

objective; he is closely involved with his subject matter, his heritage. It is this tone that I refer to as “whispering” that we do not often hear; it is the voice that is most like our own because it comes from within. This is the voice that is determined by no one else but ourselves. It is the one we most often disregard, the one we most often forget. Unfortunately, because we hear mainly the most strident noises, we do not pay attention to this whispering from ourselves.

When Brito hears “your soft voice whisper,” in my favorite poem in the collection, it is his inner voice he is hearing. Native Americans and white Americans, in fact all Americans, have fiercely hunted and watched for signs that will help them and save them from the headlong race towards destruction of their society and natural environment. We tend to go towards the most obviously apparent, the most dramatic and loudly shrill. We do not hear our innermost meditations, our most deeply innate selves that is spoken in whispers of the common humanity. It is this voice that recognizes and relates “to my DNA” that tells us we are related as close as brothers and sisters. Native and white Americans are historically enjoined as victims and victimizers in such horrendous, obvious events as the massacres at Wounded Knee and Sand Creek, and, for others, as Jews and Aryan Nazis at Auschwitz, Americans and Vietnamese at My Lai, and countless other desecrations of our common humanity.

We are indeed fierce hunters of each other and, though we fiercely watch, we do not see what is also obvious, that we are brothers and sisters nonetheless. The poet that S.J. Brito is hears himself speaking quietly, and he shares with us the whispering, the inner voice, and for that we are to be glad and thankful.

—Simon J. Ortiz
Acoma Pueblo, NM

Vinson Brown, *Native Americans of the Pacific Coast*, 2nd edition. (Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph, 1985) 272 pp., \$8.95 paper.

In the introduction to *Native Americans of the Pacific Coast*, Vinson Brown presents many admirable ambitions for any scholar writing on human existence. Brown proclaims that he will attempt to make the first Americans “live” in the style of the 1500s to 1700s during the “days of old” and of “glory and independence.” He then proceeds to assert that, in order to accomplish this goal, antiquated concepts used to “justify” the conquest of tribal Peoples must be “put aside.” He urges us, “instead,” to be inquisitive and open so that we can “see and hear” what indigenous life was like before contact. Brown later in the introduction states his

primary objectives: to provide the greater details that distinguish the “representative” tribes in the four culture areas spreading from Alaska to the Mexican border; and to “show” parts of the “spirit and essence” of individual people and their families by depicting them “through stories,” not stories encompassing lives but as “beginnings” intended as “insights.” The notes on the backcover also mention that Brown’s Native American friends have been sources of information which has added “visceral and pragmatic” knowledge to his research into the written sources. A close reading of the book, nevertheless, belies Brown’s lofty aims, for there are shortcomings and inconsistencies which undercut what otherwise might be a commendable classroom text.

Although this book was published first in 1977 as *Peoples of the Sea Wind*, can the implementation of its objectives be assumed to embody the increased enlightenment of anthropological awareness? For the most part, “Yes.” But in the introduction terms like “barbaric,” “savage” and “simple” are contrasted with and contradicted by those like “civilized,” “beauty” and “complex,” all of which connote pre-Boasian, turn-of-the-century ideas. While the stories must be complimented as a plethora of cultural information—not to mention acknowledgement of the narrative achievements of Brown’s writing—the wealth of insights supplied through these tales cannot compensate for audacious statements like these: a stereotype like “they were a more sophisticated and cultured people and clever talkers . . .” who were also a “highly charged and war-like people”; the description of two angered shamans from which “rage[came] from the *darker and bigger*” and “outrage and courage from the *lighter and smaller*” [italics for emphasis]; or animal analogies such as “heeding the warning that tingled through Storm Dodger’s body” and “Storm Dodger seemed to feel his way with his breath.” Although the book is scattered only sparsely with these types of phrases and accounts, their nuances are enflaming.

The reading aids are much less ethnocentric and are clearly an attempt to illustrate the text, but they have their failings, too. Brown should be well-noted for choosing to utilize words selected from the various indigenous languages to emphasize cultural distinction, but a glossary would have been a useful reference source. Because the maps are few and small, they do not display they many linguistic variations, sovereignty boundaries, and tribes; e.g., in the California map there are misrepresentations like listing one Pomo tribe, not nine which speak many languages and live in different locales—plus omissions like the Kato, Wailacki, Coast Yuki, and other tribes. Although this edition of the book was published in 1985, eight years after the first, the bibliography has not been updated, and it is too short for the vastness of its subject. The compilation of the appendices, especially the correlation of Appendix A to the Tlingit calendar described in chapter 2, must be granted due recognition for organization, conciseness, and accessibility; nonetheless, there is a danger in these lists and graphs to oversimplify cultures like

the one “so complicated” that even Franz Boas “grew bored” with its ceremonies.

The minor distractions of the book can also be annoying to readers looking for touches of things indigenous. The Westernized translations of American Indian names, like Silver Salmon Woman and Half-Man Woman, are not clearly as authentic as other names like Nuskeah for a period of the year or Klukwan for a village. The reduction of certain illustrations (but not all), where the fine details disappear, have left crude impressions of the original objects. Some photographs have made particular dioramas to appear childlike and have thus cut short some serious efforts to convey pictures of actual people and settings. The handful of American Indians that has been surveyed is in consensus against the faces on the cover illustration, because they believe that these images portray the Peoples of the Pacific Coast in a derogatory sense of “the primitive.”

The critical components where the book might have extended a good measure of classroom fulfillment—the declaration of goals and objectives, the stories, and the reading aids—are abbreviated by oversights and contradictions. Neither do the title and table of contents meet the comprehensive coverage that they might suggest. While Vinson Brown’s *Native Americans of the Pacific Coast* has the potential to provide the “ethnic experience” of these Peoples, the book falls short of this anticipation.

—William Oandasan
Venice, CA

John J. Bukowczyk. *And My Children Did Not Know Me: A History of the Polish Americans*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) xii, 190 pp., \$27.50; \$8.95 paper.

Bukowczyk provides us with an easily readable and brief general history of Polish Americans. Unfortunately, there is nothing new in it. The works of Helena Z. Lopata, Victor Greene, Ewa Morawaka, and John Bodnar give a more intimate understanding of Polonia.

Much of Bukowczyk’s work is based upon an extensive use of secondary sources. In fact, parts of the book reflect themes that are common in studies of Polish Americans and there appears to be little new insight to the understanding of the group. What might pass as insight are assertions which at times border on the outrageous because he offers no evidence to support his statement. An example of this is when he attempts to explain why Polish Americans failed to better themselves. He says, “Because they gave heavily to their parishes, Polish Americans