

BOOK REVIEWS

A Year on the Wild Side

Briony Penn

Victoria: Horsdal and Schubart, 1999. 178 pp. Illus. \$15.95 paper.

By Nancy J. Turner
University of Victoria

A YEAR ON THE WILD SIDE is a compilation of selected weekly columns on the natural history of southwestern British Columbia, originally published in Victoria's *Monday Magazine* and the *Gulf Islands Driftwood*, and, through these media, enjoyed and discussed by many of us over the past few years.

In her book, Briony Penn – geographer, teacher, writer, and artist – epitomizes what natural history education should be for all of us: relevant, timely, engaging, practical, instructive, and memorable. As such, *A Year on the Wild Side* will be of interest to all educators, naturalists, and local geography buffs who want to learn more about their bioregion in a thoughtful and entertaining way. The book is organized as a monthly personal commentary and diary focusing on the land and waters of the “Salish Sea.” Already Penn’s designation – Salish Sea – is catching on among local naturalists. An admittedly “manufactured” place name, the Salish Sea is described as “the distinctive inland sea that empties into the Pacific,” extending from the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca down to Puget Sound. It is, Penn declares, “one of the ecologically richest inland seas in the world” and deserves its own designation as much as does

the Mediterranean Sea (xii). It is also the traditional territory of several local Coast Salish peoples, and the name is thus a tribute to them and an acknowledgment of their long-term occupation of the area.

The contents of the book definitely qualify as “BC Studies.” Although the book is not written in an academic, scholarly mode, do not be fooled by the lively, chatty style. Penn bases her commentaries on a solid foundation of research, observation, and personal experience. The book ranges over the subjects of ecology, geography, history, anthropology, and (perhaps) psychology in an admirably interdisciplinary fashion.

The topics are as diverse as are the life forms and ecosystems of the Salish Sea. Several of the essays are about birds: murrelets, widgeons, herons, snowy owls, brants, hummingbirds, raptors, vultures, woodpeckers, and nighthawks. There are articles on river otters, seals, sea lions, orcas, bats, snakes, amphibians, slugs, butterflies, spiders, skunk cabbage, horsetails, garry oaks, maple leaves, and mushrooms. Each section embodies a story, a personal touch, a bit of humour, and an ecological lesson about the critical value and vulnerability of our local ecosystems, from garry oak meadows

to wetlands and estuaries. For example, Penn introduces one section with a poignant scene that depicts a dead mother giant Pacific octopus washed up on the beach, a creature few of us even know is an occupant of the Salish Sea. Through her whimsical storytelling, she educates us about the life cycle of the octopus and reminds us of the issues of pollution and conservation that are critical to our survival.

No review of this book would be complete without a commentary on Penn's illustrations. These are relatively simple but elegant hand-annotated pen-and-ink sketches, which Penn says were designed (in the newspaper versions) to be copied, coloured, and otherwise embellished by schoolchildren and anyone else wanting to enjoy them. This is interactive art, and it fits Penn's style to perfection. One of my favourites is her wonderful illustrated rendition of the Twelve Days of Christmas, complete with: 12

woodpeckers drumming, 11 otters sliding, 10 deer mice leaping, 9 eagles watching, 8 whales a-breaching, 7 widegeons swimming, 6 crossbills laying, 5 goldeneyes, 4 dark-eyed juncos, 3 Pacific loons, 2 buffleheads, and a ruffed grouse in a fir tree.

Although the book is entertaining, there is a serious undercurrent to the stories Penn tells. Despite the light-hearted tone, there are some ironic, disturbing, and outright heart-breaking aspects to these stories. For me, as another local observer who was raised in the vicinity of the Salish Sea, Penn touched on many of the topics that have been of deep concern: the alarming trends in growth and development of the region, the introduction of aggressive exotic species, pollution, and habitat loss.

This treasure of a book is not just another local nature guide. Its lessons are serious and should be heeded by all of us who care about the future of the Salish Sea.

Whales of the West Coast

David A.E. Spalding

Madeira Park: Harbour, 1999. 211 pp. Illus., maps. \$18.95 paper.

By Mark Forsythe

CBC Radio One Vancouver

AFTER A SEVENTY-FIVE YEAR hiatus, Makah whaling harpoons again found their mark in 1999. Live television coverage of Native whalers in a dugout canoe chasing and killing a grey whale rendered news crews speechless. The Makah served notice they were reclaiming a cultural and spiritual

heritage dating back hundreds – if not thousands – of years. They argued that greys had been removed from the endangered species list and that their right to a food hunt was firmly entrenched in an 1855 treaty with the US government. Response from around the world was swift. Conservationists and animal rights activists

attempted to stop the hunt on the water, anonymous death threats were aimed at some Makah leaders, and the public attempted to make sense of a hunt considered by many to be unnecessary and barbaric. In the span of a single generation, public opinion on whaling had shifted from indifference to righteous anger.

In *Whales of the West Coast* naturalist David Spalding puts the hunt into a historical context. He notes that it is part of a continuum in a long, complex relationship between humans and whales. West Coast Natives hunted whales for centuries; British, French, and American whalers later sailed from bases in San Francisco, Seattle, and Victoria. Whales were prized for their oil and a multitude of products made from their carcasses – from buggy whips to perfumes and dog food. One whaling station at Coal Harbour on northern Vancouver Island took almost 23,000 whales over fifty-six years. Japanese and Russian factory ships were known to kill that many in one season alone; grey populations were under siege. Former Coal Harbour whaler Harry Hole remembers the hunt thirty-five years ago: “You didn’t question either ethics or conservation – it was just what you did. These were the days when you could go out and see 100 whales at a time. We hunted as far down as the US border and as far as the Charlottes.”

It’s difficult to fathom now, but in 1959 the Department of Fisheries and Oceans positioned a machine gun over Seymour Narrows to shoot orcas because BC fishers thought whales were cutting into fish stocks. Spalding points out that there wasn’t a word of protest: “In the end the machine gun was never fired. Nevertheless, many fishermen and others shot at orcas; a quarter of the orcas later captured for

aquaria had bullet wounds. Imagine public response if the government set up a gun today!”

Whales of the West Coast includes a natural history of orcas, greys, humpbacks, and lesser known whales, and it is packed with whale trivia that is sure to amaze and amuse (the loudest whale is a blue, recorded at 188 decibels; a right whale’s testicle can weigh one ton). His first-person accounts of whale encounters in the wild are engrossing; Spalding is truly in awe of these warm-blooded, social creatures. He brings a unique perspective, having eaten whale steak as a child in England and later worked at a museum in a historic whaling port. After a career with Canadian museums, Spalding moved to Pender Island, where he now delights in strolling to the beach to watch orcas surface. Today tens of thousands of people travel from around the globe to the West Coast for much the same experience. A \$6 million guided whale-watching industry has emerged in the waters between Alaska and Oregon. Spalding believes that whales have found a place in mainstream culture: “Their images appear everywhere in West Coast design from business logos to tattoos. Interest in whales extends into the elite culture of paintings, prints and sculptures, and an extensive nonfiction literature.”

We’re introduced to numerous “whale people”: fossil hunters Jim and Gail Goedert of Gig Harbor, Washington, who have searched out 400 whale specimens; animal psychologist Paul Spong, who has brought new understanding to the behaviour of resident and transient orcas and has campaigned for whales in the wild; and John Ford, curator of marine mammals at the Vancouver Aquarium, who, for twenty-five years, has been

conducting groundbreaking orca acoustics research. Whaling historian Joan Goddard, whose grandfather managed BC whaling stations earlier this century, comments, "I'd like to write about how we are going to relate to whales in the next century – about use of whales with respect." Spalding muses that whale people are "as fascinating as the whales themselves."

