# Book Reviews

*The Curtain Within: Haida Social and Mythical Discourse*, by Marianne Boelscher. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989. Pp. 234; 12 plates.

The Haida, like most Northwest Coast native groups, have a special interest for anthropologists. Unlike other hunter-gatherers who were highly mobile and egalitarian, traditional Northwest Coast peoples lived in permanent villages and had elaborate systems of social ranking and ceremonials. They lacked institutionalized government, but political office existed in the form of hereditary town and lineage chiefships. Much of the struggle for and maintenance of power took place in the context of ritualized exchange of material goods and symbolic property — the system usually referred to as potlatching.

*The Curtain Within* is an ethnography about the Haida, based on fieldwork done with the Masset Haida from 1979 to 1981 and again in the fall of 1983 for the author's doctoral thesis in anthropology at Simon Fraser University. The book explores the "ongoing function of Haida political life, expressed not so much as formal institutions, but as a style of discourse and symbolic action" (vii).

The "content" of Masset political culture, according to Boelscher, is the battle for the entitlement to tangible and intangible property, not simply the amassing of property for its own sake or the validation of rank, as is often thought. This battle for rights to property is shown to permeate marriage choice, adoption, and the values by which people conduct their lives. It also burdens the relationships of Masset lineages and moieties with constant factionalism and disputes over legitimacy of rank and leadership. This tendency was aggravated by the severe population depletion that occurred during the nineteenth century and the clustering of the tattered remnants of distinct villages in Masset.

Lineages and branches are described symbolically as having "something like a curtain hanging between them" (44), closable yet flexible. It is an ambivalent symbol acknowledging both tension and interdependence.

The rhetoric of these tensions carries into the realm of myth and names and, by the act of recording, into the realm of ethnographic literature and land claims. For instance, the origin of the territory name K'aawas, as reported by anthropologist John Swanton in 1905, according to people affiliated bilaterally to K'aawas, was said to have been derived from the story of a woman who had many children, "just like herring eggs" (47). Rev. Charles Harrison, however, wrote in 1925 that the name was due to the fact that K'aawas men were small of stature and thus were called the "herring spawn people" (47). Boelscher interprets this later, contradictory account as reflecting the rhetorical aims of a politically competitive lineage in K'aawas.

Chapter 4 presents us with intriguing instances of chiefs who would describe themselves as slaves in an effort to enhance the prestige of their audience and, by association, themselves. Even the answer, "we are all chiefs," to questions about chiefly rank is interpreted as a way of increasing the status of one's lineage in front of strangers or an opposing lineage. One is particularly struck by the possibility that early explorers and naïve anthropologists were taken in by such politically laden talk.

Unlike more traditional ethnographies, the voices and debates of the anthropologists and their models are highly audible amidst the stories of the Haida themselves. By answering Bourdieu's challenge to anthropologists to focus on the role of process and practice in its concepts and models of culture, Boelscher is critical of the symbolic structuralism so prevalent in Northwest Coast studies. In addition, the works of early ethnographers such as Boas and Swanton are seen to be overly concerned with the recording of myths and oral culture (5). This early "salvage anthropology" meant that the political and social aspects of culture, "how actors use symbols consciously in seeking social goals" (5), were often ignored. By analyzing the recorded myths of the Masset elders and hereditary chiefs and by linking them to the dynamics of contemporary political life, Boelscher attempts to move away from a decontextualized structuralism to a more general political economy of knowledge.

Boelscher never tells us how Masset Haida entitlement to political rank or role is ever decided. Amidst all the conflicting claims, someone eventually does become chief or moves up a rank. Is it the supernatural encounters, potlatching, parents' potlatching, quality of potlatching goods, public scrutiny or the social order that decide political legitimacy?

Amidst the description of a highly dynamic cultural life, Boelscher feels that the symbolic and social interaction of the Haida "remains the same" through "decades of oppression by white society." Perhaps the work's reli-

ance on discussions with the elderly hereditary chiefs and their relatives has elicited a particularly "traditional" perspective, one which Boelscher extrapolated to all forms of symbolic and political life. Viewing any culture from "the top down" might also contribute to the emphasis on Masset culture as a forum in which claims to hereditary rank and lineage hierarchy are played out. The voices of the Haida Masset's young people and the descendants of commoners, slaves, and minor-crest groups are missing in this work.

The frequent use of Haida words in much of the book's analysis will daunt the general reader, as might some of the anthropological vocabulary. However, *The Curtain Within* is well worth the extra work. The various tables of kin terms, calendars, and names are excellent and the conclusions intriguing. Readers, moreover, will never be able to read or listen to a Haida story again without questioning its meaning or the message it conveys.

