

# TRICKSTER'S TURN:

## *New Books on Bill Reid*

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GERTA MORAY

### *Bill Reid: The Making of an Indian*

Maria Tippett

New York: Random House Inc., 2003. 336 pp. Illus. \$25.00 paper.

### *Bill Reid and Beyond: Expanding on Modern Native Art*

Karen Duffek and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, editors

Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004. 256 pp. Illus. \$45.00 cloth.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that Bill Reid is a significant figure in Canadian art. His monumental sculptures make his presence inescapable. They are widely admired in an age when public sculpture is often contentious and the “fine arts” have fragmented into a host of special interest groups. From the *Raven and the First Men*, 1978-80, at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology (MOA) to the *Black Canoe: Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, 1986-91, at the Canadian Embassy in Washington and its “jade” cousin, for which Vancouver Airport paid \$3 million in 1995 – the highest price ever for a Canadian art work – Reid’s commissions have come from civic institutions, governments, and corporations alike. Now his work appears on the Canadian twenty-dollar bill. This kind of honour has been accorded to few artists in Canada: the Group of Seven, Emily Carr, Paul-Emile Borduas, and Jean-Paul Riopelle are the only comparable examples.

What are the aspirations symbolized by Reid’s adoption as a Canadian

emblem? Is he the token of a Canada where art flourishes and liberal values embrace racial diversity? Or is this the latest instance of the settler appropriation of the Aboriginal image to signal the identity of a new colonial state? And a decoy, perhaps, that hides the ongoing expropriation of and disregard for Canada’s First Nations? Reid’s career has continually raised such awkward questions. As a Canadian of mixed Euro-American and Haida ancestry he began his life in a white urban setting and established a career as a professional broadcaster. When he trained in jewellery arts, joined anthropological expeditions to salvage totem poles from depopulated Haida villages, and transferred the intricate nineteenth-century Haida designs he was studying in museums onto golden brooches and caskets for wealthy collectors, the question arose as to whether he was simply a “white man’s Indian.” What sort of a “Haida” was he? And was this really the “renaissance” of Northwest Coast Aboriginal art that

the press and art world announced it to be?

Throughout his career Reid wrestled with these questions. But by the end of his life he had registered for Indian legal status and joined his mother's Haida people in their resistance to logging and their reassertion of land claims. His continuing prominence now will have the benefit of keeping contentious aspects of Canada's history in view. Taking on the persona of Raven, Reid has become the trickster in the pack of cards of Canadian art.

It is timely, then, that two recent books set out to assess his significance. Both start from the closure brought with Reid's death in 1998, which was marked by the dramatic celebrations of his life and achievements by the museum world and by the Haida community, which buried him with traditional ceremony at his ancestral village of T'anuu. These events brought together members of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and led to a 1999 symposium at MOA for a critical and in-depth examination of his legacy. Maria Tippett attended the symposium and completed her biography, *Bill Reid: The Making of an Indian* in 2003. And now papers from the symposium itself are published as *Bill Reid and Beyond: Expanding on Modern Native Art*, edited by Karen Duffek and Charlotte Townsend-Gault. They offer excerpts from the heated debates on identity politics and on the legacies of colonialism that have dominated the worlds of art and anthropology during the past two decades. There are contributions from representatives of the Haida Nation and from a range of First Nations and Euro-Canadian artists and scholars, many of whom have worked with Bill Reid and knew him well.

The essays are grouped around four main themes: (1) Reid's understanding of and influence on conceptions of Haida art; (2) his relationships beyond the studio with the communities in which he participated – the First Nations, the museum and art worlds; (3) the construct of a Northwest Coast renaissance and Reid's iconic position within it; and (4) the legacy of a European-defined modernity that has shaped concepts of Aboriginality and that continues to affect the histories, lives, and identities of Aboriginal peoples (Duffek and Townsend-Gault 14). First Nations writers contribute to all sections of the book, and what they have to say is salutary reading in a Canadian context that has for too long depended on unilateral "new-comer" accounts of the Aboriginal population.

On the issue of Bill Reid's claim to be "Haida," which troubled him to the point where he repeatedly confessed that he was "to all intents and purposes a good WASP Canadian" (Bringhurst 196), the Haida contributors are unanimous. Miles Richardson, former president of the Council of the Haida Nation, states that this is not even a question since, in Haida custom, lineage is traced through the maternal line. Reid *was* Haida, and his upbringing without explicit knowledge of his Haida heritage was "not a unique experience amongst Haidas or amongst First Nations people generally" (Duffek and Townsend-Gault 21). Or, as Guujaw puts it: "Like me, that was what he was – Haida – and there was nothing he could do about it" (63). Or in the words of Gwaganad (Diane Brown): "We are going to show our respect for him now. He was a very skilful Haida, he was a very gifted Haida. He put the Haidas up. Thank you, Iljuwas. Thank you, Bill" (64). She acknowledges there

were frictions between Reid and the Skidegate community but reports their delight in his antics: “He liked to be a trickster, he liked to be referred to, in fact, by one of his honoured names – Yaahl Sgwansung, which means ‘the Only Raven’ – given to him by Florence Davidson” (68). This living up to his name exemplifies what Loretta Todd, the Métis/Cree film director, describes in her essay “Beyond” as Reid’s final realization that his idea of himself “would be nothing without the language of his life – a language that preceded him. And in that way, he was no longer alone” (286).

First Nations contributors used the symposium to assert their own customs and perspectives. As Gwaganad states, Haida protocol respects the feelings of the bereaved, prescribing that a year pass after someone’s death before she/he is publicly discussed. Since that time has passed, she can now speak about Reid. Intertribal courtesy, and rivalries, are demonstrated by several speakers: Ki-ke-in, a Nuu-chah-nulth artist, describes the collegiality and respect that Reid showed to him on many occasions, despite their difference in age and fame. Then he tells of an incident he heard from his teacher, Henry Hunt, Mungo Martin’s son-in-law. Martin had replied to Reid’s boasting about the superiority of the Haida in everything by telling him the story of the capture, enslavement, and humiliation of a Haida war chief who led a raid on Tsaaxiis (Fort Rupert) in the nineteenth century. When the Haida managed to escape, he was chased by some Kwakwaka’wakw boys from the village who shot at him in the treetop where he had taken refuge, and waited for him to drop down after he had bled to death. According to Ki-ke-in this piece of verbal aggression, which hits the reader like a punch in the solar

plexus, had Martin, Hunt, and himself doubled up with laughter (181-3). In his own turn, the Kwakwaka’wakw carver Doug Cranmer jokes, “When people asked me, ‘Did you work with Bill Reid?’ I used to reply, in fun, ‘Yes, I taught him everything he knew’” (179).