Whales of the West Coast serves as a useful handbook for newcomers to

whale watching as well as seasoned observers. Its 200 pages include details on whale parks, museums, hotlines, research and conservation agencies, and information on when and where to view whales in the wild. Spalding thinks that our growing fascination with whales can only pay dividends: "If closer association with whales can help us develop a new more intimate, friendly relationship with nature, we surely need it."

*Since the Time of the Transformers:
The Ancient Heritage of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Ditidaht,
and Makah*

Alan D. McMillan

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999. 252 pp. Illus., maps. \$85 cloth.

By Donald Mitchell
University of Victoria

IN AN IDEAL WORLD of archaeological scholarship, definitive regional summaries and interpretations would be offered once basic data recovery had passed some threshold of adequacy. There would have to be studies reporting the results of excavations at sites that are collectively representative of all categories of sites from all periods of human occupation in all distinguishable sub-regions. We will not even approach such a daunting ideal on the Northwest Coast for many generations to come. Meanwhile, there is a place for less-than-definitive publications, describing what is currently known and outlining at least an interim reconstruction of past forms, events, and processes. Studies of this sort are a kind of stock-taking, informing us of the present state of

investigation and defining and clarifying the problems still to be resolved.

Such a work is *Since the Time of the Transformers*. The territories of the South Wakashans (Nuu-chah-nulth, Ditidaht, and Makah) delimit the region – an area in the very early stages of investigation, with large portions still archaeological terra incognita and with substantial segments of time as yet unrepresented. The core body of data for reconstructing the region's prehistory comes from major excavation projects: Ozette and Hoko River on the Olympic Peninsula, the Toquaht project at Barkley Sound, Shoemaker Bay at the head of Alberni Inlet, the Hesquiat Harbour project, and Yuquot at Nootka Sound. McMillan's Toquaht archaeological project – and

especially excavations at Ch'uumat'a – plays a particularly prominent role in this reconstruction of West Coast and Olympic Peninsula prehistory, but the author does not fall into the trap of viewing the region exclusively from “his” sites. We are given an admirably complete introduction to *all* work done in the area, thanks, in large measure, to the author's evident familiarity with the region's “grey” literature: dissertations, theses, reports, and conference papers.

A major thesis of the volume is that, in the light of recent research, the West Coast culture type (a descriptive concept based on work known up to about 1987) is in need of revision with respect both to its presumed uniformity and conservatism and to its assumed geographical extent over time. While confirming the culture type's general applicability to the entire area in recent times, McMillan outlines some important spatial and temporal internal variation and makes a solid case for the existence of an earlier, different culture on the southern part of the Coast. The 4,200-year span of the Yuquot site's occupation still stands as evidence of long-term existence of the West Coast culture type, but early assemblages from Ch'uumat'a, Little Beach, Shoemaker Bay (and other sites in the Alberni Valley), and Hoko River are of a markedly different form. Their closest resemblance is to contemporaneous assemblages from the Strait of Georgia and northern Puget Sound. This discovery is an exciting development, for it opens the possibility that prior to a Wakashan spread,

represented by the widely distributed West Coast culture type, there was a Salishan occupation of the whole of southern Vancouver Island. The early presence of Salishan speakers has long been suggested for the head of Alberni Inlet, and Hoko River's initial component is identifiably like the Strait of Georgia's Locarno Beach culture, which is of the same age. But it now looks like the whole area from at least Barkley Sound south was also allied to the culture of the Strait of Georgia (Salishan) area.

McMillan's synopsis makes very evident those gaps in the record that wait to be filled. No cultural deposits have been found predating 2300 BC, although the area was free of ice several thousand years earlier and known occupation of Vancouver Island dates back to 6000 BC. And almost no sites have been excavated within the northern one-third of Nuuchahnulth territory. That large area, along with the adjacent, even larger, Kwakwaka'wakw portion of northwestern Vancouver Island (also without significant excavation), forms a particularly intriguing frontier. A number of signs point to it as the “homeland” of the Wakashans, from which expansion took place south, east, and north (as the South and North Wakashans grew separate).

If still a long way from a definitive history of the West Coast people, we have at least a first-class summary and provisional interpretation to set the stage for research in the new millennium.

*The Social Life of Stories:
Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory*

Julie Cruikshank

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998. 211 pp. Illus., maps. \$75 cloth.

By Joyce Shales

*Alaska Department of Education
and Early Development, Juneau*

JULIE CRUIKSHANK'S *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* was a pleasure to read. It was a pleasure for me because I was reading for the first time about something I always knew but had never put into words for myself. What this book did was make me think about my own upbringing and how stories were used in my own family. The book meant a lot to me, not only because I know many of the families in the Yukon Territory in Canada, but also because I have spent time in the Sakha Republic in Russia and know many of the people there. It was a perfect book for me to read and review.

As I said, I read this book with pleasure, but it was more than that. I read it as if I were thirsty, drinking in every word or idea. I read faster and faster. I wanted to absorb as much as possible as fast as possible. Why? Because it is so rare to be able to read a book written about Indigenous peoples that is so close to where we live, so close to our own hearts. So close to our own experience.

I could actually see in my mind's eye Mrs. Angela Sidney, a Deisheetaan Tlingit and Tagish woman, whom I knew as Auntie Angela, educating the author. According to Dr. Cruikshank, she and Mrs. Sidney worked together for many years. In the beginning they

began a journey together doing what Cruikshank understood as oral history. Yet, when Cruikshank asked questions, Mrs. Sidney's answers were not what she thought she wanted nor were they necessarily what she expected. Mrs. Sidney, it seems, would insist on telling a story instead of directly answering questions.

One of the stories Mrs. Sidney told was about a coastal Tlingit man named Kaax'achgook, who may have lived near Sitka, Alaska. Kaax'achgook was a famous ancestor of the Kiks.adi clan, the clan of my grandfather, Rudolph Walton, of Sitka, Alaska. The story about Kaax'achgook is about a hunter lost at sea for many months and how he used the sun's positions as steering points to navigate his return home. The story has many meanings, but one of the important aspects of the story is that Kaax'achgook had a difficult time adjusting to the changes that occurred during his absence. Cruikshank states that Mrs. Sidney told her that story only once in 1974 but that she referred to it many times in the following years that they worked together.

Then in 1981 Mrs. Sidney told how she used the story of Kaax'achgook for the first time in public in 1945 when she was about forty-three years old. According to Cruikshank, Mrs. Sidney talked about Kaax'achgook when her son, Pete, was visiting one day so that

she could illustrate why it was so important to Pete's life. Peter Sidney had served overseas for five years during the Second World War. Mrs. Sidney explained how hard it was for her while he was gone. Pete had been gone a long time, just like Kaax'achgook, she explained. When Pete was on his way home from the war, the family discussed how they would celebrate his return. Mrs. Sidney described the feast they planned and the people they would invite. And she said she was going to sing "that Kaax'achgook song!" When Pete came home the greatest gift she could give her son was the song sung by Kaax'achgook when he returned home. And that's why it is called "Pete's song." A verse from the song is: "I gave up hope, and then I dreamed I was home" (37).

When Mrs. Sidney was eighty-six years old she decided to use the Kaax'achgook story and song again. She was then a senior elder storyteller in the Yukon Territory. She was in great demand, and in 1988 she was invited to participate in the opening of the new Yukon College in Whitehorse. She was also asked to give the college a Tagish name. Mrs. Sidney sang the Kaax'achgook song at the ceremonies "because it conveyed her feelings about what Yukon College could mean to young people in the Territory." She sang the Kaax'achgook song to a mixed audience that might not understand the meaning of the story because, as she put it, "that Yukon College is going

to be like the Sun for the students. Instead of going to Vancouver or Victoria, they're going to be able to stay here and go to school here. We're not going to lose our kids anymore. It's going to be like the Sun for them, just like for that Kaax'achgook." (40)

Cruikshank states: "If we think of oral tradition as a social activity rather than as some reified product, we come to view it as part of the equipment for living rather than a set of meanings embedded within texts and waiting to be discovered." She goes on to observe that "Angela Sidney's various tellings of the Kaax'achgook story remind us that when we approach oral tradition there is more involved than textual analysis. Her point, in her various retellings, is to show how oral narrative is part of a communicative process ... Unless we pay attention to why a particular story is selected and told, we understand very little of its meanings." (41)

What excited me so much about this book is that Julie Cruikshank learned from Mrs. Angela Sidney as well as others and understood what I always knew from my own heritage but never thought about. Dr. Cruikshank, through her research, came to understand that there is a reason a particular story is told and a point that the storyteller is making to the listener. And that the context in which a story is told is as important as the story itself.