*University of Toronto* ANNA DE AGUAYO

*Trail to Heaven: Knowledge and Narrative in a Northern Native Community*, by Robin Ridington. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988. Pp. xv, 301. $29.95.

How are we best led to understand the normal experience of radically different peoples? We may listen to what they say; but without a deep grasp of the premises they use to frame their experiences, we will miss the intentions behind their words. We need an interpreter of premises, and the interpreter needs an extraordinary ability to translate not words but an idiom of experience characteristic of the cultural "other" into our own idiom. Even more, the translation must speak to us in terms that will engage our interest, suspend our disbelief, and open up to a widened universe of human discourse.

It is no wonder, then, that this effort at translation is a very difficult book to describe in the brief compass of a review. Like the traveller's accounts of past centuries, it is a romance, written for a broadly educated reader more than for professional colleagues, inviting us to vicariously participate in their observational experiences. Unlike these earlier accounts, it is also an experiment in modern reflexive ethnographic *reportage*, with emphasis on the subjective experience of the author. It could be labelled post-modern, though this halo may not be helpful and is in any event

untrue, since it has very much in common with some twentieth-century books that antedate the launching of post-modernism.

The book is in four parts. The first is the account of a cosmopolitan young man from Harvard University stumbling into an exotic small world of Indian hunters, becoming occasionally useful, escaping hazards ("Come here, Robinson, you handsome son of a bitch"), and discovering the mythical dimensions of daily life — life experienced as an allegory.

In the second part, our pilgrim speaks with authority, not as an intellectual but as an aspiring singer of tales. Narratives recorded from hunters are given verbatim, and between these texts are interpretive sections, some in fairly ordinary prose, but gradually becoming a kind of chant of much shorter, grammatically simple sentences with choppy imagist juxtapositions, a mosaic of probes toward authenticity, to move us readers into mythic thinking.

The third part is a single conversation with one hunter, where we have the opportunity to try out our mythic thinking as a way to understand the man's words.

The fourth part is an event analysis; how embeddedness in traditional religious commitment and action led a spiritually deep man to understand, accept, and reflect the frustration and violence of a younger, shallower one. And then let the anthropologist, no longer a pilgrim but somewhere short of a singer, buy him breakfast and remain somewhat mystified.

If we have travelled well through this book, we experience as our reward the feel of the hunter's life and community, past and present. This is a subjective, and fundamentalist, description of cultural style and value. It was born in reaction to the objective and relativist descriptions of most monographs, was reared in the consciousness-seeking spirit of university life in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and came to maturity in the self-valuing 1980s.

We come away with much more exposure to the author's personal genre and that of his hunter friends than are found in the early travel accounts. The approach is more personal and these genres of author and subject blur, and are blurred, more than we would expect even in a biography or novel. This is a double-edged matter; a solution to the problem of depersonalized ethnography and a problem for the enlargement of objective knowledge about humankind. We need those monographs, too, and more varieties of depiction and comparison than we now have.

I find instruction in comparing this with the account of a Yale intellectual, Cornelius Osgood, who went north to study Dene hunters near Great Slave Lake in the late 1920s. His sensitivity to personal nuance was surely

comparable to Ridington's, but his circumstances left him with little data and no texts, save an indelible visual memory. Like Ridington, Osgood eventually decided to write about his personal journey, but it was capped by a solitary epic trip by dog team around a region that denied his intelligence and challenged his very presence.

Ridington's journey is also ultimately solitary, detached, intellectually distanced, but travels a mindscape that challenges his intelligence, and denies . . . that final letting go into myriad intimacies that are tacitly demanded, and yet casually taken for granted by the people we know, but do not stay with. I too have made the twenty-five-year journey of depth ethnography in another northern hunting culture, and I feel the profound, mute tension between the writer of books and monographs and the persons we commit our academic careers to representing to a larger world. Native authors like Tomson Highway and Billy Diamond add much more to the mosaic, but no person is without their points of challenge and denial in speaking of humanity, to humanity.

*McMaster University* RICHARD PRESTON

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*Environmental Ethics: Philosophical and Policy Perspectives*, edited by Philip P. Hanson. Simon Fraser University: Institute for the Humanities, 1986. Pp. 199.

*Environmental Ethics, Volume II*, edited by Raymond Bradley and Stephen Duguid. Simon Fraser University: Institute for the Humanities, 1989. Pp. 215.