Many First Nations contributors pay tribute to Reid’s role in winning international recognition for Northwest Coast traditional art, and to his concern with high standards and with innovative extensions for the art. The paper by Kwakwaka’wakw artist Marianne Nicholson is an example (248-50). A serious problem for the First Nations, however, is the belief that Reid stated many times throughout his career that the “real” traditional Haida culture was now dead. Several papers examine this narrative of a “dying culture” – one originated by the settler community. The most incisive analysis of its history and insidious logic, together with suggestions for a way forward from the current situation, comes from Marcia Crosby, a historian of Tsimshian and Haida ancestry. Bill Reid was born not at the *end* of Haida culture, she suggests, but in the *middle* of this narrative structure. In his seductively eloquent writings, as she points out, his mourning for the lost “genius, personality, and individual and social complexity of the dead became Reid’s point of reference for what contemporary Haida life was not. Like many non-Native experts, it’s clear he believed he knew more about what it was to be a ‘real’ Haida than did those who lived in the twentieth century” (120). By rejecting any cultural forms other than the ancient *visual* forms, Reid brushes aside the period of assimilation through which his mother and he himself grew up, and he ends by erasing “the details of a time of great change and half a century of aboriginal

life, including his own" (121). Crosby suggests that different questions now need to be asked – about the ongoing identities and identifications of Haida people in the midst of assimilation, when their "Indian" identity was indeed legally imposed on them from outside but when their "Haida" identification could be freely chosen. This might be through the wearing of the Haida jewellery that Reid saw on the arms of his mother and aunts, or through the retention of ancient meanings, once embodied in cultural objects and ritual and now invested in the emergence of a new kind of Aboriginal politics and in other forms (117). "When we change the field of questions, we shift the focus from constructing Reid and his mother's beginnings as a time of assimilation and 'hopeless demoralization for natives' to its context in the history of *Canada's* 'shameful' past ... When we begin to look at our histories from a different perspective, we see the incredibly diverse ways that aboriginal people were challenged to deal with the impact of colonization. Sophie Reid's history then, is not about stagnation and decline, but is rich in its complexity" (122-3).

Having shifted the question, Crosby sees the evidence of such a history of continuity and pride even in Reid's own conversation and activities. She evokes a meeting during which Reid told her a story that linked his family and hers – his memory of his mother's description of the funeral preparations in Skidegate for Crosby's great-grandmother, Ada Crosby, and of seeing the tattoos of aristocratic crests on Ada's chest, about which an old woman commented, "She so plitty." She notes Reid's grasp of the Skidegate intonation, his devotion to "the old people," and the similar stories and memories she herself had heard in conversations between her own parents.

And while Reid argued that the value of his own art and of traditional Haida art existed as a modern art form of international value, and was thus made for all human beings, he was puzzled whether that might make it "a medium without a message." Crosby's reply is that "exploring the logic of its contemporary making by other contemporary Haida artists, and its use-value for Haida people – its reason for being – requires a different paradigm than the [modernist] one Reid used. It requires putting Bill Reid – his beliefs, his stories, his assumptions, as well as those of his peers – in the middle of contemporary Haida history" (126).

Most writers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, seek to complicate the idea, popular in the 1970s, that Bill Reid led a "renaissance" of Northwest Coast "art." Aldona Jonaitis focuses on the role of the post-Second World War "art boom" and on the modern art system's demand for art stars as catalysts for the collecting activities of patrons and museums as well as for the shaping of Reid's reputation. Her account perhaps loses sight of the simultaneous political concerns of figures like Wilson Duff and the Hawthorns. Aaron Glass proposes that, rather than a reviver, Reid (like George Hunt and Mungo Martin before him) can be seen as a "culture broker" – an individual who is called upon to translate between the cultural values of two different communities, which may make quite different demands upon her/him.

The collection offers an interesting balance between personal witness and scholarly analysis. Opening essays by Ruth Phillips, and by Karen Duffek and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, introduce the main issues with the clarity and mature perspective that we have come to rely on from these

distinguished scholars. There are fascinating reflections from George Rammell, the sculptor who assisted Reid on most of his large-scale commissions; from Bill McLennan on the “modernity” of Charles Edenshaw’s work; and from David Summers on the potential relevance of the European Renaissance concept. Between them the academic contributors (too many to mention individually) offer an extensive analysis of the systemic problems of colonialism and the destructive effects of their own community’s institutions on the lives of Aboriginal peoples. Yet their enumeration of transgressions sometimes misses the irony that it is often those people who felt most sympathy for First Nations peoples and who advocated for them that, because they were in the forefront of contact, have become the scapegoats of postcolonial critiques. Nonetheless, these are well-documented examinations of the complexities of a very star-crossed history as well as of the current field of Aboriginal art production and strategies. They will be useful to students of the visual arts and museum studies, and to all those interested in relations between Natives and newcomers in Canadian history.

Maria Tippett’s biography of Bill Reid is informed by the same post-colonial premises as are the papers in *Bill Reid and Beyond*, although the genre of biography, with its linear deployment of the details of a single life, gives little space to theoretical arguments. However, Tippett’s use of current academic wisdom to demonstrate repeatedly that *she* is politically correct, and that Bill Reid was *not*, is frustrating. She remarks at the outset that “biographers become unpopular when they challenge the received wisdom. Few people want to know about the dark side of their heroes’

lives” (Tippett 5). This is disingenuous: we know that the “dark side” is what most often sells biographies today. And what does Tippett represent as Reid’s dark side? On the one hand there are the illnesses that made his life difficult – bipolar affective disorder diagnosed around 1969 and the Parkinson’s disease that, until his death, progressively disabled him. The latter affliction has made Reid something of a public hero; but Tippett also convincingly links his health problems to his difficulties with personal relationships, with his relationships with his assistants, and to debates about how far he was the actual executor of his works. What is insidious is the continual implication that Reid exploited his Aboriginal ancestry in deceptive and self-serving ways, that the ambiguities in his statements about when and how far he became aware of his Haida extended family amount to some kind of deception. Tippett makes it her mission to expose Reid as the “unreliable narrator of his own past” (13): “My work offers a challenge to Bill’s autobiographical self, which he consciously or unconsciously often misrepresented.” Because “his autobiographical accounts ... acquired authority through repetition” those who wrote about him have “unwittingly propagated ... a romantic, mythical story” (6). Artists indeed have frequently contributed to their own mythologization through dramatic declarations of the passions that drive their work. Such statements are inherently revealing, and what we need are questions about the pressures and the obsessions that make an artist represent him or herself in particular or exaggerated ways. Unfortunately, when Tippett quotes Reid’s views, instead of exploring their underlying connotations, she proceeds at once to contradict them: “But he was

wrong" (77). By treating matters of interpretation as matters of simple fact, she creates misleading simplifications. Typical examples are her ripostes to Reid's laments that Haida culture was dead. Describing a visit made by the family to Haida Gwaii in 1932 when Bill was twelve, she writes: "Far from the popular belief that Native culture was rapidly dying out, Bill knew as a result of his visit to Skidegate that it was very much alive" (45). Does this make Reid a liar? Or does it merely show that he and Tippett are conceptualizing culture differently? Tippett's evidence of the vitality of "Native culture" is that "Charles Gladstone and other Native artists in Skidegate ... [were] supplementing their incomes by selling their work through white middlemen" (45). Reid's judgments come from a period in his life when his study of nineteenth-century Haida carving convinced him that the central role that traditional imagery and cosmology had once held in Haida society had lapsed.

Robert Davidson describes a similar experience during his youth in Haida Gwaii: "At this time the art was at a low ebb. There was no evidence anywhere in the village of the once great culture that I came from. All we had were photographs ... There were no totem poles left in Massett, absolutely none" (Steltzer and Davidson 16). Tippett's statement that, in 1948, "Native art, as Ellen Neel made so clear in her talk [to the BC Indian Arts and Welfare Society's and UBC's Conference on Native Indian Affairs], was very much alive" (Tippett 75), elides Neel's anger and frustration at the economic impossibility of actually making the work she wanted to make. Tippett's simplistic overstatements, while avoiding the previous "dying culture" tropes, thus do little to aid the reader's understanding of the cultural

shifts experienced by First Nations generations in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The same is true of her comments on Reid's ability to sell his work to a non-Aboriginal audience. Through a succession of snide comments, Tippett's Reid is turned into a self-serving opportunist: "Once again, Reid knew how to make the most out of a good thing" (252).