Thank you, Julie, for asking, for listening and writing, and for understanding.

Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808-1939

Andrea Laforet and Annie York

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998. 282 pp. Illus., maps. \$75 cloth.

By Lynne Jorgesen¹
Nlaka'pamux Nation

IT'S KIND OF A FACILE REVIEWING device to begin by saying that Andrea Laforet and Annie York take up where James Teit left off 100 years ago, but, in its modest way, *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808-1939* presumes to do just that. For the first six chapters, Laforet is fully in command of her material, and the gentle, serene tone of the book is a fitting homage to the persona of the late York, whose presence permeates its heart. The pair slyly inverts the scrupulous methodology of their illustrious ethnographic predecessors (notably Franz Boas but also Teit) by cheerfully giving names, identities, even characters to those Nlaka'pamux whose lives as lived constitute the ethnographic insight presented. Laforet also successfully (ably assisted by York, it is assumed) and helpfully backtracks through Teit's material in order to reposition the community informants of a century ago beside the knowledge they shared with the world.

It seems a fitting vindication. In his zeal to present pure information as ob-

jectively as possible, Teit's editor, Boas, purged virtually everything from their published works that could identify Teit's informants. Teit left a legacy of thousands of pages of faithfully detailed field notes, but those notes directly related to published text apparently did not survive Boas's purge.² There is almost a sense of poetic justice contained in the image of two women, a century later, overturning the precedent so carefully established by two men (and being applauded for their audacity in doing so).

The title of the book is self-explanatory; but the book is also a warm, humane portrait of an ancient Spuzzum that is invisible to legions of heedless drivers passing through on Canada's national highway. Then there is post-contact Spuzzum, which cannot shake a lingering, faintly unsavory reputation derived from having been caught in the path of the onslaught of gold seekers from 1858 on. So completely isolated are these two realities from each other, however, that they never intersect in the book. That is not to say that the Nlaka'pamux did not successfully adjust to life in the new economy that descended upon them, and an important part of

¹ Before beginning, a caveat to the reader: this review is written entirely from a contemporary Scw'exmx-centric point of view. The Scw'exmx correspond to Teit's Cawa'xamux, or Tcawa'xamux, also referred to as the "Nicola Division" of the Nlaka'pamux. Here, the phrase is inclusive of all First Nations in the Nicola watershed, including the Syilx (Okanagan) people of Douglas Lake, from whom I trace my ancestry.

² Wendy Wickwire has discussed the mentor-editor relationship between Boas and Teit in a number of papers, most recently in "Storied History: A Case Study from the Similkameen Valley, British Columbia," 3-4 (unpublished paper in the author's possession).

Spuzzum is a compelling look at how tirelessly these people worked to get by from day to day. Even more compelling are the sections on Nlaka'pamux cosmology and thought that seamlessly weave insights gleaned from Teit with material from Annie York and others.³

For instance, ethnographers have grappled for decades with the difficult question of why Christianity was so readily embraced by Interior Salish groups like the Nlaka'pamux. The resulting, sometimes contradictory, theories usually lead to a similar conclusion – one that casts Indigenous peoples as either pawns or victims of external forces beyond their comprehension. Laforet recognizes that “the superficial similarities between the Nlaka'pamux and Christian concepts of prayer and prophecy were enough to act as a bridge between the Nlaka'pamux and the missionaries” (115). The point that has escaped so many in the past is finally made here: “the Christian message was *an addition* to the first converts’ understanding of the world, *not a replacement* of what they had been taught from childhood” (108, emphasis mine).

³ A brief aside about orthography must be made. While *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories* offers both “a brief guide to pronunciation” and an “Orthography conversion table” (of the two orthographies used by Thompson, Thompson, and Bouchard), the Nlaka'pamux phrases found throughout the text employ symbols not found in the charts at the beginning of the book. As a consequence, although having heard Nlaka'pamux (and Syilx, its Interior Salish relative) spoken since at least the age of eight, I must confess to lacking Laforet’s linguistic proficiency. Thus, in spite of much effort, capturing the elusive Nlaka'pamux words encoded in the medium of print at times proved beyond me, so one can imagine the impact on novice or casual readers.

Unfortunately, once the proselytizing foot was in the door, these once-parallel world views were on what, in hindsight, seems an inevitable collision course. Some historians have implied that conversion was merely a means to an end for the Nlaka'pamux. What they were really after, runs this line of logic, was help with land claims and access to European medical practices (which then became, by inference or otherwise, “superior” to cure by traditional means). There is lukewarm comfort to be found in the thought that those Nlaka'pamux who did benefit from Western medical interventions – like smallpox inoculations – were probably culled from the ranks of the Christian select rather than from the actively practising “Pagans” categorized as “Type 2” (of 4) by Teit in his unpublished paper on attitudes held by members of the Spences Bridge band towards missionaries.⁴ In sum, as Laforet observes, “Annie York accepted both Christianity and Nlaka'pamux belief” (108). In this, York’s views were consistent with those of Mourning Dove, novelist and autobiographer of Colville and Nicola (Scw'exmx) descent, who wrote in the mid-1930s:

⁴ James Teit, *Religion: Attitudes of Indians Towards Missionaries (Spences Bridge Band)* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, Salish ethnographic notes, c. 1906-10.), no. 61, Boas Collection 372, roll 4, no. 1 (3-4). Typed facsimile in collection of author was obtained from Wendy Wickwire. In this paper Teit also observed that the typical “Type 2”

also lives almost as moral and as good a life as “Type 1.” He does not care about having his children educated, or, if he does, he wants it done under his own eye. Writing is one of the “mysteries” of the whites, and may therefore be “bad medicine” for the

When I returned home from school in 1912 people said I was another Indian going back to the blanket because I saw no conflict in the old and new [creeds]. I used the sweat lodge and one day remarked to another woman that I was pleased to see such a staunch church member in the lodge. She was horrified at my suggestion that the two did not belong together and flung angry words at me in defense of her own beliefs.⁵

Additionally, Laforet is the first non-Native ethnographer I have encountered to accurately present the changes in Nlaka'pamux women's status as they moved through one life stage to the next, gaining more and more of what feminist theory has taken to calling "agency" with each transition: from maiden (surrounded by a web of constrictions, observing eyes, and duty at every turn) to powerful matriarch.

However, while there is much to praise, I cannot give an unqualified endorsement of *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808-1939*. One reason is the dilemma presented by Laforet's naming of Annie York as her

Indians. He does not care about giving his real name to a white man, and he hates to be counted by the Indian Agent or in the census. (4)

This statement lends credence to my long-held belief that indigenous populations of the day were scandalously under-enumerated not just in the Central Interior but throughout the province. This observation might also be interpreted as a trenchant self-comment on Teit's accomplishments as both ethnographer and federal enumerator.