These are two soft-cover volumes. The first, *Environmental Ethics: Philosophical and Policy Perspectives*, is edited by Philip P. Hanson of the Department of Philosophy, Simon Fraser University. In the Preface Mr. Hanson explains that a research workshop on "environmental ethics" was convened in Montreal in December 1983. Lead papers were prepared and distributed in advance, as were designated responses. While some of the

papers were subsequently revised, it is those papers prepared for that particular workshop which form the core of this volume.

While the length of this review prohibits a thorough discussion of each paper, the object of the workshop was to explore the moral rightness and wrongness of human actions insofar as they affect the natural environment, such that theories and principles might emerge that would form the basis of an ethic governing man's treatment of the environment. The participants, who prepared the various papers, were diverse in their backgrounds, being leaders in and representing the fields of law, economics, ecology, biology, philosophy, and sociology, and also included researchers in environmental and communication studies.

The various papers, taken together, represent a vigorous debate among intellectuals. Pierre Dansereau takes the view that a new ethic may well be the very condition of human survival itself. Donald A. Chant defines man's two notions of dominance and of perpetual progress as the "seeds of disaster" for the environment and calls for a modern Environmental Ethics "based on our increased awareness and understanding of our dependency on the natural system. . . ." Norman H. Morse makes a memorable comment when speaking of the way man has allowed things to drift toward the species that are more adaptable, letting the highly specialized ones succumb. He says "our experience may in the last analysis become an endurance test for survival between something like rat and man." J. Stan Rowe makes the comment: "Once humans see themselves as integral parts of the natural world rather than separate from it an ethic that embraces that wider environment ceases to be optional."

While it is difficult to summarize such a debate, L. W. Sumner attempts to divide the combatants into three categories. First, there is the anthropocentric school of humanism, which holds the view that all and only human beings have moral standing. Next, there are the sentientists, who hold the view that all and only sentient beings have moral standing. "Sentience" is defined as the capacity to experience pleasure and pain. So the sentientist would extend moral standing not only to man but also to certain animals. Finally, there is the unitarian, which is also described as the "new-ecological paradigm" or as "deep ecology," which would extend moral standing beyond sentient beings to plants, trees, and rocks. If you can think like a mountain, then you are in unity with nature.

Volume II of *Environmental Ethics*, edited jointly by Raymond Bradley and Stephen Duguid, comprises twelve papers, six falling under Part I, "The Domain of Environmental Ethics," and six under Part II, "Environmental Crisis: Causes, Cures and Questions of Policy." Each of the twelve

authors participated in one or other of a series of three conferences organized by the Institute for the Humanities of Simon Fraser University, and several authored papers in the first volume.

In the Introduction Messrs. Bradley and Duguid reduce the three categories of ethical theories referred to by Sumner to two categories: "anthropocentric" and "nonanthropocentric." The non-anthropocentric group is also referred to as "ecocentric," and into this latter category are grouped both the sentients and those who espouse "deep ecology."

In Part I, the debate from the first volume is simply continued, with five of the six authors falling into the category of being non-anthropocentric and therefore taking the view that rights and obligations should be extended to animals, plants, species (specifically to endangered species), and to the ecosystem at large. One author, Phillip S. Elder, took on all comers and rejected the argument that non-animal and perhaps non-living objects ought to have legal standing. He felt that everything that needed to be accomplished could be done within ordinary ethics and the legal framework as it exists.

Part II of Volume II is an attempt to state the seriousness of the problem. John Livingston, for example, believes that an ecological disaster may already be upon us, though he admits that he cannot prove it. For this situation he blames Western ideology generally. William Vanderburg believes that there is a possibility of an ecological collapse of catastrophic dimensions and allocates blame to our cultural drive for technological efficiency. Kai Nielson points his finger at capitalist ideology alone and advances the claim that pure socialism would promote the values cherished by environmentalists. Doug Bisset, on the other hand, believes that the steady and thoughtful application of technology will solve the problems that technology itself creates.

Both volumes are organized well. The Introductions provided in each case by the editors are excellent and serve the purpose well of tying the papers together, analyzing where the various authors agree and disagree with each other.

Having studied the debates between those who would be anthropocentric and those who would be ecocentric, is it not common ground that each espouses action to save the environment, but the first group would do it for the sake of man and man's survival while the other would do it for the sake of the ecosystem and its survival? What I could not be persuaded of is how man can stand separate and apart from earth's ecosystem, upon which he relies for life.

Further, if we accept John Livingston's belief that an ecological disaster may already be upon us, then, as Mary Anne Warren said, "We need a wedding, not a war" but between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism so that the common purpose of saving the environment, for whatever reason, may proceed with dispatch.