Although not aided by copious letters and journals (as was the case with her previous biographical subjects) Tippett amasses information from interviews and from a search through press and archival materials. Despite the frequently belittling tone of her narrative, she provides a useful context for the circumstances and events through which Reid's life unfolded. A significant find that adds to the history of Reid's Haida family is a notebook kept between 1888 and 1897 by his grandmother, Josephine Ellsworth. The entries begin three years after Ellsworth and the rest of the population moved away from the village of T'anuu, and they provide glimpses into this time of transition, showing the Haida response to the arrival of white settlers in northern British Columbia during Reid's grandparents' generation. Josephine was a convert to Christianity and attended school to learn to speak and write in English. She and her second husband, Charles Gladstone, raised a proud and talented family of six children, all educated at the local mission day school in Skidegate. Their daughter Sophie, who became Bill Reid's mother, left home at the age of ten for the Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, as did her younger sister Eleanor and her brother Percy. All three went on to postsecondary education and professional training. Reid was thus the third generation in a Haida family that prided itself on

appropriating Euro-Canadian skills and opportunities.

Photographs and other evidence show that Sophie stayed in regular touch with her Haida relatives during those years and that she took the children on at least two visits to Skidegate. When Reid said in his 1974 curriculum vitae that he had not become aware of being “anything other than an average Caucasian North American” until his early teens, this is plausible; however, the statement that he had not visited Skidegate or met his grandfather until he was an adult was certainly not true (Bringhurst 86-8). One can only assume that the early family visits did not hold the same significance in his memory as did his own later, repeated visits to his grandfather (which began in his early twenties). Both Doris Shadbolt and Robert Bringhurst give details they learned from Reid about when, in 1943 at the age of twenty-three, he visited his grandfather in Skidegate – a visit that, oddly, is neither discussed nor denied in Tippet’s biography (Shadbolt 27; Bringhurst 237).

Tippet usefully pinpoints the moment when Reid made the first published declaration of his Haida ancestry. This was in 1953 in an interview with Rhodi Lake, a reporter from the *Vancouver Sun*, soon after his return to Vancouver after four crucial years in Toronto. In Toronto Reid had established his career with the CBC and studied at the Ryerson Polytechnic’s School of Jewellery Arts. He also became fascinated by the Haida totem poles at the Royal Ontario Museum, applied Haida designs to some of his silver work, and made two further trips to Skidegate to visit his grandfather. Early in 1954 Reid again visited Skidegate, this time to attend his grandfather’s funeral, and

on his return he eulogized him on the CBC (Bringhurst 238; again, this is not mentioned by Tippet). It was soon after this that Reid wrote an open letter to the *Vancouver Sun* explaining and defending Aboriginal totem poles and suggesting that the public should “allow Native peoples to relearn their pride and skill in ‘the old arts’” (Tippet 78). This was the agenda he himself would follow.

Tippet’s book is particularly useful for tracing out details of the many vicissitudes of Reid’s public life. What it signally lacks is a sympathy for the artist’s vision, for his sense of humour, and for the actual quality of his writing and artistic production. The art-historical commentary adheres to the “influence-spotting” and stylistic emphasis of modernism rather than moving ahead into interpretation. Tippet repeatedly makes a big deal out of Reid’s “copying” and “stealing” the designs of earlier Haida artists, when such copying was both normal and necessary. There are also many odd comments, as when Tippet states that Reid’s illustrations to Christie Harris’s *Raven’s Cry* “owed much to the illustrations [of] Prairie woodcut artist Walter J. Phillips” (142). She doubtless means W. Langdon Kihn; but, even so, Reid’s stylization found all it needed in argillite carvings. It is difficult to see how Reid’s 1970s jewellery and *Raven and the First Men* was “in tune with the funky art of the Ontario [sic] artist David Gilhooly” (186), even if Reid admired Gilhooly’s work. The book is also peppered with the kinds of errors that slip through when copy editors have little independent knowledge of the subject. Anthony Walsh appears as Welsh; Richard Simmins is Simms; Amelia Connolly (Douglas) is Connally, and becomes Coast Salish instead of Cree; a

photograph of Bill Reid on the balcony of the Hayward Gallery, London, is labelled Montreal; and so on.

In her eagerness to refute earlier celebratory accounts of Bill Reid's art and life, Maria Tippett seems unaware that her own biography, like any piece of writing, is a discursive construct. But she swings so far in the opposite direction that her own bias becomes clearly visible to the reader. It is in the collection of symposium papers that Reid, with all his contradictions and complexities, finally comes to life, through the words of those who knew him and who struggled with him and his work.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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*The Secret Voyage of  
Sir Francis Drake, 1577-1580*

Samuel R. Bawlf

Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas  
and McIntyre, 2004. 400 pp. Illus.  
\$24.95 paper.

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THIS BOOK REPRESENTS AN expanded form of the much debated revelations of Samuel Bawlf concerning the Pacific Ocean explorations of Francis Drake during his 1577-80 voyage of circumnavigation. Parts of the voyage account are well known, such as the trial and execution of the nobleman Thomas Doughty, the difficult passage through the Strait of Magellan, and the plundering of Spanish commerce on the Pacific side of the Americas from Chile to Huatulco on the coast of New Spain. However, from this point onward, until the *Golden Hinde* completed the Pacific Ocean crossing, Bawlf argues that Drake's movements were shrouded by state secrecy connected with the desire to suppress information about the Northwest Passage. Most previous historians have

limited Drake's northward advance to the California or Oregon coasts.

Bawlf developed the novel conclusion that Drake undertook a remarkable voyage northward in search of the western entrance to the Northwest Passage. Without repeating all his detailed arguments, the key elements concerned deciphering coded details that appeared in otherwise imaginary coastlines depicted on maps and globes. For example, on the 1597 globe produced by Emery Molyneux, Bawlf recognized an indentation illustrating the continental coastline lying inside of Vancouver Island, which, for unknown reasons, was not depicted. While the actual details on the map were shown crudely and were extremely small in scale, Bawlf recognized Prince of Wales Island, the Queen Charlotte Islands, Vancouver Island, and the Olympic Peninsula. He identified Cape Flattery and concluded, without apparent evidence, that Drake landed near fifty degrees latitude on Vancouver Island. Sailing north to the Queen Charlotte Islands, Drake traced the Inside Passage east of Prince of Wales Island, visited the delta of the Stikine River, and worked his way north again to view an ice-filled Chatham Strait that he believed must be the entrance

to the Strait of Anian. This remarkable voyage left the present reviewer in a state of advanced incredulity. How could a seaman of Drake's intelligence and experience ever have contemplated such a voyage with the *Golden Hinde* in need of careening and freighted with an enormous treasure captured along the coasts of Spanish America? Moreover, it seems unlikely, given the time available, that Drake could possibly have completed such a demanding detour to his voyage of circumnavigation.