⁵ Jay Miller, ed., *Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 114-5.

co-author. Laforet herself explains that the book is the result of twenty years' intermittent "conversation" (19) with York:

We wrote the information down because it was our way. She worked in an oral tradition because it was her way. Running through this book is a stream of information about Spuzzum families and the cosmology and social organization of the Nlaka'pamux that Annie and I came to share as a result of our work together, information that was, in the end, both oral and written, inscribed in my notes and always in her memory. It is this information that makes it possible for me, writing this after Annie's death, to provide an interpretive context for both the oral information contributed by Annie and other older people of Spuzzum and the archival information I have supplied. (xi)

Laforet's gesture is certainly intended to give York equal credit (and the accompanying status of co-author), but I tend to agree with David Murray's assertion that the conventions of writing define the form of expression, and "this is particularly relevant when one culture is expressing itself, or being expressed, in the literary and cultural forms – the texts – of another in a situation of political and cultural inequality."⁶

On the other side of the ledger, Annie York was a renowned oral historian and interpreter who had given a lifetime of service to her own people

⁶ David Murray, *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing and Representation in North American Indian Texts* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1991), 66.

in several languages. She was a seasoned member of the second wave of Nlaka'pamux informants by the time she worked with Laforet, and she could predict earthquakes. Surely she was aware of the implications, as she dispensed vital knowledge that would permit the world a glimpse into the Nlaka'pamux soul.

However, it is a pity York is not able to speak for herself because, paradoxically, Laforet appears to position herself and her co-author at odds with the theorists cited in the closing chapter, who appear to question the veracity and continuity of collective oral histories (presumably on the same basis as individual human memory can be challenged in the courts). I believe the ultimate error lies in not properly differentiating between individual and collective memory, but it is difficult to determine where Laforet herself stands in the midst of a dense thicket of theory. Consider:

The principle that representations of the past function as charters for social reality in the present, with the implication that representation of the past is mutable over time, first articulated in 1926

by Bronislaw Malinowski, was underscored by Laura Bohannon's study of the genealogies of the Tiv people of West Africa, which were subject to revision through oral discourse even in the presence of a written record made at an earlier time. (198)

And: "Judith Binney has put it even more bluntly: 'the "telling of history," whether it be oral or written, is not and never has been neutral. It is always the reflection of the priorities of the narrators and their perceptions of the world.'" (198) Yet on the next page, Laforet writes: "Oral tradition is often spoken of as if it were monolithic, yet as work in ... virtually every other part of the world attests, orally transmitted forms of history are as diverse as the societies that generate them" (199). This creates a skewed balance between the first part of Laforet's (and York's) indisputable achievement and the book's conclusion. The result may be an uncomfortable and difficult final chapter for First Nations readers, but it is one worth the effort, if only to gain a critical appreciation of an important issue looming on the horizon in post-Delgamuukw British Columbia.

*Brushed by Cedar, Living By the River:
Coast Salish Figures of Power*

Crisca Bierwert

Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999. 314 pp. \$52.95 cloth.

By Jo-ann Archibald

University of British Columbia

C RISCA BIERWERT presents ethnographic essays on various lifeways and issues faced by the Stó:lō people of southwestern British Columbia. She also includes perspectives of Native American people of Washington State who have some cultural practices similar to those of the Stó:lō Nation. Bierwert brings some complex cultural issues to life and, most important, brings out community perspectives and teachings about the Stó:lō relationship to land and resources as well as the Stó:lō spiritual, family, community, and cultural identity. She also portrays the difficult challenges of getting past colonization and appreciating contentious issues related to economics, politics, Aboriginal rights, and gaining an understanding of cultural protocols and cultural epistemologies. She weaves her personal story and, most important, her "outsider" perspective and academic analysis with the voices and experiences of Stó:lō and Coast Salish peoples. My comments will be limited to what was written about the Stó:lō communities.

I valued immensely the words spoken by Stó:lō community people such as Sweetie Malloway, Frank Malloway, Elizabeth Phillips, and Amelia Douglas, who are highly regarded by many people in the Stó:lō territory. I am Stó:lō and have grown up valuing the river that gives us our name and valuing the teachings of the elders. The

community people shared their knowledge and personal views with Crisca Bierwert. I was disappointed to not find any mention of her checking back with the people who are cited in the book and obtaining their permission to publish what they said.

I was surprised to find myself in the book. Bierwert presents a vignette of me discussing the concept of "silence," grandparent, with the Stó:lō elders during the time I worked on a locally developed Stó:lō curriculum. Coming across this episode reminded me of the stories I had heard from First Nations people who recalled having an academic outsider "live with them," interview them, and then go away. They hear nothing from this person until someone tells them that he/she has published a book about them. In my case, I didn't know Crisca Bierwert was conducting research for her book or that her book existed until I was asked to review it. I knew that she had worked on the curriculum project, and I certainly wasn't asked if she could use my personal identity in retelling the curriculum session with the elders. Even though Bierwert presented the vignette in a respectful and fairly accurate manner, she did not ask me if I wanted to be named. This short episode is only a minute part of the book, but it is an example of an important issue — one that ensures that academic research and publishing will continue to be mistrusted by First Nations people.

I felt very uncomfortable reading about spiritual practices that we are asked not to publicly discuss or write about. I believe that we are asked to do so in order to protect this type of knowledge, to keep it sacred and personal, to let it live among the people who practise it. Bierwert presents the issues and problems of introducing "writing" into spiritual practices, yet she introduces it anyway. Non-Native academics need to respect spiritual privacy and knowledge and to stop writing about it.

This book presents Stó:lō people as fraught with family violence, as suffering exceptionally low unemployment,

and as wrestling with never-ending fishing issues. One short paragraph lists the types of initiatives undertaken by the Stó:lō to counter these problems. Even though Bierwert introduces the historical and socio-political landscape in order to understand the context of these problems, she leaves too many gaps. Yes, there are problems, but much is being done to create a better Stó:lō life.

The book jacket describes Bierwert's narrative ethnography as representing "the future of contemporary anthropology." If it does, then I am disappointed.

*First Fish, First People:
Salmon Tales of the North Pacific Rim*
Judith Roche and Meg McHutchison, editors

Vancouver: One Reel and UBC Press, 1998. 199 pp. Illus. \$29.95 paper.

River of the Angry Moon: Seasons on the Bella Coola
Mark Hume with Harvey Thommasen

Vancouver: Greystone, 1998. 184 pp. Map. \$26.95 cloth.

By Charles Dawson
University of British Columbia

EVERY NOW AND THEN, one comes across a pair of books that dialogue with each other in ways that extend the reader's sense of local place, while siting that place in a network of global concerns. Each of the books reviewed does so superbly in its own right. Taken together, they offer a remarkable sense of the overlap of ecology, story, and history that have come to constitute British Columbia.

Dealing, as they do, with rivers and with salmon, the books speak in powerful ways of the human demands that have crested through this century and imploded into a network of absence. But rather than leave the reader with a sense of nostalgia or sadness alone, the books point to the diversity that remains, the watersheds of cultural and ecological memory left to pass on to the future. Concern for

the future links both volumes and can link cultures.

Tracing and celebrating the indigenous traditions of the North Pacific Rim, *First Fish, First People* situates British Columbia in a temporal and spatial current determined by fish and story rather than cartography. The book will have a vital role in publisher One Reel's plan to link school children with elders in the Pacific salmon communities, but it is also an illuminating work that fosters cross-cultural understanding between nations.

First Fish, First People collects a series of stories, songs, images, poems, interviews, and essays with people from two continents and four countries: Ainu from Northern Japan; Nykvh from Sakhalin and Ulchi from Siberia; Makah, Warm Springs, Spokane, and Tlingit writers from the United States; and BC writers Lee Maracle (Coast Salish) and Jeannette Armstrong (Okanagan). The contributions spiral the Pacific, East to West, each section circling into the next one, recounting the traditions and visions of the participants and demonstrating an overlap of concern and potential. Human rights, salmon rights, food fisheries, globalization, and commercial fishing – the survival of cultural traditions and the survival of the salmon come together.

The book adopts a variety of forms to push the message that care is needed from all communities on the Pacific Rim and its rivers. Elizabeth Woody, Gloria Bird, Nora Marks Danenhauer, and Lee Maracle use short fiction; eloquent memoirs (e.g., Shigeru Kaguno's) recall lives transformed by modernity; essays recount the extent of dispossession and struggle; and folk tales, songs, and drama are transcribed. Throughout this careful, detailed production glyphs mark each author's contribution. The early photo-

graphs are striking; the faces in these shots have stayed with me for weeks. The memoirs by Ainu elder Ito Oda feature a photograph of her husband Kiyosaku, with palms upraised, honouring a tree; this gesture will resonate with many in British Columbia.