I compare the above debate to two people standing at the fork in a road. They both agree with respect to which branch of the fork they should take. They only disagree as to how far each will go along that same branch.

*University of British Columbia* DAVID H. SEARLE, Q.C.

*This Was Our Valley*, by Earl K. Pollon and Shirlee Smith Matheson. Calgary: Detselig, 1989. Pp. 401.

When the history of twentieth-century British Columbia is written, the 1960s and 1970s will be remembered as the decades of megaprojects. The Arrow Lakes, Mica, and Revelstoke dams on the Columbia River, the Bennett and Canyon dams on the Peace River, the southeast and northeast coal projects and the extension of the British Columbia Railway to Fort Nelson were all built in these "decades of development." Each of these projects grew out of its own political and economic context, involved very large capital expenditures (both public and private), and all were undertaken in the name of progress and economic opportunity. Each had, and continues to have, major socio-economic and environmental consequences for the people and places in which it is located. In *This Was Our Valley*, Earl Pollon and Shirlee Matheson write in a semi-popular way about the inter-relations betwen the upper Peace River and those frontier people who went to live in its valley in the 1930s and the changes brought about by the construction and operation of the Bennett and Canyon dams. The book contains a number of photographs (some poorly reproduced) but has no index or collated list of references. The legibility of the maps on the inside cover leaves much to be desired in a book in which, particularly in the first section, the reader is taken all over these northern parts of B.C.

In Part One, Earl Pollon chronicles his life on the frontiers of settlement during the period 1930-65. In fourteen chapters he describes his experiences as trapper, carpenter, prospector, hauler, lime burner, and more in places as far afield as Germansen Landing to the west and the Sikanni Chief River to the north. Stylistically he has some difficulty in making a

cohesive narrative out of his recollections, and one often wishes that he would move away from his experiences somewhat and provide the reader with some background about his family and the politico-economic circumstances of the region. Nevertheless, his stories (and a selection of his poems) bring the reader close to the Peace River and the fascinating backgrounds and the caring values of his tough frontier neighbours and associates.

In Part Two, Shirlee Matheson narrates aspects of her life as a "newcomer" to Hudson's Hope and documents many elements of the planning, construction, and operation of the Peace River power project, drawing on her experience as secretary to the Hudson's Hope Improvement District. Her twenty chapters deal with two major themes: the economic potential of Hudson's Hope and the upper Peace Valley and the impact of the power project upon the river, its valley, and people. Under the first theme she reviews the potential of coal and other minerals, the prospects of resource processing industries and the need for road and rail links to markets. She tells all too briefly the fascinating story of the formation of the Peace River Power Development Company and the complex inter-relations between British, Swedish, and British Columbian interests. She also writes of the tension between "locals" expecting employment on the dam project and those thousands of workers brought from outside the region by the Allied Hydro Council.

Under the second theme, Ms. Matheson systematically deals with the impact of the power projects upon the town of Hudson's Hope, the people of the upper Peace Valley, and the biophysical character of the river and its valley. The problems and heartbreaks of the settlers who had to give up their hard-won homesteads are vividly described, as are the dramatic changes to wildlife habitat and river regime resulting from power production and the deep flooding to accommodate Williston Lake. In the concluding chapters she reflects, with the people of Hudson's Hope, on the benefits and costs of "harnessing the river" and the expectations which remain unmet.

This book may be compared with that of James Wilson (*People in the Way*, University of Toronto Press, 1973), in which he describes "the reality of the Columbia River project in relation to the people of the Arrow Lakes region" of southeast British Columbia. In *This Was Our Valley*, Pollon and Matheson seek to do the same thing with respect to the Peace River projects and the people of Hudson's Hope and the upper Peace region. One difference is that Wilson wrote as an outsider looking in (he had been an employee of B.C. Hydro based in Vancouver), while Pollon and Matheson write as insiders looking out. The authenticity which this pro-

vides helps to overcome the otherwise somewhat contrived linkage of the two quite different styles and subject matter of the two authors.

*Vancouver, B.C.* J. D. CHAPMAN

*Continental Dash: The Russian-American Telegraph*, by Rosemary Neering. Ganges, B.C.: Horsdahl & Schubart, 1989. Pp. 215, illus.