While on the Northwest Coast Drake set up heavy posts with inscribed metal plates that Bawlf notes might have been in imitation of totem poles. He reports that, in 1954, a prospector on Kuiu Island (close to Chatham Strait) who visited a Tlingit burial cave found a small metal plate whose Latin inscription mentioned Drake. Like other will-o'-the-wisp evidence cited in *The Secret Voyage*, that pertaining to the plate was lost in a robbery and never recovered. Drake headed south to the eastern side of Vancouver Island and cruised through the narrows of Johnstone Strait, with its dangerous rip tides. Bawlf has Drake selecting a site for the future colony of Nova Albion at today's Comox Bay. He continued through Georgia Strait, viewed the mouth of the Fraser River before entering Puget Sound, and then sailed back through Juan de Fuca Strait to the open sea. If this was not enough, Drake was said to have visited the mouth of the Columbia River – possibly taking his pinnace across the treacherous bar. Any knowledgeable reader of Northwest Coast literature will be left almost breathless by Bawlf's version of Drake's progress.

Without the existence of any journals or charts and with only crude maps to guide him, Bawlf's conclusions

are imaginary, to say the least. He states repeatedly that Drake "would have seen," "would have been," "would have traveled"; and he employs similar phrases that are designed to flesh out what Drake might have seen and done had he managed to make such a trip. After all, the much better equipped eighteenth-century explorers experienced enormous difficulties in their Northwest Coast explorations, which slowed the acquisition of cartographic evidence. Did Drake not fear narrow passages, hidden reefs, swift currents, treacherous storms, lee shores, thick fog, and other dangers that, at the very least, could have left his men permanently marooned upon a most inhospitable coast? As Bawlf notes, in 1741 the Russian explorer Alexi Chirikov lost two boats on the southern Alaska coast, probably due to treacherous rip tides rather than to Aboriginal attacks. Similarly, the Comte de la Pérouse lost two boats and the lives of all aboard in plain sight of horrified witnesses who were helpless to lend assistance. Even George Vancouver faced the danger of losing the *Discovery* on submerged rocks – rocks that, according to Bawlf, Drake passed almost 200 years before on the way to his planned settlement at Comox Bay. The author fails to take into account that the presence of English intruders would have provoked the coastal peoples to protect their lands, resources, and possessions. At the least Drake would have suffered innumerable incidents with Aboriginals anxious to possess iron and other metal items. Although the Elizabethan explorers had matchlock arquebuses, these weapons were by no means as effective as were eighteenth-century flintlock muskets.

With his well designed and attractively illustrated book, and his strongly expressed convictions,

Samuel Bawlf may lure some less knowledgeable readers into accepting his fantastical account of Drake's visit to the Northwest Coast. However, Bawlf clearly permits his imagination to overreach the thin shreds of evidence contained in his sources. He does not take into account the work of many well-known historians who contradict his views, and he fails to turn up startling new archival evidence to defend his hypotheses. Historians will continue to accept the view that Drake followed the navigational instructions captured from Spanish pilots and sailed from the coast of New Spain for Asian waters without deviating northward. Though Bawlf's study is not good history, by identifying Comox as the site of Drake's proposed Nova Albion settlement, it might well enhance that town's value as a tourist destination.

*Selling British Columbia:  
Tourism and Consumer Culture,  
1890-1970*

Michael Dawson

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004.  
292 pp. Illus. \$29.95 paper.

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IN THIS INTERESTING BOOK, Michael Dawson studies the rise of a tourist economy in British Columbia over the course of the twentieth century. At the heart of the story are loosely related groups of tourist promoters – business elites, bureaucrats, and politicians – who gradually define tourism as “an industry in itself” (156), transforming it from a creature of settlement and industrial development into an element of an emerging consumer society.

These promoters sought to build the cultural, geographic, and institutional infrastructure of a tourist economy, first through internal organization (at the local and later at the regional level), then by mobilizing the provincial state and eventually even by encouraging British Columbians to behave hospitably. Their projects were mostly successful. By the postwar period, tourism had carved out an institutional place in the growing provincial bureaucracy, was recognized as a key element of the provincial economy, and was woven into the image and landscape of British Columbia.

In travelling along this narrative road, Dawson connects tourism to consumer culture and to the burgeoning literature that charts its history. Most notably, in the middle chapters of the book, Dawson connects understudied Depression-era and wartime promotional activities to the more familiar postwar consumer surge. Between 1930 and 1945, he argues, the basic cultural and institutional infrastructure of the postwar tourist boom (and perhaps, we might infer, the broader consumer boom as well) was built: business elites forged links with government bureaucracies and politicians, and defined the strategies that became staples of postwar consumer culture. This is an important discussion, making *Selling British Columbia* a must-read for historians interested in either consumer history or twentieth-century Canada.

The book seems excessively detailed at times, but it is refreshingly clear and straightforward in style, even when covering topics that invite jargon, such as cultural appropriation and anti-modernism. The detail partly follows from Dawson's intellectual approach. Dawson-the-cultural-historian (familiar to readers of his

earlier book on the Mounties) peeks through on occasion, particularly when he analyzes the selective use of imperial and Aboriginal symbolism. Much of *Selling British Columbia*, however, provides close readings of promotional ideas and institutional politics, leaning heavily on biographies of business and political personalities, minutes from tourist bodies and chambers of commerce, government reports, and other institutional sources.

In this sense, though placing tourism within the context of the emerging consumer ethos, *Selling British Columbia* implicitly parallels an older tradition of historical political economy (of which H.V. Nelles's *The Politics of Development* [1974] is the exemplar). Dawson emphasizes the ideological and institutional links between government bureaucracies, politicians, and regional business elites, all in the name of a particular notion of economic development. In the minds of the promoters and in the way Dawson relates its growing economic and geographic influence, tourism comes off as a sort of staple for the service economy.

This implicit analytic similarity follows logically from Dawson's more explicit theoretical argument, laid out in his introduction, that studies of consumer society have been too interested in consumer agency and not interested enough in the power of cultural producers. Of course, it is always easier to focus on producers when they have produced all your sources: even Dawson admits that tourists themselves are largely absent from his story. In this case, however, the hackneyed criticism about sources (though true) would miss Dawson's larger point. You needn't agree with his desire to swing the pendulum to producers – or with the particular

way he tries to do this – to admit that “agency” is often rhetorically overplayed, something that we throw into our boilerplate introductions, pretending to court controversy when, in fact, the concept is a commonsense impulse in the academy. Dawson's sort of political economy, which is still attentive to ideas and meaning, will do us good.

In the ongoing academic conversation about consumer societies and economic development, *Selling British Columbia* raises important questions that need to be thought through. Dawson's analytic gaze is mostly from the centre. Local interests appear on occasion, but the main characters are metropolitan elites, bureaucrats, and provincial politicians who travel widely to collect ideas, compare notes, and manage the challenges of competition and promotion. Dawson approvingly cites James Scott's *Seeing Like a State* (1998) to emphasize how these projects resembled other systems of “state-initiated social engineering” (179–80). Yet, unlike the highways the promoters advocated or the economic staples they aspired to match in importance (e.g., hydro or timber), the tourist industry itself – restaurants, hotels and motels, resorts, hunting and fishing expeditions – was mostly decentralized and entrepreneurial well into the postwar period. Within Dawson's narrative arc, which leads organized promoters to the provincial state, this point doesn't matter very much since it is clear that they successfully influenced economic priorities and created a “formidable apparatus of consumer culture” (216). But in moving beyond consumer agency, how do we place this apparatus within British Columbia's broader economic culture? Dawson's promoters seem to spend much of their time, even after they have won over the

province, cajoling local entrepreneurs to modernize, to advertise, and to adopt consistent symbols – to go along, in other words, with a modern tourist project that tended to exclude smaller interests. Were local restaurant owners or motel operators cultural producers? Were they subjects in, or objects of, the promoters' project? Were they both?