Sandra Osawa (Makah) records the US and Washington State governments' persistent violations of court decisions, and Jeannette Armstrong's outstanding piece, "Unclean Tides: An Essay on Salmon and Relations," recounts more recent US breaches of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The BC contributions suggest ways forward: Maracle sees First Nations and White policy alliances as one way to avoid salmon extinction, and Armstrong closes by calling for a collaboration between small-boat fishers and traders, First Nations, academics, and the 60,000 school children rebuilding salmon habitat in British Columbia and across the border.

We must forge something new, a new course chosen for the right reasons. A course ensuring the preservation of the precious gifts of life to each of us and our generations to come as true caretakers of these lands. For the salmon – our spirit relatives, messengers of the future are swimming the unclean tides heralding our passing, and in their ebb speak of the duty entrusted to each of us born in this time of grave omens. (192)

Armstrong's essay affirms her call; the collection as a whole revoices it in resonant and beautiful ways.

Mark Hume has written his account of a year in the Bella Coola Valley in association with Harvey Thommasen. Through twelve sections, their titles based on the Nuxalk calendar, Hume

walks us through this area, documenting its richness. He wades, swims, and, in one marvelous scene, snorkels through the water in all weather, seeking "the unknowable mystery of the river" (142). The Pacific-wide focus zooms in.

Hume's book (winner of the 1999 Roderick Haig Brown BC Book Prize) contains a wealth of detail about the watershed and the art and passion of angling; considered, provocative commentary on the politics and economics of salmon fishing; and memories from locals and early anglers. The respect for the watershed and those who have protected it (e.g., Nuxalk elder Art Saunders) is unstinting. Eulachon; Dolly Varden trout; Chum, Coho, Chinook, Sockeye, and Pink salmon – they are all here, and Hume catches and releases them all. What's more, he makes the practice appeal to a non-fisher like myself because he is sensitive to the ecological context that brings the fish to him and imparts to the reader his connection with the valley.

Loss is a constant theme: Hume's book is a loving testament, but it could

become a eulogy. "In one human generation the [Steelhead] run had been destroyed" (81). He rejects any wasteful fishing practices, be they Native or the more damaging commercial catches, and he criticizes mismanagement (such as the cancellation of the Coho enhancement program run by the Snootli Hatchery). Yet Hume's concerns are placed in the riverscape context. Lyricism is woven into the grim statistics: when things fall into place – cast, breath, water, and fish – Hume is transported: wonderful stuff. These rare moments are hard-won and inspiring.

These two books speak powerfully to the interdependent issues of fishing, culture, politics, and ecology that will continue to shape the territory of British Columbia and all who dwell here in the next century. By then I'll be back in New Zealand. When my first child, due in a few days, asks me what British Columbia is like, I'll point to these books. One day, we might come and see the salmon running, if they return.

Bill Reid

Doris Shadbolt

Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1998. 216 pp. Illus. \$65 cloth.

By Megan Smetzer

University of British Columbia

IN THE YEAR AND A HALF since his death (13 March 1998), Bill Reid has been both celebrated and denigrated. A controversial article in *Maclean's*, a two-day conference, and the re-release of Doris Shadbolt's book,

Bill Reid, have each contributed to the growing discourse surrounding Reid's impact on the Northwest Coast. *Bill Reid*, first published in 1986, traces the artist's early years; investigates his exploration of his Haida ancestry; and

examines his technical abilities, motifs, and inspirations. Shadbolt states that the book was an attempt "to bring some understanding of Bill Reid's art in its slow unfolding, in relation both to its grounding in Haida tradition and to his evolving inner self" (11). The 1998 publication adds a final chapter that touches on Reid's last major works: the cedar canoe *Lootas*; the *Spirit of Haida Gwaii* (*The Black Canoe*) at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, DC; and *The Jade Canoe* at the Vancouver International Airport. The chapter concludes with commentary on the six-hour memorial service held at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, followed by a description of his burial at Tanu on Haida Gwaii.

This book does what it sets out to do: introduce the life and work of Bill Reid to a wider audience. It is laudatory, beautifully photographed, and clearly the work of a friend and admirer. What this book does not do, however, is contextualize Bill Reid within the larger theoretical discussions surrounding First Nations art. Native and non-Native scholars have been engaging with such postcolonial issues as the construction of identity, boundaries of knowledge, hybridity, and translation – none of which is a part of *Bill Reid*.

The *Maclean's* article, "Trade Secrets," by Jane O'Hara, which appeared on 18 October 1999, provides a striking contrast to the well-researched yet unproblematic nature of Shadbolt's book. Purporting to uncover the "unsettling truths" behind Bill Reid's success, the article was negatively received by many in the Haida and art world communities as sensationalistic and, to some, racist. Several of those who were quoted in the article, including

Shadbolt, claimed their statements were decontextualized and did not accurately represent their opinions about Reid and his work.

The timing of the article was particularly unfortunate in relationship to the conference organized by the Museum of Anthropology some months earlier and held 13-14 November 1999. Entitled "The Legacy of Bill Reid: A Critical Inquiry," the conference was intended to push the discourse about the artist to a more complex and theoretical level than that found in current articles and books (such as *Bill Reid*). During the conference, Shadbolt's book was repeatedly cited by the speakers, who recognized its position as an early and important discussion about Reid – one from which they could begin their own examinations. The perceived misrepresentations of the *Maclean's* article, however, served to undermine the criticality of many of the participants. For example, the question and answer period, which was meant to give the audience an opportunity to enter the discussion, turned into a condemnation of *Maclean's* magazine and of Jane O'Hara, the author of "Trade Secrets." While this may have been cathartic for those involved, it did not do much to further the discourse on Reid.

Indeed, the power that the article had in changing the nature of the conference points out the need for a critical, theoretical reassessment of Bill Reid and his work. Books such as Shadbolt's, while useful for historical content and images, leave the door wide open for irresponsible and lurid critiques. In order to better contextualize and, thus, discredit articles like the one appearing in *Maclean's*, it is imperative that scholars of First Nations art produce a richer, more politically engaged critique of artists such as Bill Reid.

*Stolen from Our Embrace:
The Abduction of First Nations Children
and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*

Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey

Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1997. 250 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

By Gale Cyr

Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue

USED TO THINK OF COLONIALISM as having many facets, from militarism, to the church, to contemporary justifications of legislation such as the Indian Act or, for that matter, globalism. Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey reaffirm the simple-minded view of colonization as a patriarchal form of divide-and-conquer politics, from the creation of *terra nullius* (to justify European invasion) to globalization's attempts to undermine First Nations self-governance, self-determination, and self-healing.

What the authors want to share, both from the past and from the present, is not only the consistent impact of the pervasive assimilationist policy of separating children and their families, but also the stories of resistance, healing, and renewal. If we let the blood flow between the mind and the heart we can see the pattern of broken relationships that are depicted in *Stolen from Our Embrace*. This pattern is revealed in the personal First Nations testimonies concerning people's experiences as children and adults, from initial contact to residential schools to the 1990s and the "scoop" of Canada's child welfare/child protection policy.

The first several pages introduce and explain a powerful Stó:lō legend. Although the legend is self-explanatory,

the authors use it in order to provide the context of Stó:lō experience. Of equal importance, this section reveals to the reader that this book is not only an academic exercise for the authors, but also a lived experience – as it is for the reviewer!

