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Review of *Peyote: The Divine Cactus* by Edward F. Anderson

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Peyote: The Divine Cactus. Edward F. Anderson. 2nd Edition. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996. xvii+272 pp. Photos, figures, references cited, and index. \$19.95 paper (ISBN 0-8165-1654-5).

The explanation of peyote, the hallucinogenic cactus central to several American Indian ceremonies, requires forays into many diverse fields, from chemistry and botany to ethnomusicology, frontier history, and legal studies. Other books approach peyote via the anthropology of ritual, appending material about the cactus itself. Anderson's work, which first appeared in

1980, places the plant at the heart of inquiry. This new edition offers minor reorganization and a major updating in style and content.

The book begins with a discussion of peyote use in Mexico, from conquest times to the modern rites of the Huichol and Tarahumara. Religious use in the United States is treated in chapters 2 and 3, focusing on origins and diffusion and then ceremony, with examples from the Southern Plains and Navajo. Chapters 4 through 7 examine the user's experience, medicinal qualities, and peyote pharmacology and chemistry. Here the author describes the synthesis and properties of mescaline and a fascinating array of other peyote alkaloids in structural formulas as well as in the text. He designates peyote as a "psychotomimetic" with possible clinical applications and antibiotic benefits beyond its ritual potential.

Anderson pursues his subject through summaries of existing literature. In the process he winnows away much ethnographic detail and the extant studies do not permit as much explicit correlation between laboratory and tipi as readers might wish. Also, at least one imprecision is perpetuated: the Comanche word *puhakati* ("puakit," p. 107) signifies any person or object possessing supernatural power; it is neither the word for peyote nor a term meaning peyote and medicine simultaneously. But the synopsis is appropriate for a general audience—thorough enough, balanced, and above all plainly written, especially in this new edition. The discussions of Christian influence, peyote music, and mescalism are typically succinct and accurate.

Chapter 8 on botany offers important original contributions thanks to the author's forty years of research in cactus taxonomy and ecology. Settling earlier questions, Anderson establishes two species of peyote and maps their ranges exactly. The peyote range in Texas is smaller than previously thought, hugging the Rio Grande valley from Big Bend southward. The author's field observations and photos of local peyote habitats are also unique and helpful to a variety of investigators.

A final chapter outlines the many efforts in the U.S. to either ban "narcotic" peyote or ensure religious freedom for peyotists. This enduring conflict flared again with the 1990 U.S. Supreme Court ruling against a Klamath peyotist in Oregon, which in turn prompted the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Review of these recent cases puts the book at the forefront of general treatments of peyote law. With such improvements *Peyote: The Divine Cactus* continues to work very well as a basic reference, an interdisciplinary model, and a critical bibliography serving further research. **Daniel J. Gelo**, *Department of Anthropology, University of Texas at San Antonio*.