Since, in addition to modernist elites, Scott is interested in the way institutions require informal knowledge to operate, arguing that we should move from consumer agency to the power of cultural producers continues to raise difficult questions. The point is not to criticize Dawson's book but, rather, to engage with it. *Selling British Columbia* is a good discussion of the ability of tourist promoters to develop an economic vision and to convince the state to underwrite it; however, if we move past (or at least de-emphasize) agency as a totem concept, and admit that "cultural producers" shaped and structured consumer decisions, who do we define as "cultural producers"? How do we attend to the limitations of their projects without simply recreating the drawbacks of the power-agency opposition? And what do we do with "the market"? However invented an economic construct and dicey an analytic concept, it did have remarkable power to destroy any project that sought to impose coherence, as Marx taught us more than a century ago and as Keynesian bureaucrats discovered somewhat later. In thinking through these questions, Dawson has provided a good start. Who would have thought that provincial government could be so engaging a topic?

*In the Shadow of Evil*

Beatrice Culleton Mosionier

Penticton: Theytus Books, 2000.  
320 pp. \$19.95 paper.

*Whispering in Shadows*

Jeannette Armstrong

Penticton: Theytus Books, 2000.  
296 pp. \$18.95 paper.

JEANNE PERREAULT  
*University of Calgary*

BEATRICE CULLETON MOSIONIER is well known and highly respected for her first novel, *In Search of April Raintree* (1983), which received serious critical attention and has been widely taught at the university level. A toned-down version for high school students truncated one of the most vivid racially inflected rape scenes written in English. In this second novel, *In the Shadow of Evil*, Culleton Mosionier revisits some familiar territory, although the emphasis on Aboriginal experience is reduced. She tells the story of a conflicted sister relationship, this time from the perspective and narrative voice of the darker-skinned younger child; the incompetent, alcoholic mother; the untrustworthy foster care system; and the main character's long struggle to undo the effects of betrayal and loss.

I admired *In Search of April Raintree*, enjoyed its tight and complex structure, and was moved by its powerful articulation of the minds and experiences of both Cheryl and April. This novel, too, has a story – a very important one, one that is not often told – the story of how the evil of sexual violation grips a child, even though she is a "survivor," and, throughout her life, keeps her in its "shadow." Culleton Mosionier shows

how this evil is both psychologically internalized and externally manifested – a powerful metaphor for how the sexual predator steals the joy of a child victim's life.

Culleton Masionier somewhat complicates the structure of first person narrative as the novel opens with an unidentified evil voice planning a tormenting cat-and-mouse game with the unsuspecting object of his attention. A second narrative opening lyrically describes the members (with names) of a wolf pack enacting their free lives. The novel proper is narrated in the first person by a woman who, although plagued with insecurity from an early trauma, is now a successful writer with a loving husband and a cherished son. She tells the story of the unwelcome visit of her estranged sister and, soon after, the mysterious disappearance of her husband and child. Flashbacks of her life as a sexually abused foster child, a young woman, and a writer of children's books are interspersed with the ongoing unravelling of her life as sinister events accrue around her. Her only supports are a wise and kind Aboriginal couple who are her neighbours and a ghostly wolf that appears at key moments. Despite the elements of the "thriller" here, the story occurs almost entirely within the mind of the main character, and the tension and drama associated with that genre are absent. The narrator tells us in detail about her actions and thoughts, both in the present and in the past. The latter sections are not presented as memories but relivings, and the movement is slow, often repetitive. Set against the generally uninflected voice of the narrator, none of the scenes from childhood, adolescence, or her present adulthood give us much feeling for who she is, why her husband loves her, or why her elder sister remains devoted to

her. It is hard to imagine the children's stories she'd write.

While the autobiographical narrator may appear to offer great intimacy and emotional authenticity to the story, the mind of this narrator single character must be intense and textured. The author must be ruthlessly critical of dead air. Here is an example of the mental processes of the narrator in a moment of despair:

My first thought when I woke the following morning was to wish that I didn't have to go through another day. And why should I wait? I now had no doubt that Peter and Todd were dead, so I really didn't have to wait for the police to find their bodies. And I had never cared for the ritual of funerals. I knew, too, that Peter's parents would claim the bodies once they were found, so they could bury them too. Inside the small enclosure of the cabin I paced restlessly, just as I had when I was younger and felt trapped and needed to be free. (123)

This interior voice does not sound, to me, like the actual thought/feeling processes of an anguished and desperate person. The voice is flattened, reporting the mental movements rather than living them. Given the importance of this story and the real knowledge the author demonstrates about the reality she is portraying, how is it that the novel fails its readers? As I read, I found myself wondering repeatedly, "Where is the editor?" Almost every writer acknowledges the assistance of these gifted first readers, their keen eye for the clunky line, the wooden dialogue, or the drag of a too-long description. This text is free of irritating errors, typos, and the like. But the weaknesses

in it suggest either that editorial advice was not given or that the author refused to take it. A significant representation of a too common life experience is muffled here. This numbing feels like loss and waste, especially given the strength and courage it takes to write a novel of this substance. *In the Shadow of Evil* is gripping almost in spite of itself: the author knows much about the menace and the power of evil and its mercilessness pervades the novel. There seems to be a conundrum: to me the flattened prose dulls the effect of emotional tension; yet I am left with an overwhelming sense of the narrator's damaged spirit. Perhaps the narrative style reflects the defensive layer that the narrator exudes in order to insulate herself against the pain and horror of the past. If this is so, Culleton Mosioneir will have to find ways to signal her intention more clearly. Her work deserves it.

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Like *In the Shadow of Evil* Jeannette Armstrong's novel, *Whispering in Shadows*, also uses the image of "shadow"; however, to Armstrong the force of shadows is not evil but part of the necessary world – something not to be feared but, rather, accepted, taken in, and changed. Armstrong's work as a poet and an activist permeates the language and content of this novel, which reads as an assemblage of the main character Penny's chronological narratives: her letters to sisters, lovers, and friends, and her diary entries. The novel is even formatted like a prose poem, with much white space, abrupt shifts from dialogue to Penny's italicized self-talk, to diary entries, and to bare description. The fragments hang together, each making the narrative more intelligible, the emotional reality of the character more dense.

Penny, whose own name seems foreign to her until she hears it in her great-grandmother Susapeen's voice – "Paen-aye" – is presented as a speaking/thinking presence and as a character intimately known by the narrator. Penny is an artist, and some of the novel's most effective segments involve her musing and puzzling over her effort to get the colour of snow just right on her canvas, or her grappling with the relation of art to ethics and the marketplace. Armstrong's narrative takes us through Penny's life, first as a young woman, then through her childhood memories, and finally through the memories of her grandmothers. Direct narrative makes us feel the stink of the pesticides and the weight of the apples Penny picks at her summer job. The materiality of the bodily experience is so strong here that I was reminded of Robert Frost's "After Apple Picking." Penny becomes an activist in environmental and indigenous resistance movements which take her, in one of the novel's most powerful sections, into the Chiapas guerrilla movements. Armstrong presents a thorough analysis of the interconnections of politics, economics, and ecology in the strangulation of the earth's peoples and the consumption of its resources. Her despair at seeing the marketing of her art as inextricable from a global system that consumes the many to support the few leads her to destroy her paintings and to quit making art.