The first chapter begins with Ernie Crey's lived experience and includes the historical context of his honouring of his Stó:lō ancestors. This sets the pace for the ensuing stories of resistance. These stories, from resisting residential schools to surviving inter-generational abuse and/or fetal alcohol syndrome, are followed by community workers' and activists' accounts of their experience of the healing process. The text's conclusion provides a discussion of the barriers faced by today's youth, and it outlines the issues of AIDS, access to education, fetal alcohol syndrome, suicide, racism, and so on. Most important, this chapter stresses, once again, the effective use of personal testimonies, the success of individuals, and optimism for the future.

The interdependence of mind, body, and spirit is like the interdependence of past, present, and future. I believe we do not have to live in the past but that the past must be acknowledged within the present for the future. Our legends, our oral traditions, and our teachings will provide this, as I under

stand it now. I do not even like the word "history," for it implies that something is forgotten, as in "that's history – so, forget it," "he or she is history," or "if you don't conform, you're history." Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey may be criticized for portraying a utopian view of First Nations before contact and for being somewhat ethnocentric. I would only ask everyone to reflect that ethnocentrism, like reverse discrimination, may occur, but one must have power before one can be ethnocentric. Maybe it is a form of resistance, like the stories that the authors let individuals tell.

As well as providing a socially sensitive and responsible account of the experiences of First Nations children,

Fournier and Crey show that responsibility and accountability continue to be part of First Nations communities, individuals, and leadership. Much of the book is concentrated on the experience of British Columbia's First Nations children. Initial contact with First Nations is recent in British Columbia, and one-quarter of the residential schools were located in this province. The book can provide insight into the distinct BC First Nations experience with child welfare while providing a crucial overview of First Nations experience throughout Canada. *Stolen from Our Embrace* is a text for First Nations and non-First Nations interested in either collective or individual experiences.

Alejandro Malaspina: Portrait of a Visionary

John Kendrick

Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
200 pp. Illus., maps. \$34.95 cloth.

By Freeman Tovell

Victoria

THE FIVE-YEAR EXPEDITION (1789-1794), planned and carried out by the thirty-five-year-old Italian-born Spanish naval officer, Alejandro Malaspina, was designed to equal if not surpass the achievements of England's Cook and France's Bougainville and La Pérouse, and bring Spain the international prestige their expeditions acquired. Malaspina's purpose was not exploratory but scientific (in the spirit of the Age of Enlightenment) and political: to examine the state of the Spanish

vice-royalties in the Americas and the Philippines.

Malaspina chose his officers and scientists carefully. The mass of cartographic, ethnological, botanical, ornithological, and other scientific data they gathered related to the Pacific Basin generally. Important work was also accomplished on the Pacific Northwest Coast, including a fruitless search for the Northwest Passage in the region of Yakutat Bay, Alaska, and a two-week visit to the Spanish establishment in Nootka Sound.

Malaspina had planned to publish a full account on his return, but he first attempted to depose the ruling corrupt administration in the hope of seeing it replaced with an administration that would institute more liberal policies in the governance of the Empire. He was declared a "criminal," imprisoned for eight years, then exiled to his native Italy. All the expedition's documents were sequestered.

The recent growth of interest in the Malaspina expedition, stimulated by the research of a handful of American, Spanish, and Italian historians, has encouraged the Museo Naval in Madrid – which holds some 6,000 of the expedition's papers – to publish, in a projected twelve-volume series, the journals, the cartographic work, and the drawings of people, landscapes, birds, animals, and fish. The Hakluyt Society of London, jointly with the Museo Naval, is publishing a three-volume translation of Malaspina's journal edited by an international group of scholars, including Kendrick.

Kendrick's study is the first to deal at length with Malaspina's intellectual formation and political thought. It is neither a biography in the usual sense, though it contains essential biographical material, nor a detailed account of the voyage. Its special merit is that it enables the reader to gain a more complete picture of this fascinating sailor and a clearer understanding of the causes of his ultimate tragedy.

Kendrick traces the development of Malaspina's ideas, beginning with his liberal studies at the Clementine College in Rome, through his friendship with influential contemporary Spanish writers such as Gasper Melchior de Jovellanos, Francisco Cabarrús, and the group of intellectuals known as the *Amigos del País*. Carefully analyzed are

Malaspina's most important writings, his youthful *Theses ex Phisica Generali* and his important *Axiomas políticos sobre América*, which were largely formulated during the expedition. In them, Kendrick states, "Malaspina comes [close] to warning his masters of the danger of revolution in America" (110). Also discussed is Malaspina's equally important *Discurso Preliminar*, which he intended to be the first chapter of his account of the voyage. Of particular interest is his extensive, very personal correspondence with his long-time banker-diplomat friend, Paulo Greppi (both during the voyage and, later, when a prisoner), in which he chronicles the ups and downs of his moods.

Kendrick also describes how Malaspina was influenced by non-Spanish contemporary writers, including Rousseau, Diderot, and the French *Philosophes*. Among the books he took on the voyage were the writings of David Hume and Thomas Jefferson as well as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, which was a particularly strong influence and led him to advocate, among other matters, freer trade between disparate components of the Spanish Empire.

Despite warnings from his superiors, including his nemesis, Manuel Godoy, the chief minister and the queen's lover, Malaspina never understood the danger he was running in his pursuit of a more enlightened administration and the removal of corrupt officials. Though not seeking political office for himself, his "blind refusal to recognize the futility of his plan to unseat Godoy ... cost him his liberty" (10). Even his patron, Antonio Valdés, the minister of the navy, voted for his incarceration. His naïveté also cost him well-deserved renown, and it cost Spain the prestige he sought for it.

This well written volume is flavoured by occasional touches of humour, such as “[Malaspina] was getting into very deep water; for a navigator this is the best place for his ship, but Malaspina was swimming in

the waters of politics” (137). It is an important contribution to the growing literature on the Malaspina expedition, especially for readers not at home in Spanish.

*Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed
and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada*

Peter Baskerville and Eric W. Sager

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. 294 pp. Illus. \$24.95 paper.

By John Belshaw

University College of the Cariboo

UNEMPLOYMENT IN CANADA appeared in the Victorian era as a corollary of growing dependence on wage labour as a source of income. As alternative non-wage strategies began to shrink or disappear, and as “seasonality” became a less relevant consideration, the phenomenon of unemployment was “discovered.” Nineteenth-century observers, steeped in liberal individualism, were quick to assign to the unemployed negative qualities, among which “sloth” was the principle deadly sin. Naming the fact of regular, widespread, and persistent joblessness was a first step in problematizing unemployment; coming to know what it was in human terms proved elusive for Victorian commentators. The identification of unemployment as a “social problem” is the subject of the first substantive chapter in this text, but it is a theme to which the authors return repeatedly.

Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager approach their quarry – the economically vulnerable, those thousands

of Canadians who fell between labour market cracks 100 years ago – from a mainly quantitative angle. They tease out the correlation between unemployment and underemployment on the one hand, and gender, neighbourhood, trade, age, and other variables found in the census manuscripts from the late nineteenth century and 1901 on the other. Focusing their efforts on six cities (Victoria, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Montreal, and Halifax), the authors situate employment in its specific economic milieu, being sensitive to the particular while alert to the general. The picture that emerges of the nation’s unemployed is unsettlingly familiar. The experience and “problem” of unemployment in the past, likewise, turns out to be even more recognizable in the present than one might have guessed.

Through careful demographic spadework, Baskerville and Sager not only provide an understanding of *who* was unemployed, but also, in some measure, *why* unemployment struck certain households and *how* those

households replied. In this respect the book is evenly divided between the phenomena of joblessness/under-employment/unemployment, family survival strategies, the spatial distribution of unemployment in cities, and the challenges faced by the least powerful and generally least skilled part of the working class in their efforts to combat economic precariousness. The authors are meticulous in their selection of variables and are alive to the patriarchal language of the census and "work." For these reasons and others this is a book that will appeal to (and well serve) historians of urban life, families, social policy, population, and – thanks to its comparative framework – the national experience as a whole.