The Russian-American Telegraph — commonly known in B.C. as the Collins Overland Telegraph — was an ambitious attempt to link Europe and North America by a telegraph line through the virtually unknown lands of northern British Columbia, Russian America, and Siberia. In the early 1860s, the telegraph was the ultimate means of rapid communication and an essential element in the military, diplomatic, and commercial life of both continents. The Atlantic Ocean, however, remained an effective barrier to linking the two continental systems despite several major efforts by Cyrus Field to lay a trans-Atlantic cable from Ireland to Newfoundland during the 1850s.

The brainchild of Perry McDonough Collins, a San Francisco promoter and adventurer, the overland route was intended to solve the problem of the Atlantic and link the United States with Europe via Asia. As early as 1855, Collins promoted the idea of a land route as part of a grander scheme to advance the commercial interests of the United States in eastern Asia and the North Pacific. In his view, the United States and the expanding Russian Empire had much in common and much to gain through cooperation. Collins' travels in Siberia further convinced him of the desirability of trade between the two countries and of the power that a telegraph link through the area would bring to the United States.

Despite interviews with the governments involved and vague promises of support, Collins was unable to finance the project himself. In 1858 he gained a powerful ally in Hiram Sibley, head of the Western Union Telegraph Company, which had emerged as the giant of the North American industry after a series of mergers and acquisitions. By 1864 Sibley and Western Union were sufficiently convinced of the improbability of a successful trans-Atlantic cable that they were willing to gamble on the overland route. The company acquired the rights to construct the line assembled by Collins in negotiations with the Russian, British, and United States governments since 1856, and formed the Western Union Extension Company to undertake the work.

Exploration, survey, and construction parties worked on the project from 1865 until 1867, when news that Field had successfully laid an Atlantic cable the previous year finally reached the parties working in the far north. In the main, the work accomplished consisted of the construction of the British Columbia portion as far north as Telegraph Creek and exploration and survey work in Russian America and Siberia. The only other section of the line actually erected consisted of a few miles on the Seward Peninsula. The project had special meaning to British Columbia in that both New Westminster and Victoria gained telegraph links to the outside world once the initial sections of the line were built.

Rosemary Neering's discussion of the efforts to construct the telegraph line is not an academic study, nor is it intended as such. It is conceived and executed as popular history directed at the general reader. While some attention is given to the problems of capital formation and management decisions associated with the venture, the major focus of the book is on the trials of the exploration and survey and construction parties in the unknown North. The personalities associated with the project are considered in heroic and sometimes tragic terms as they winter in the far North, conduct scientific observations, and attempt to establish a route for the telegraph under adverse conditions.

The book draws heavily upon the travel literature published after the failure of the venture as well as upon reminiscences and diaries of the participants who worked and wintered among the natives and traders of the regions. The book reproduces many of the illustrations that graced these earlier works. *Continental Dash* is, in effect, an extension of that species of nineteenth-century literature. It assumes a romantic view of history concerned with noble undertakings and, in this case, noble failures. As such, it is not the definitive study of the Collins' Overland Telegraph. It is, however, a good introduction to the topic for the general reader and will hopefully spark further research.

The narrative provides some insight into the methods of nineteenth-century promoters and the special problems associated with their desire to extend United States influence into the North Pacific. Interest in Siberia and Alaska can be viewed as variants on the American obsession with the China market in the context of the maritime fur trade. Unfortunately, these larger themes are not discussed in any detail. Intriguing glimpses are provided into the life of the natives and traders in Alaska and Siberia as filtered through the minds of the adventurers who chronicled their time in the North. In sum, more can be asked of the topic, but Neering is not

to be faulted for her work: the book is designed as a narrative for the general reader, and it achieves that end.

*Anchorage, Alaska* LOGAN HOVIS

*Images from the Inside Passage: an Alaskan Portrait by Winter and Pond*, by Victoria Wyatt. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1989.

Nineteenth-century photography often came about as the result of a restless, gold-digging, exploitative spirit. There was money in images of far places and peoples, and tourism fostered that market. The migration of two young Californians to Alaska in the 1890s, lured by dreams of frontier gold, was the initiating movement which was to produce the photographs here: eighty-eight plates of Indian portraits and views and some additional material selected from the archival holding of Winter and Pond's studio, which was active in southeast Alaska at the turn of the century (and did not actually close until 1956). The book was produced in association with an exhibit of these photographs at the Alaska State Library, and the manner of the text reflects a careful and somewhat pedestrian style of archival display.