Unfortunately, much of the political information comes to us as polemic rather than in the dramatic forms of the apple picking or the Chiapas visit. Penny, a single mother, continues with her world-travelling activism until she exhausts herself and returns home with her children to the reserve, her family, and the earth. This trajectory

of movement from a centre outwards and then back is not uncommon among First Nations authors; however, in significant ways, Armstrong's character is dissimilar from the abused and neglected children depicted in some other Aboriginal novels. Penny is raised in a loving and strong extended family, and she is capable of taking on a wide range of experiences and making numerous decisions. The harm done to her is a byproduct of the larger injury foisted upon the earth and its peoples by the greed and blind consumption of global capitalism. We are meant, for example, to connect the cancer that strikes her to the poisonous chemicals used by the apple growers. And the metaphoric cancer of environmental destruction and cultural genocide shifts back and forth, from foreground to background, in Penny's life.

*Whispering in Shadows*, like *In the Shadow of Evil*, raises a profound question: how can one resist the forces arrayed against the earth and still maintain a life that is connected to the earth. Everyone who struggles with the contradictions of contemporary life will feel grateful for Armstrong's insight and her generosity as well as for her unflinching assessment of power and money and how they work.

Armstrong's prose is rich, engaging, and crisp. Her spiritual and philosophical musings, along with her intricate assessment of activism and its costs to her family, make even the lecture-like sections of the novel affecting. This balance falters only when someone rails about how immigration works for global capital, or what effect tourism has on local economies, or why mass industrialism paralyzes creativity. Even these segments never go on too long. Armstrong seems to trust her reader much more in *Whispering* than she does in *Slash* (Theytus, 1990). She

presents herself here as a fully mature author whole-heartedly engaged with her characters and the world in which we all live.

*Songhees Pictorial:  
A History of the Songhees People  
as Seen by Outsiders, 1790-1912*  
Grant Keddie

Victoria: Royal BC Museum, 2003.  
176 pp. Illus. \$39.95 paper.

JOHN LUTZ  
*University of Victoria*

THIS IS A WONDERFUL addition to the history of Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia and Canada. It is unusual because it takes images as the starting point and valuable because the people upon whom it focuses are among the least known in the written history of the region, despite being the most observed. It is also a great example of popular history: an appealing coffee table book that is original, scholarly, and authoritative.

The Songhees (also known as the Lekwungen) were the first Aboriginal group in western Canada to experience urbanization: the town of Victoria, and then the city, enveloped them within two decades of the first arrival of Europeans. Their reserve was in constant view of the city and in the direct sightline of the colonial and provincial legislative buildings. Moreover, Songhees people were frequently in the city: working, buying goods, and selling fish, game, or art work. Among the Songhees, as well as other Aboriginal visitors to their reserve, Victorians found the stereotype of the lazy, mercurial, drunken, immoral Indian. This became *the*



story of the Songhees among the settler population, and since many of the capital's politicians, residents, and visitors had never encountered other views of Aboriginal peoples, these images ended up, in many respects, defining the province's "Indians."

Ironically, anthropologists largely ignored the Songhees because they were too much like Europeans in dress, religion, work, and social (including drinking) habits, and because they intermarried extensively with other racial/ethnic groups. As a stereotype they were hyper-visible, but as a cultural group they were invisible.

Keddie's book makes the Songhees/Lekwungen visible in a way that is not only respectful but celebratory. Each of the nearly 200 images is supported by detailed research and commentary. Keddie delves into each photo with a detective's eye. Working with archival sources (e.g., checking cannery records for the owner of a boat with a cannery number), he identified many of the people in the images. By studying the appearance or disappearance of buildings and checking the tax rolls for their date of construction, the height of vegetation in comparison to what is depicted in other photos, and other techniques he is able to date images and, specifically, to identify activities (distinguishing, for example, the potlatch photos of 1869 from those of 1874 and those of 1895 from those of 1901). The incredibly painstaking and thorough research and description of the photos makes *Songhees Pictorial* outstanding.

The organization is roughly chronological, starting with brief accounts from the Spanish visits of 1790 but focusing on the period between the 1843 establishment of Fort Victoria and the 1910-11 sale of the Songhees reserve and the people's relocation to

a new reserve in the (then) suburbs of Esquimalt. There are accounts of the traditional territories of the different families who signed the Fort Victoria treaties in 1850-52; their integration into the mercantilist economy of the fur trade and the capitalist economy of the city; their often fractious relations with visiting Aboriginal groups; their escape from the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1862; major potlatches; and the series of attempts to remove them, culminating in the 1910 agreement. There are also brief sidebars with biographies and/or details about specific places, images, and photographers.

Grant Keddie is well placed to create such a book as his office overlooks the old settlement site. As curator of archaeology at the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM) he has been at the forefront not only of local archaeology but also of larger issues around the pre-European cultural changes of Pacific Northwest Aboriginal peoples. One of the great assets of the museum is its expansive ethnographic photographic collection, which, when combined with the rich BC Archives Collection (now being formally merged with the RBCM collection), provides the majority of images in the volume.

If the Songhees were always within clear view of Victoria, Victorians were also in clear view of the Songhees. We do not get much sense of what the Songhees thought of Victoria, but Mission Hill (on the reserve) was a great vantage point from which to take in the growing city. The collection of panoramic photographs of the city taken from the reserve between 1858 and 1912 are important contributions to the city's history.

*Songhees Pictorial* is handsomely designed and the text is full of original

details and descriptions, which are kept short to fit the pictorial format. In order to ensure the format's popularity, the museum decided on a ninety-nine-page Internet supplement that provides fuller descriptions and comparisons and that includes many photos not published in the book.

*Songhees Pictorial* is self-consciously an outsider's view. Its celebratory tone is an antidote to the often disparaging commentary on, or the total invisibility of, the Songhees in BC histories; however, this does make the scholarship less "critical" than it might be. Keddie's chosen photographs and text emphasize the smiling faces, celebrations, and strong leadership of the chiefs. Critical commentary on Chief Freezie is largely absent; the secret \$16,000 payment to Chief Cooper to "facilitate" the sale of the reserve and his forced resignation in 1917 go unremarked in Keddie's gloss, which has him as chief for life, from 1902 to 1935.

It is a testimony to the book's success that it leaves you wanting more. It would have been great to see more from Keddie and colleague Dan Savard, who contributed a short essay, on how to critically read these particular photographs; it would have been interesting to see images (or be provided with a discussion) of the Johnson Street ravine or even Johnson Street, both of which were Indian spaces in the city; and the appendix on the Songhees traditional worldview is tantalizingly short. Wilson Duff's Songhees place names might have been included with the more detailed but narrower list of place names in one of the subfamily territories. While the photographs are meticulously documented, the textual references are not, and readers are left to wonder which of the bibliographic sources cited for each chapter is the source of specific statements.

These matters do not cloud the fact that *Songhees Pictorial* is a fine book. It is a novel experiment in merging popular and scholarly, print and Internet publishing. Impeccably researched, Keddie's handsome book adds a new dimension to Aboriginal history in Canada by focusing on a previously ignored "urban" Aboriginal community and by meticulously using photographs as its central "primary" source.

### *Constructing Cultures*

*Then and Now:*

*Celebrating Franz Boas and the  
Jesup North Pacific Expedition.*

*Contributions to Circumpolar  
Anthropology, vol. 4*

Laurel Kendall and Igor  
Krupnik, editors

Washington: Arctic Studies Center,  
National Museum of Natural  
History, Smithsonian Institution,  
2003. 364 pp. Illus., maps. paper.