There are forceful and poignant elements in all of this. It becomes clear that migration from underemployment in one community to underemployment in another was neither a winning option nor, in most cases, a possibility. Parents found a variety of ways to exploit the income potential of their children. Reliance on benevolent organizations proved to be widespread but susceptible to the concentration of social authority in the state. Unable to muster effective support from a nascent labour movement, into which they fit imperfectly, the jobless were equally voiceless. In short, we see the underemployed acting historically but only between frustratingly narrow margins.

This is an accessible book, though rich with tabular material. An innumerate reader terrified of tables and charts need not fear: discussions of regression formulae do not dominate, although they are there for the specialist to enjoy. One could quibble with small editorial points (the term "injured trade" is introduced on page 73 but isn't defined for another dozen pages), or with the style (the authors seem uncommonly fond of exclamation marks as well as of posing questions in a manner that suggests lecture notes), or with the choice of sample cities (the inclusion of Victoria can only be justified by the authors' address, and they could have been more forthright about it). Even if these flaws were far more numerous than they are, they do not detract from the overarching messages of the text: unemployment existed well before the dirty thirties; the costs of reproducing labour, of surviving unwanted idleness, of providing the market with a surplus labour supply were all shouldered by the least privileged and most vulnerable members of our society; and, finally, the liberal economic cant that characterized the unemployed as shiftless was (and is) profoundly ignorant of reality. Released at a time when the social safety net has developed gaping holes, this is a book to be quoted whenever condescending and simplistic neo-conservative shibboleths are piously intoned.

*Diversity and Change:
A Profile of British Columbia Families*

Vancouver: BC Council for Families, 1997. 71 pp. Tables.
(BC Council for Families, #204-2590 Granville St.,
Vancouver V6H 3H1).

By Veronica Strong-Boag
University of British Columbia

THIS IS A VERY USEFUL REPORT. It is divided into two sections: the first, "Marking a Milestone," outlines the views of the BC Council for Families; the second, "BC Families: Statistical Profile," has been prepared by Statistics Canada. Originating in 1977, the BC Council for the Family adopted its present name twenty years later, signalling a commitment to "all BC families: families of all shapes and sizes, including members of various ages, with children and without, and from diverse cultural backgrounds – families that follow familiar paths, and families forging new directions" (xiii). This inclusive vision recognizes how economic uncertainty, cultural diversity, and demographic change, together with the ever-present reality of gender relations, create substantial complications and opportunities for individual women and men. In the face of mean-spirited governments and a confused public, the council urges "progressive policies to encourage and maintain

healthy family development" (xxi). The statistical profile provides ample evidence of the complex and often trying situation facing British Columbians. Tables covering the years from the mid-1970s to 1996 offer a wealth of information on "Selected Characteristics of the Population in British Columbia," "Family Characteristics," "Labour Force Characteristics of Families in British Columbia," "Income and Expenditures," "Housing and Household Amenities," and "Time Devoted to Unpaid Work." Recent scholarship has clearly informed compilers who correctly alert readers to such influential factors as immigration, proportion of seniors, polarization of income, and the disparity between women's and men's contribution to productive activities. The result is a convenient little treasure trove for policy makers and educators, not to mention a reality check for ill-informed journalists and the right wing. It deserves wide circulation.

*"A Whole Little City by Itself":
Tranquille and Tuberculosis*

Wayne Norton

Kamloops: Plateau, 1999. 192 pp. Illus., maps. \$21.95 paper.

By Veronica Strong-Boag
University of British Columbia

THIS POPULAR STUDY of the Tranquille Sanatorium near Kamloops, British Columbia (1907-58), helps commemorate the centennial of the Canadian Lung Association (2000). Wayne Norton has produced a clearly written text that sets forth the key dates, personalities, and issues in the decision to locate one of Canada's leading centres for tubercular patients in British Columbia's dry belt. Beginning with a brief survey of the history of the disease and its treatment, he moves quickly to introduce nineteenth-century Canadian public health responses, notably the sanitarium movement, and from there to discuss the debates surrounding the choice of the Kamloops site. While initially uneasy about a source of possible contagion, the residents of the Interior soon appreciated the economic advantages of having a major provincial institution close at hand. Even with local support, however, Tranquille had trouble

keeping afloat. The heroic efforts of the BC Anti-Tuberculosis Society eventually gave way to provincial ownership after the First World War. Private philanthropy continued to meet a variety of shortfalls until the "San" was eventually closed when services to tubercular patients were concentrated in Vancouver in 1958. Short, lively chapters and a fascinating collection of photos introduce continuing problems of construction, food, and finance as well as the machinations and sacrifices of doctors and politicians. The patients and the workforce emerge less clearly, but they, too, are briefly described, notably the military clients after the Great War and the hard-pressed nurses. In short, Wayne Norton has provided a useful introduction to an important institution. Anyone interested in the medical history of British Columbia, not to mention the politics of institutional location, will find it valuable to consult *A Whole Little City by Itself*.

Does Canada Matter?
Liberalism and the Illusion of Sovereignty

Clarence Bolt

Vancouver: Ronsdale, 1999. 214 pp. \$14.95 paper.

By Steve Tomblin

Memorial University of Newfoundland

CLARENCE BOLT IS CONVINCED that neo-liberalism poses a major threat to Canadian sovereignty and the different historical and cultural traditions of regional and linguistic communities. He hopes that, by exposing the problems associated with homogenous globalism and the tendency of elites to push a liberal agenda, it will be possible to create an opportunity to inform other Canadians who are equally frustrated and cynical about current political realities but who are uncertain about what the problems are or what can be done to change things. Bolt's thesis is that the biggest problem facing Canada is liberalism and the various corporate, political, academic, and media elites who have dominated and managed policy debates and the public agenda according to liberal assumptions. In an effort to mobilize and inform the general public about the dangers of current political thinking, Bolt argues that Canada's economic, social, and political problems can be resolved, but only if we first understand the threat to our sovereignty posed by neo-liberalism and then spend some time creating models that are better equipped for dealing with contemporary problems and challenges. The objective of the book is provocative: to question the policy prescriptions of neo-liberal elites. In an effort to transform the intellectual and political environment, the author

begins by pointing out various problems associated with the liberal approach to interpreting social and political reality, and he concludes by offering a new, more community-based approach. It is a vision calling for grassroots democracy and stronger regions.

The analysis begins with a brief discussion of the threat posed by liberalism and a group of elites who have made it possible for liberal ideas and policies to flourish and shape our perceptions of globalization and our conceptions of citizenship and national identity. This is followed by a discussion of the various economic and political problems associated with liberal ideological traditions in Canada. The author argues that the country can remain sovereign and united even in an era of globalization only if new forms of democracy emerge and citizens mobilize and challenge the liberal assumptions and policies imposed by their elites.

Bolt addresses an important contemporary issue, but there are a few problems with his analysis. One problem with the book is the way the material is organized. A related problem involves the sources that are used to support his argument. In an effort to present an informed discussion, the author borrows widely from a diverse group of people who do not always seem relevant to the analysis. Bolt discusses the ideas of George Grant, T.W. Acheson, Alan

Cairns, Linda McQuaig, Cole Harris, Michael Polanyi, Charles Taylor, and Harold Innis, among others, to support his claims. Greater emphasis should have been placed on integrating this material in a more systematic way. For example, it would have been useful had the author gone further in establishing the link between Grant's views on liberal thought in Canada, which receives a great deal of attention in the first part of the analysis, and the regional model that is defended later on.

Morover, the book does not include various sources clearly relevant to the issues raised in the analysis. Given the content of the book and Bolt's observations and policy prescriptions, the author should not have ignored the work of people like John Porter, Louis Hartz, Kenneth McRae, Seymour Martin Lipset, David Bell, Neil Nevitte, Janet Ajzenstat, and Peter Smith, among others, who have debated and discussed Canada's formative influences, traditions of elite accommodation, and cultural traditions. Furthermore, since Canada is not the only country in the world concerned about the forces of globalization, the "democratic deficit," or the need to re-think the role of the national state and shift power and authority to a local and/or regional level, it would have been beneficial to place this debate in a comparative context. Bolt's analysis would have been better informed had it even briefly mentioned the struggle over regions in Europe and the extent to which these kinds of experiments have, in practice, helped to strengthen democracy and to promote the cause of European integration and unity.