Why these images were taken is an easier question to answer than how we can read and use them today. Photography, from its invention in mid-century, had provided an occupational opportunity for the person of artistic inclination who also needed to make a living. It was a new field, a modern technology but not so difficult as to be beyond the capacities of a moderately educated man. Lloyd Winter, we are told, had been an art student and portraitist in San Francisco before travelling to Alaska with romantic ideas of mining gold. He settled into photography, a secondary commercial exploitation of the region, when he bought an existing business in Juneau from a man named Landerking, who had been a machinist's mate, and brought in as partner Percy Pond, who had been a bookkeeper.

Victoria Wyatt provides these details while regretting the absence of diaries or journals which might tell us what was in the minds of this pair of photographers as they set up their shots. (Dual attribution is evidently necessary; Professor Wyatt does not venture any idea about which partner did what.) The broad motivation is not really in doubt: Winter and Pond took their Indian photographs because it was local colour — and saleable. They did not specialize exclusively in Indian photography, and they do not

appear to have had the ethnographic ambitions of an Edward S. Curtis, but they were serious enough about this side of their trade to publish two pamphlets on the Alaska Indians and their totems to accompany albums of pictures they produced. They used their own boat, the *Photo Friday*, for the necessary travel. Clan treasures and ceremonial artefacts were kept in the villages, where the longhouses and totem poles were also desirable photographic targets. They also appear to have developed good personal contacts with the Indians.

The result is an interesting, if conventional, set of Indian photographs. We see the familiar products of the conjunction of nineteenth-century camera and Northwest Coast Indian culture: dancers in elaborately beaded tunics, houses heaped with clan treasures, bands of potlatch celebrants gathered on northern beaches. Many of the photographs specifically register traditional objects: masks, poles, dancing blankets, nose-rings, and so on, because evidently these were available and established synechdochic expressions of Indian culture. Wyatt's observation that tourists wanted the kind of photographs they might have taken themselves provides a sensible explanation for a further range of photographs of contemporary scenes in an undressed, realistic manner: women street-sellers with baskets, tent-dwellers by the waterside, old women crouched in doorways — though there may also be a hangover here of traditions of street photography stemming from European practice.

Content appears to sufficiently explain some photographs of a general, public nature. But documentation, or the lack of it, undoubtedly reveals its importance in relation to portraits of individual Indians. There is an uncertainty here which brings to mind the general weakness of photography as ethnography. We do not know what went on before the shutter was opened, and this ignorance necessarily induces caution. Photographs, despite the claim of truth made by their exactitude, are notably vulnerable to challenge in terms of content and arrangement. This is most obvious in studio photography, where the carefully deliberated posing of subjects allows and perhaps encourages the dressing-up of figure and setting with properties that might be available but inauthentic; Professor Wyatt points to the anachronism in the fur capes worn by young Indian women who posed in the Winter and Pond studio at a date when the wool blanket had become the standard outer garment. She also identifies and pursues ceremonial objects which appear and reappear in different outdoor photographs, and were perhaps as casually introduced into those shots as studio properties. And, further to the question of truth, she notes and corrects looseness in captioning. A line of supposed "Chilkat dancers" on one Win-

ter and Pond print have been carefully identified by her, with the help of informants, as a group of Haida notables.

Documents, of course, are not a firm control and guide in all situations, but sometimes one is aware of how a simple register of business transactions could help. At least two portraits which appear here make the point: both show Indian women in white dress. One is a handsome young woman in a tasteful, fashionably tailored day dress — she might be the wife of a prominent man in the Indian community; the other shows two women in light and frilly sleeveless dance frocks. Were they dance-hall girls? If we knew who commissioned and paid for the sittings, some interesting social questions might be answered. A number of photographs in this collection support the view that Indians, too, kept photograph albums.

Such answers would bear upon the general function which Professor Wyatt sees this collection as serving: the registering of details of Tlingit and Haida life in the region at a time of contact with white trade and settlement. Put in terms of an issue, this is to ask a question. Was the contact a disaster for the Indians or a stimulus? Her answer is that the photographs show the adaptability and resilience of the strong Indian cultures of the Northwest. There is the simple record of continuance of traditional Indian activity and also, within the photographs, evidence of positive interaction between the cultures. Perhaps the best detailed support for this positive reading lies in the photographs of house fronts which show white architectural styles being taken over, while the ancient use of the house front to proclaim identity and status is retained. In one instance, a leading Indian of Wrangell, named Kadishan, builds a two-storey house with bay windows on both storeys which is placed facing the sea and, as photographs show, with two traditional totem poles raised before the bay windows. In another set of photographs, two Tlingit house fronts are shown bearing plaques inscribed with poems, in Longfellow's favourite metre, which identify the occupant, in more or less boastful terms, as a friend to the white man. In both these instances, there exists surrounding documentation to assist an understanding of the photographs.

