

of Alaska, crossing the Chilkoot Pass to Lake Bennett — which he named for the owner of *The New York Herald* (Schwatka 1885a: 100) — and on to the headwaters of the Yukon River, following which his party built a large raft and commenced a voyage of 1829 miles to the river's mouth (Schwatka 1885b).

In 1885, Schwatka left the army and became one of the world's first professional explorers, a man who would travel anywhere for the correct financial incentive. The next year he led an expedition sponsored by *The New York Times*, which had the goal of making the first ascent of Mount Saint Elias, then thought to be the highest peak in North America (Johnson and others 1984: 12). In 1887, *The World*, Joseph Pulitzer's New York flagship newspaper, sponsored Schwatka's attempt to make the first winter crossing of Yellowstone National Park, and in 1889, *The Chicago American* sponsored his expedition to the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico (Schwatka 1893).

The goal of Schwatka's last expedition was to explore as much unmapped country in the interior of Alaska and British America as possible. Schwatka, Charles W. Hayes of the US Geological Survey, Mark C. Russell (a local miner), and seven Alaska natives left Juneau in May 1891, following the Taku River into British Columbia. Upon reaching Teslin Lake, they headed northwest into the Yukon, navigating the Teslin River and parts of the Yukon River to Fort Selkirk, from where they made their way west, partly over land and partly upon rivers. In late August they reached Nunchek on Hitchinbrook Island. This was in many ways Schwatka's most important expedition, exploring, mapping, and assessing huge tracks of previously little-known country.

Remarkably, it seemed for many years that no major account of this journey was ever published. Schwatka died the next year in Oregon, having overdosed himself with the laudanum that he took for acute gastric problems. Hayes, meanwhile, published a paper in *National Geographic Magazine*, but it concentrated on the geology and geography of the areas in which they travelled, while giving little detail of the actual expedition.

It was left for more than a century for the full account of the expedition to become available to a wide audience. Arland Harris, a retired forester who had believed that a writer as prolific as Schwatka must have had a journal and notes even if nothing had been published, discovered that Schwatka's account *had* indeed been published the year after the expedition. For years, Hayes' note that the expedition had been sponsored by a syndicate of newspapers was accepted, but Harris found a reference to the expedition having been sponsored by *The New York Ledger*, a small-circulation magazine. This proved accurate, and Harris discovered that *The Ledger*, which ceased publication in 1903, had run a series of 18 letters from Schwatka, giving full details of this important expedition.

*Schwatka's last search* thus gives the first major account of Schwatka's final expedition. Harris has not only provided an excellent introduction to Schwatka and the expedition, but the 18 letters that appeared in *The Ledger*,

and also Hayes' journal and photographs from the expedition. It is the combination of these — Schwatka's vivid and exciting prose, written by an explorer who made his living generating popular tales for a broad audience, and Hayes' clear, concise, and detailed geological and geographical observations, professionally recorded about a virtually unknown region by a scientist for scientists — that provides such a remarkable picture of Alaska and the Canadian northwest in the era before the gold rush opened them up to settlers from around the world.

Harris is to be commended for his efforts, which have produced a major contribution to the knowledge about early Alaska, Yukon, and British Columbia. This book will well reward those who read it, whether they be primarily interested in exploration, anthropology, geology, botany, or many other aspects of Alaska and the Canadian northwest in the nineteenth century. (Beau Riffenburgh, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

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#### BOUNDARIES AND PASSAGES: RULE AND RITUAL IN YUP'IK ESKIMO ORAL TRADITION.

Ann Fienup-Riordan. 1995. London and Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. xxiv + 389 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-8061-2646-9.

*Boundaries and passages* is an exploration of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Yup'ik Eskimo cosmological views, as embodied in traditional stories and in accounts of private and public ritual. Ann Fienup-Riordan focuses on a prevailing metaphor that emerges in the recollections of contemporary elders: that of creating and maintaining difference in an essentially undifferentiated universe. While the bulk of the data comes from the Nelson Island area, the work includes accounts from other parts of the Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta, and the author generalizes on this basis.