DAVID G. ANDERSON

*University of Aberdeen*

THIS IS A RICH, edited volume on the anthropology of the North Pacific. It was produced following a 1997 conference held in New York at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), which celebrated the centenary of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition – an ambitious, multidisciplinary international expedition designed to study the cultures surrounding the North Pacific of the Russian Empire, Canada, and Alaska. This expedition was an important landmark in the development of comparative ethnology and the founding

of cultural anthropology in the United States. Directed by Franz Boas, often credited with being the “founder” of American cultural anthropology, it produced a number of fundamental monographs that still serve as classic studies of the peoples of this region.

The purpose of the 1997 conference, and this volume, is not only to reflect upon the Jesup North Pacific expedition but also to continue its legacy. A group of enthusiasts at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and at the AMNH have encouraged a multidisciplinary team of scholars to apply for funding to continue its research. As a monument to the expedition’s work, *Constructing Cultures* offers the reader a rich collection of chapters on the history of science, linguistic analysis, physical anthropology (which made use of genetic markers), and summaries of museum collections. To my knowledge it is one of the best resource books on the history of the region, surpassing the volumes published by the Smithsonian following the *Crossroads of Continents* exhibit in 1977.

By far the heaviest emphasis in *Constructing Cultures* is upon the history of expeditionary anthropology at the turn of the last century. Parts 1 and 2 of the volume present ten extremely well researched chapters on the themes and actors involved in the Jesup North Pacific expedition. The introductory chapters by Krupnik, Vakhtin, Schweitzer, Lee, and Graburn provide a solid and critical understanding of the goals of the expedition, giving readers access to a wealth of unpublished sources. Indeed, until I read this book I was unaware of the depth of the manuscript and photographic collections that the expedition had amassed, all of which complement the many extant published works.

As is made clear by its title, the theme of this volume is “constructing cultures.” Unlike other interdisciplinary volumes, *Constructing Cultures* has an unusual theoretical focus – the delicate alliance between indigenous peoples and those who study them. Many revisionary histories of expeditionary science have begun to dig for the histories of those bicultural and bilingual field assistants who, in many cases, silently provided data to the scholars whose careers were forged by these expeditions. *Constructing Cultures* continues in this tradition by providing new data not only on the collaboration between Boas and Teit but also on the relatively unknown work of Pilsudski, Laufer, and Shotridge. A fine chapter by Sergei Kan summarizes the important role of indigenous interpreters.

Part 3 of *Constructing Cultures* presents five chapters by recent researchers. There is a contemporary ethnography of Kamchatka (Koester), a chapter on archaeology (Artuiunov), a summary of genetic research (Schurr and Wallace), a summary of linguistic research (Krauss), and a chapter on the natural history of the region (Hoffmann). Although each of these chapters provides a good overview (in the case of Schurr/Wallace and Koester, excellent overviews) they tend to get lost among the other chapters on the history of the Jesup expedition. Then, as now, the work by physical scientists has taken a back seat to the work on cultural contact. That being said, it is important to note that all of the chapters are extremely well edited, situating their findings within the context of original research hypotheses deriving from the Jesup expedition.

The final section presents six chapters on the material culture of the region as housed in museums and, most significantly, as used by local people.

This section again reflects the main theme of the book – how expeditionary science not only has amassed cultural material but also has provided the bricks and mortar for local peoples to rebuild their culture. The chapters by Webster, Ivanov-Unarov, and Loring/Veltre provide exceptionally good examples of how museum collections live in the present.

*Constructing Cultures* contains a number of high-quality black-and-white illustrations printed on glossy paper. For students of anthropology the book provides rich material on the history of science in the region, while for activists working along the BC coast it provides several important comparative examples of how cultures change and revitalize themselves over time.

*Constructing Cultures* is the fourth in a series of edited books on the anthropology of the Circumpolar Arctic. Two of the other three volumes concern the anthropology of the North Pacific. Readers of this book will be interested in Volume 1 (2001), which is specifically devoted to the history of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition. Like *Constructing Cultures*, these volumes are of high intellectual quality; unfortunately, they are all published with flimsy softcover bindings and letter-sized paper. It would be good if the Smithsonian could invest the funds to improve the physical presentation of what is an excellent series that offers a great service to the history and ethnology of the Circumpolar region.



*Wartime Images, Peacetime Wounds: The Media and the Gustafsen Lake Standoff*

Sandra Lambertus

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. 277 pp. Maps, Illus.  
\$55.00 cloth.

KENNETH BREALEY  
*Fraser Valley University College*

A WELCOME ADDITION to the literature on Aboriginal symbolic politics and direct action in Canada, this book describes the standoff between the RCMP and a handful of Native activists and supporters at Gustafsen Lake, British Columbia, in summer 1995. Its purpose is to show how the state and mass media use such confrontations to position, and reinforce stereotypes of, Aboriginal peoples in liberal democracies generally. Lambertus situates a content analysis (of media reports and interviews with reporters and the RCMP) within a blend of structural anthropology and discourse analysis to examine “the underlying relations between Canadian Aboriginal peoples, the media, and the RCMP” (3); and, while necessarily having to work primarily with “outsider accounts,” she is largely successful in this endeavour.

Beginning with the occupancy of the sundance site at the Lyle Ranch, and then tracing the escalation of the standoff from the first attempts to evict the camp occupants, to the arrival of the RCMP and the creation of a militarized zone about the camp, through a series of armed encounters between the RCMP and the camp occupants, to attempts by Native and non-Native intervenors to defuse the standoff, to the eventual surrender of

the occupants and the court case that followed, the account is essentially chronological. Lambertus shows how the RCMP exerted control over media access to the camp and, in so doing, succeeded in presenting the standoff within an increasingly criminal frame. She shows how filtered media reports of (and reporter competition over the right to cover) the same events contributed to their contradictory delivery as well as how “investigative journalism” ultimately yielded to a carefully orchestrated RCMP smear campaign. Some of the story, as it oscillates between the events and how they were reported and interpreted, is a little choppy; but perhaps this merely reflects the character of the standoff as it lurched from one moment of crisis to another. It certainly captures the rising tensions and performative drama that was actually played out on the ground. While all of this became part of the public record at trial, Lambertus should be commended for having been able to negotiate interviews with players who would have had every reason to be distrustful of her motives.

My reservations have less to do with the existing content than with the way in which Lambertus framed the study and what she left out. Curiously, she prefaces her account with the 1994 blockade at Douglas Lake but consigns references to the 1990 standoff at Oka to isolated passages in the text and appendices. Surely it was at this earlier event that the collaboration between media and police to criminalize Aboriginal direct action was most thoroughly worked out, and surely a discussion of it would have provided readers with a good introduction to the Gustafsen Lake events. Lambertus does note how the media and police representation of Gustafsen Lake informed the rising crescendo of opposition over the then

pending Nisga’a Treaty, and she acknowledges its links to some of the other highly mediated direct actions at Lyell Island (1985), Penticton (1994), Ipperwash (1995), and Burnt Church (2000). But if her aim was to “frame and situate” the discursive context of Gustafsen Lake, then she needed to provide more tracking between these various events. Lambertus does offer a history of the evolution of the Aboriginal land question in British Columbia, but it occupies at best six pages split between the introduction and appendix. And some of this material, if only because of its selectivity, is factually suspect. This may unnecessarily confuse readers who have little or no knowledge of the Aboriginal land question in British Columbia.