Debasement and poverty, following contact, might alternatively be inferred from some of the pictures. Professor Wyatt does not seriously explore the question or build a context of social history around the photographs. The course of history in this century has proved the survival, in some fashion, of the Northwest Coast Indians, and there are other contemporary pressures which no doubt encourage her positive attitude in reading the past. It is worth noting, in this respect, that none of the original Winter and Pond captions which appear in this book contain doom-laden phrases

such as "vestiges" or "vanishing race" which are common elsewhere in white photography of the Indian at the turn of the century. Edward S. Curtis, of course, used just such phrases in arguing the urgent need of his comprehensive project to photograph the Indian cultures of North America before they became extinct. Curtis began his work on the Northwest Coast a couple of decades after Lloyd Winter arrived in Juneau, but their periods of activity overlapped; it is noticeable how much more successfully Curtis uses the still photograph. His photography may have been predicated on the cultural death of the subjects, but the pictures are dramatically full of life and always interesting to the eye.

Professor Wyatt says little about the aesthetics of the Winter and Pond photographs and, indeed, from one point of view there seems all too little to say. Photographically, the achievement is competent but unadventurous. A number of photographs taken outdoors possess a sense of life and visual interest derived, generally, from the drama of the setting. But attention to the plain visual record may dominate to the degree that the natural drama of a scene is actually suppressed. The plates which show the interior of the Whale House at Klukwan are cropped in a manner which reduces the perspective of depth; consequently the content appears all on one plane as detailed line and pattern. This is not an interior entered but a surface confronted, flat and iconic and unrevealing. Such a record may suit that side of ethnohistory which treasures particulars; it can also deaden the subject matter by making it dismayingly inert and, in its detail, recondite. The work of Winter and Pond presents at times a curious parallel to the symmetrical and two-dimensional art of the ceremonial blankets and house screens which they photograph.

As studio photographers, the pair regularly display the practices of an earlier generation. One or the other was evidently capable, at some date, of using light to invest scenes with tones of feeling: Professor Wyatt points, with an attention which suggests scorn, to the sentimentality of such a picture of a baby in a native sling. The majority of the portraits are plain, head-on, full-figure poses which lack such development and control of feeling; one consequence, as the figures confront the camera, is a sense of awkwardness and oddity. The anthropologist Margaret B. Blackman asks questions in her Preface about the stories to be read behind such enigmatic figures. Her remarks are not hostile and are directed towards appreciation of the powerful actuality of photography. But it should have been noted by someone in relation to this collection that photographs, with or without captions, can be enigmatic or not enigmatic: handling is the key. This book has the virtues of clear presentation and honest caution, but it remains

unnecessarily thin in explanatory surround, particularly in the area of photographic history, including aesthetics. Aesthetics should not be neglected for, finally, these photographs may be read as a silent restatement of the age-old idea that humans are essentially art-making creatures, whether white photographers or Indian weavers and carvers.

*University of Toronto* ALAN THOMAS

*History of Music in British Columbia 1850-1950*, by Dale McIntosh. Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1989. Pp. 296; bibliography, index, photographs.

Dale McIntosh's *History of Music in British Columbia 1850-1950* is the first scholarly, monograph-length, regional music history to be published in Canada. Its appearance could herald a new stage in our awareness of our cultural selves — one that owes less to a narrative of national identity and more to local experience as the theatre of meaning.

The author chooses to focus on the traditional institutions of European classical music: the wind band (which receives the most expansive chapter), choral organizations, orchestras, theatrical companies, education, and musical festivals. His final chapter, "A Musical Potpourri," provides briefer descriptions of a fascinating range of other subjects, including instrument building, musical clubs, music publication, jazz, chamber music, dance bands, theatre music, and composition. Five of the chapters end with a useful checklist of organizations (Chapters 1-3) or works (Chapters 4 and 7). Within each chapter, a wealth of detail about who did what, where, and when is unfolded, not only for major cities such as Vancouver or Victoria but also for many smaller cities and regions. With a primarily geographic sub-organizational scheme, the sub-regional histories embedded within this provincial one go far to challenge the prevailing stereotype that the energy centres of Canada's music culture are exclusively the large cities. Twenty-eight plates of photographs complement and enliven the text of each chapter; perhaps a second edition of the book could provide an index of these.