Fienup-Riordan's main argument is that a Hobbesian notion of society as a diversity of individuals united through self-interest is presumed in anthropology: 'Contemporary anthropological analysis continues in this tradition insofar as it assumes the innateness of cultural differ-

entiation, and that a fundamental “problem” of social analysis is the explanation of the relation of analytically distinct categories and separate domains. These categories are not seen as man-made but as facts of nature’ (page 46). This presumption, she argues, is at odds with a Yup’ik representation of categories as culturally constructed. The remainder of the book is dedicated to elucidating Yup’ik categories and the ideology that informs them.

The enduring importance of the work lies in the descriptive detail amassed to support this argument. The author has organized data and presented direct translations of interviews and narratives in a way that makes both absorbing reading and ethnographic good sense. In this respect, it is unparalleled in contemporary Inuit ethnography. It combines the best of an earlier era of descriptive ethnography with a contemporary sensitivity towards ‘voice’ and respectful representation.

This book also attempts to redress another problem Fienup-Riordan sees in the literature: anthropologists have written much about what Eskimos do and little about why they do it (page 48). *Boundaries and passages* approaches the problem by presenting extended narratives in which orators describe, and from which Fienup-Riordan abstracts, the rationale behind the many daily prescriptions and prohibitions that regulated Yup’ik life. At the heart of the book are the chapters detailing the interactions of humans with animals and supernatural beings, both of which are human-like. Managing such interrelationships in a permeable and sentient cosmos forms the basis for all moral action: everything from childrearing practices to the prevention and treatment of illness, from the men’s hunting to the productive and reproductive activities of women.

These data, discussed in terms of the book’s prevailing metaphor, are preceded by a contemporary ethnographic summary and followed by several chapters describing the major rituals that articulated community expressions of this theme. The latter section summarizes the work of previous scholars and substantially expands it in the context of the Nelson Island Eskimo.

Through this process, a very complex portrait of Yup’ik ritual and ideology, which have often remained unexplored or presented relatively simply within more general accounts of Yup’ik life, emerges. With the cultural changes occurring in the decades after Margaret Lantis produced her rich descriptions of Nunivak Island Eskimos (1946, 1960), anthropologist Wendell Oswalt (1963a, 1963b) began to doubt that nineteenth-century Yup’ik traditions could be reconstructed from oral accounts. However, based on a review of research beginning in the late 1970s, Ernest Burch (1984) accurately predicted that Yup’ik studies would flower in the next decade.

*Boundaries and passages* is clearly a major contribution to this florescence. It complements Fienup-Riordan’s earlier work on Nelson Island (1983), representing a self-conscious shift from structuralist analysis to ‘a closer reading of texts from the natives’ point of view’ (page 7). She has continued to try to strike a balance between anthropological interpretation and direct quotation of her

sources in her most recent work (1996), the catalogue written to accompany an exhibit of more than 200 Yup’ik masks, ‘Agayuliyararput: our way of making prayer,’ which she curated. Like *Boundaries and passages*, this is an impressive compendium of information.

The merits of Fienup-Riordan’s work are very clear. There are also two problems that bear mentioning. First is the claim that the metaphor used as the book’s title is indigenous and overarching. ‘Boundaries and passages’ sometimes emerges as an overdrawn dichotomy, a heuristic that serves the author’s purpose but predictably falls short of encompassing the complexity she is at pains to elaborate. Stating that this is a cultural construction of the sort that anthropologists fail to notice also overlooks much contemporary theory dedicated precisely to the question of how meaning is culturally constructed.

Another challenge posed by contemporary anthropology is to elucidate the relationship between actors’ explanations and their actions. Fienup-Riordan overlooks this question, as well. She has a tendency to conflate ideology and practice, to assume that these descriptions directly represent what people did. By neglecting the social construction of action in favor of the cultural construction of meaning, she presents an idealized portrait. Perhaps it would have been sufficient to acknowledge the difference between the two and the relative difficulty of reconstructing action.

Certainly an author needs to construct a framework for presenting the data. However, an insistence that the Yupiit, not the author, invented the frame, and that it accurately reflects action as well as ideology, raises a degree of skepticism. Readers (including Yupiit) may well see other salient organizing themes in these data. Fortunately, the data are there to examine. In the end, the book represents an enormous and welcome accomplishment; it is required reading for anyone interested in Inuit/Yup’ik ethnography or, more generally, in ritual. (Phyllis Morrow, Department of Anthropology, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775, USA.)

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