Regionalism comes in various forms, and a frustrating feature of the book is its lack of detail concerning the best way to implement a new regional vision. What would the regional boundaries

be and how would they be determined? On a couple of occasions Bolt refers to Newfoundland and Labrador as part of the Maritimes. However, the Maritime region does *not* include Newfoundland, and Atlantic integration has been a holy grail for generations. Nor are other important issues addressed. How would this regional vision deal with the Native question? Would there be equalization or would each region have to be self-supporting? These and other relevant questions are ignored. Indeed, Bolt is better at identifying enemies than he is at providing details on how to create and implement a new vision for the future.

A final problem I had with Bolt's analysis involves his assessment of the Rowell Sirois Commission. According to Bolt, who appears to support the study, the federal government "paid little attention to the findings of the Commission" because "such an approach smacked of socialism" (57). The Rowell Sirois Commission was informed by Keynesian assumptions, and Ottawa did implement several policies based on its recommendations. It is also worth noting that the Rowell Sirois Commission study was opposed by Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia because Ottawa assembled a group of academic elites who tended to be centralist and then tried to impose this new vision on the provinces. The integrationist vision promoted by the commissioned study was opposed by these provinces because it was seen as elitist and as a threat to provincial autonomy. Given the argument defended by Bolt, it would have been useful to spend more time on these apparent contradictions.

To conclude, while this book raises some interesting issues, it will make only a slim contribution to the debate over political restructuring in Canada.

Painting the Maple:
Essays on Race, Gender, and the Construction of Canada

Veronica Strong-Boag, Sherrill Grace,
 Avigail Eisenberg, and Joan Anderson, editors

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998. 290 pp. Illus. \$75 cloth.

By Janice Fiamengo
University of British Columbia

AT FIRST GLANCE, the editors' disciplines (listed on the back cover of *Painting the Maple*) – Women's Studies, English, Political Science, and Nursing – don't seem to have much in common. However, shared preoccupations and assumptions link the diverse essays collected here in a genuinely interdisciplinary enterprise. The focus is the primary role of language, or symbolic systems, in constructing social relations and perceptions of reality. Canada, the contributors insist, is a linguistic entity, a text to be read for what it reveals about the historical asymmetries of power that have shaped its present outlines; it is also a text in process, never closed or finished, susceptible to rewriting.

Such is certainly the emphasis, for example, of Christl Verduyn's essay about the emergence of major writers of Colour Dionne Brand, Claire Harris, and Marlene Nourbese-Philip ("Reconstructing Canadian Literature"); their presence on the Canadian literary scene has reshaped not only the literary field, but also the critical and conceptual paradigms through which scholars and teachers map that field. Ideas about confronting nature, the rugged North, and the experience of isolation – once thought to identify the distinctive national flavour of Canadian writing – must now be reconsidered and enlarged to reflect

the mainly urban and extra-national focus of these writers, for whom identity is often (painfully or productively) hyphenated, the meaning of home fractured, and the geography non-Canadian. In turn, reading these writers enables us to recognize the racial and cultural specificity of "unhyphenated" Canadian identities.

Verduyn's emphasis on the need to examine our working definitions in order to construct more accurate models of the nation is characteristic of the essays in the collection. While Verduyn's scope is national, if Toronto-centred, many of the articles in the collection have a BC focus. Isabel Dyck's essay on health-care delivery ("Methodology on the Line") presents two Vancouver case studies of the particular needs of Indo-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian women. Gabi Helms and Sherrill Grace ("Documenting Racism") examine the hybrid dramatic form of Sharon Pollock's *The Komagata Maru Incident*, a documentary play about a ship, carrying immigrants from India, that was denied entry to Vancouver in the summer of 1914. Yasmeen Abu-Laban demonstrates how Canada's post-1967 immigration policy, though turning decisively from the overt racism of earlier legislation, remains structured by hierarchies of race, gender, and class in its emphasis on education and

skills. Her argument is of particular relevance for British Columbia, where the recent arrival of boatloads of refugee claimants from Fujian Province, China, has revealed the ferocity of racial tensions in the province. Lisa Chalykoff's "Encountering Anomalies" focuses on the experiences of Chinese immigrants to British Columbia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, emphasizing how those Chinese workers who planned to return to China have been written out of the Canadian historical record. All of the essayists in the collection seek to make connections between their particular subjects – a television program, news coverage, the dichotomy between collectivism and individualism – and the broad cultural questions that inform discussions of Canada's past and its future.

The ability to write accessibly for scholars outside of one's discipline would seem a necessary prerequisite for interdisciplinarity; in general, these articles are remarkably successful in making their object of inquiry "thinkable" (Helms, James, and Rodney, 264) across disciplinary boundaries. There are, however, a few exceptions. To get at Dyck's interesting analysis of cultural difference in health-care research, one must first slog through an overly ambitious and ponderous survey of theoretical perspectives on difference. Jo-Anne Lee and Linda Cardinal's able article on national feminist organizations also over-emphasizes the theoretical discussion of such concepts as hegemony, while scanting the particular case studies that should have anchored the discussion. Most impressive and engaging are those essays that employ the

insights of postcolonial, feminist, and anti-racist theory without the use of obfuscating jargon. For example, Strong-Boag's analytical biography of Pauline Johnson ("A Red Girl's Reasoning") combines cultural criticism and a richly contextualized historical narrative to present a balanced, insightful, and eminently readable essay. Linda Warley's examination of the television series *North of 60*, which she reads as a forum for national "consciousness raising" and productive "self-scrutiny" (173), is a wonderful contribution to the collection in its scope, clarity, and elegance. Becki Ross and Yasmin Jiواني have also done fine work in presenting complex material clearly and cogently.

Although I have no hesitation in recommending this anthology as a valuable resource, I register one disappointment. While the introduction claims that the collection aims not only to examine Canada's past and present, but also "to repaint the maple, to tell new stories, and to reimagine Canada" (4), it largely fails to deliver on this bold and intriguing promise. In a few cases, I suspect that the exclusive concentration on ways Canada has failed to realize its multicultural and democratic ideals may have prevented authors from seeing "what Canadians do differently and do well" (Warley, 176) and, therefore, from creating positive blueprints for the future. In response to this objection, the editors might well argue that it is necessary to strip the maple of its false glitter before new colours can be applied. Perhaps this volume should be followed by a second, future-focused collection.

*From Hudson Bay to Haro Strait:
Books on Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest,
A Collectors' Guide*

G.J. Kim Whale

Victoria: Rockland, 1998. 316, xii pp. \$100 cloth.

By Melva J. Dwyer

Emerita, University of British Columbia

KIM WHALE HAS BEEN an avid collector of western Canadiana for over forty years. Recently, he has owned an antiquarian book business specializing in this literature. His sales catalogues are the foundation for the present book, which contains 1,754 numbered entries.

The entries are listed alphabetically by author and include complete bibliographical information – the mark of a true bibliophile. Each item contains a short description of the content of the item plus a reference to any other relevant bibliographic listings. A selling price is given at the end of each citation, taken from the author's sales catalogues. The inclusion of ephemera and pamphlets is

very useful, since these are often difficult to identify. A number of historical vignettes are interspersed throughout, which helps to lighten the text. A bibliography and subject index, containing geographic terms as well as specific references, follow the main text. Morriss Printing of Victoria, well known for its excellent work and attention to detail, was responsible for the typesetting and printing.

Although this book is not for everyone, it is an excellent reference tool for those interested in the literature of western Canada and the Pacific Northwest. A collector or library specializing in the field will find it valuable.