McIntosh has an eye/ear for good anecdotes and, it seems, British Columbia has had a share of interesting and occasionally even unsavoury characters, ranging from the elusive Henry Green, the conductor who wouldn't be photographed, to the swindlers, choir director Charles Schaffer or orchestral conductor Ed Leewards (and "Mama"). We learn of idiosyncratic performance practices (the euphonium player who conducted with his foot, or the conductor who threatened to fine his players

a case of beer if they failed to observe a rest) and practical jokes (the bandsmen who put limburger cheese on the brass mouthpieces or the pit piano player whose large nose got caught by an on-stage whip in a musical theatre production). The anecdotes convey a more rough and tumble nineteenth- and early twentieth-century musical society than that represented in other Canadian music histories. We seem to learn less, on the other hand, about the lives of the important musicians whose careers were perhaps less coloured by humorous or unsavoury events. Perhaps subsequent publications by McIntosh might provide more biographical and sociological contextualization for such major figures as William Haynes, Archibald McMurdo, Stanley Bulley, Reginald Hincks, or Basil Horsfall.

As McIntosh is clearly aware (see his Preface), the choice of emphasis and the organizational scheme selected for any written document creates its own biases. This book, like any other, should be read with these in mind. The focus on the traditional European performance institutions, for example, has precluded extensive discussion of informal, amateur music making. Similarly, large institutions (orchestras, choirs, bands) are privileged over small ones (chamber groups). Through its dedication to Anglo-based music, the book provides little about other ethnic traditions (except for Indian communities that developed bands or other "mainstream" ensembles, and for tantalizing hints about a Chinese funeral, the German Sing Verein [*sic*] or Les enfan[ts] de Paris). A more accurate title such as "A History of Anglo-related music . . ." could perhaps have acknowledged the bounds of the subject matter.

Another bias manifests itself in the generic focus, especially as regards chronology. Composition is given extremely short shrift (five pages of prose plus a checklist of compositions "indigenous to British Columbia"). Furthermore, while the title's chronological limit of 1950 is overly modest for most of the book — all other realms of activity are, in fact, surveyed up to the mid-1980s — composition is strictly limited to pre-1950 work. In view of the flourishing of compositional activity in the province in the past forty years, this leaves an impression of less creative vitality than is the case. While the enormity of discussing post-1950 composition may, indeed, have expanded the monograph to an unrealistic dimension, the imbalance of up-to-date information about performance, music drama, and education with delimited "period" information about composition is hard to fathom.

McIntosh describes his interest "in music as a social phenomenon and its contribution to the cultural framework of this province" (11). While "society" is sometimes hidden behind the name lists, there is considerable information here about the values and social structures integral to British

Columbia's music history. In relation to the music cultures of other regions of Canada, this reviewer is struck by the following: the extent of large ensemble activity (especially bands) in native Indian communities, the instances of special forms of patronage (e.g., company ensembles or even resistance to advertising in concert programmes), the structuring and valuing of competition within and outside of music festivals, innovative social structures such as that of the Arion club with "active" and "associate" members, mechanisms for cultural co-operation among communities (especially in the Okanagan Valley), the emotional support for such organizations as TUTS, the vitality of youth groups (a subject to which McIntosh, as a "music education" professor, is no doubt attuned). I would welcome critical analyses of these topics. The author might have devoted more space to "why" and "how" in addition to "who, what, where, when."

Perhaps because it breaks from the subject constraints imposed, in part, by the focus on institutional structures, the last chapter, "A Musical Potpourri," raises some of the most significant topics for a socio-musicological survey. The extent of instrument-making (though perhaps, at this point, we need to examine Sabathil's definition of "authenticity" with more care) and the important role of musical clubs suggest that separate chapters might be warranted for these topics.

Scholars will want more extensive documentation than McIntosh provides. His decision to footnote only quotations leaves us wondering about the source and hence accuracy of many anecdotes and facts. His bibliography does not include a list of interviewees (were the interviews taped?); nor is the location of all manuscript material indicated. Were all the newspapers listed on page 269 indexed for music entries? If such an index has been computerized by McIntosh, this would be a rich source of information for subsequent scholarly work.

In a future edition one could hope for the correct spelling of Bruno Walter's name (consistently "Walther" in this printing) and for the elimination of duplicated lines on page 226. These details, however, do not detract from the overriding importance of the book.

No doubt, all future research on British Columbia's music culture will start from McIntosh, and music scholars in other provinces will find much valuable comparative material as well as useful structural models for parallel studies. Finally, we should reiterate that this book displays fundamentally that Canada's music culture is richly textured on provincial and regional levels and is not the monopoly of a few urban centres.

*York University* BEVERLEY DIAMOND-CAVANAGH