, descriptions of technology, conversation, oratory, and correspondence, all but the last two represented in this collection. As well as giving a more even overview of areas of cultural interest, this variety of genres is most useful for linguistic analysis, as grammatical forms may vary in different types of narratives. It has been demonstrated for Montagnais, a sister dialect of Cree, that *tipâcimôwina* use different sets and frequencies of verb paradigms and evidential markers than do *âtalôhkâna*, particularly in order to establish the provenance of information in the former. Montagnais *tipâcimôwina* are noted for reports of events which are heavily studded with concatenations of "it was said" and "she/he said" as well as grammatically marked distinctions between direct personal experience and hearsay. Although Ellis mentions stock beginning and ending formulae, he mentions no more narrowly linguistic basis for distinguishing genres in these dialects.

This volume will be of interest and use to scholars of Cree and of aboriginal literature not only for the breadth of its coverage of genres but also for its accuracy of transcription. Care has been taken to render the concomitants of real speech such as false starts, whispers, laughter, changes in voice quality, and emphasis in order to convey the power of the original Cree. A long section on editorial conventions follows the texts and discusses phonological transcription, stylistic variation, borrowed words, and names of persons and places. The extensive section of endnotes—which labels the genre of each text, reports comments by narrators and listeners, and gives alternate possible

pronunciations and relevant cultural information—is ethnographically useful as well as entertaining.

The final section is a glossary of all Cree words used in the texts with grammatical information, cross-referencing to a typical example of usage, synonyms, and related forms. The list of occurrences is not exhaustive and the reader is warned that final editing of the texts may have rendered the cross-referencing to paragraphs inaccurate. This glossary of almost 6,000 items will be most useful, as no comprehensive dictionary of either the Swampy dialect or the l-dialects of Cree has yet appeared. The glossary from Ellis' previous work (1983), along with reprints of the Watkins-Fairies largely Plains Cree dictionary (1938), in an out-of-date orthography, have been the only major reference tools available for many years. The Cree of Ontario have recently undertaken to produce a comprehensive dictionary and grammar of their language, for which this glossary will provide a solid foundation.

Linguists working on other dialects of the Cree-Montagnis-Naskapi language complex will find the glossary useful for the attestation of vowel quality and original sibilant consonants. The vowel system of Cree consists of seven vowels, four long and three short, but in many of the dialects spoken in Quebec and Labrador the two non-round short vowels *a* and *i* have fallen together. Although the quality of the original vowel is difficult to recover, speakers engaged in establishing standardized orthographies have decided to preserve the correct vowel and can make use of the glossary in order to recover it. Similarly, speakers of the northernmost dialect of Ontario Cree, in Fort Severn, who no longer have a clear distinction between *s* and *sh* [š], but have agreed to write it as part of the recently standardized syllabic orthography, can refer to the Ellis glossaries.

The roman spelling used here has become the norm for published texts in Cree although certain short vowels and repeated initial syllables have been left out, as they are not pronounced in normal speech. Unfortunately, no syllabic transcription has been included in the volume, which renders it much less useful to speakers of Ontario Cree, who use the syllabic system exclusively. Nevertheless, this volume will stand as a very important resource for both academics and speakers of Cree.

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