Lambertus correctly states that it is generally “news sources with power, status or news appeal [that] have a greater potential to frame events” (73), and she properly notes some of the differences in tone and representation between the more liberal urban press in the larger Canadian cities and the more conservative local media in places like Williams Lake. At the same time, there is no examination of stories in the Aboriginal media or, for that matter, in the alternative popular press. The author admits that these would have provided a valuable alternate perspective and that Native communities were indeed split over the efficacy of this action. Lambertus interviews a handful of local chiefs but ignores Aboriginal media on the grounds that they were generally “not available” (14), when in fact they clearly were.

Most striking in its absence, however, is any engagement with the visual media – a surprising omission given the author’s acknowledgment

that it is visual representations that are most likely to entrench stereotypes. Lambertus includes a dozen photographs of the camp and its occupants, but they are blocked together in the middle of the book, inadequately captioned, and not cross-referenced in the text. Missing completely are any of the highly inflammatory images that accompanied the various newspaper reports with which she deals. Indeed, I was struck by the lack of dialogue with the literature on visual anthropology, the politics of representation, and the frontier myth in colonial settler societies generally. Lambertus states that “neither the RCMP nor the media took into consideration at the time ... their complicity in reinforcing a pre-existing stereotype ... of criminal Indians at the level of national media saturation” (128), but she does not follow this through. Indeed, the mediations of the colonial encounter in travel writing, photography, art, and film date back to first contact, and they are surely as relevant to a discursive framing of Gustafsen Lake (and the public response to it) as are the machinations of the contemporary media and the legal and empirical history of the land question proper.

In this light Lambertus might have also chosen a few of her words more carefully than she did. She claims that “the cross-section of newspaper stories represented a theme of conflict between Aboriginal spirituality and western understandings of property ownership” (191), but in then commenting that “the standoff occurred when a group of Native people chose violence as a strategy for social transformation” (199), she lets the violence of the Indian Act and the reserve system – and against which Aboriginal direct action and symbolic politics must be measured – off the hook. Certainly, one

does not have to accept the tactics of the camp occupants, but when Lambertus further adds, with no evidence, that “Native militant groups are amassing illegal weapons and are continuing to be a serious threat to national stability” (201), she wanders dangerously close to being complicit in the very smear campaign she is trying to deconstruct. In the end, the book worked for me on some levels but not on others. As far as the media’s ongoing role in the maintenance of the “frontier myth” is concerned, the author is clearly in her element – and, to be fair, this is her principal aim. Still, it is the discursive context of blockades and occupancies that is the villain in the piece, and I do think that Lambertus missed an opportunity to develop this side of the standoff in a more robust way.

*Landscapes of Promise:*

*The Oregon Story, 1800–1940*

William G. Robbins

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997. 409 pp. \$29.95 paper.

*Landscapes of Conflict:*

*The Oregon Story, 1940–2000*

William G. Robbins

Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004. 439 pp. \$49.95 cloth.

THEODORE BINNEMA

*University of Northern  
British Columbia*

THIS TWO-VOLUME environmental history of Oregon, written by a distinguished historian of the US Pacific Northwest, sets a new standard for environmental histories

of individual states (and provinces). The author is best known for books on the political economy of the US West, with a particular emphasis on the forest industry of the Pacific Northwest. They include *Lumberjacks and Legislators: Political Economy of the US Lumber Industry, 1890–1941* (1982) and *American Forestry: A History of National, State, and Private Cooperation* (1985), and more recently, *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (1994), which argues that global capitalism and the “industrial statesmen” from outside the region did more to shape the modern American West than did the rugged individualists of mythology. Although the present two volumes represent a change in topic, they are vintage Robbins. British Columbia historians should find them useful not only because they provide a valuable interpretation of Oregon environmental history but also because the environmental history of Oregon has so many interesting parallels, similarities, contrasts, and intersections with the environmental history of British Columbia. Not only are Oregon and British Columbia similar environmentally and economically, but they both also find themselves in the forefront of environmental politics.

Robbins focuses upon the effects of the market system on Oregon’s environment. *Landscapes of Promise* examines this history “from the first inroads of market influences” to the onset of the Second World War (13). Although he suggests that the central thesis is “that culture has been a powerful force in shaping the place we call Oregon,” and that the pace of cultural change has dramatically accelerated the pace of environmental change (16), this does not seem to describe the thrust of the book so well

as does the argument expressed in the epilogue: “to grasp the transformation that has taken place across the Pacific Northwest during the last two centuries is to know something of relations between countryside, its urban centers, and distant constellations of capital and markets. Capitalism has been, in brief, the most powerful determinant of environmental change during the last two centuries” (302).

This argument is also made in *Landscapes of Conflict*: “Today, native peoples and newcomers alike live amidst the awesome changes that have been wrought to Oregon’s landscape since the forces of market capitalism first penetrated the region in the early nineteenth century” (316). This focus on the market system – which puts it in good company with many other environmental histories, as well as with Robbins’s other books – lends these volumes both their greatest strength and their greatest weakness. It gives them coherence and unity at the cost of subtlety and nuance. There is no doubt that capitalism has been a tremendous force for environmental change, but some important factors and trends – industrialism and technological change, the growth of consumerism and the culture of waste, the emergence of environmental movements connected with conservation and preservation of the national parks, the wilderness movement, and the rise of sport hunting and middle-class tourism – are not discussed as much as many readers might like.

Interestingly, the declensionist theme is less apparent in the second volume than it is in the first. This is because Robbins points to various forces that, since 1970, have somewhat fettered capitalism. Thus, in *Landscapes of Conflict*, Robbins points to “those individuals and groups who valued

civic commitment and stewardship over raw profiteering, who sought to build a society that promised something more than the reduction of all human behavior to market transactions" (xx). After a section that looks at postwar optimism, population growth, and economic growth, culminating with the floods of 1948, the book offers sections on agriculture and forestry. Its last and most optimistic section consists of three chapters that examine those forces that have curbed Oregon's postwar mania for development and unfettered private enterprise. It emphasizes the interesting history of certain politicians (separate chapters are devoted to Richard Neubeber and Tom McCall) much more than it does environmentalists and environmental organizations.

These volumes should be of great interest to BC historians not only because they may serve as models for an environmental history of the Pacific province but also because they suggest interesting parallels and comparisons with Oregon. Much about Oregon and British Columbia is comparable. Similarities range from their natural endowments, their Aboriginal societies, and the economic significance of their forests, salmon, and dams to their environmental politics and environmental legislation. Even the floods of 1948 hit both jurisdictions.

An environmental history organized around a political unit is defensible; however, not surprisingly, Robbins's books only hint at comparisons between Oregon and its neighbours. Richard White's *Organic Machine* (1995) and Matthew Evenden's recent *Fish vs. Power* (2004) explore the links in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia environmental history more fully than does Robbins. Other connections are only suggested in

Robbins's studies. Oregon put itself on the cutting edge of environmental legislation when it passed the first bottle-return bill in the United States in 1971 (*Landscapes of Conflict*, 298). Interestingly, this bill came a little more than a year after British Columbia enacted the first beverage container deposit recovery system in North America. More significantly, Senate Bill 100, Oregon's pioneering land-use planning law (which solidified the state's reputation for progressive environmental legislation) was passed on 29 May 1973 (*Landscapes of Conflict*, 290-308); British Columbia's Land Commission Act passed on 18 April 1973. How intertwined were these developments? On 26 March 1973, NDP premier Dave Barrett answered suggestions that the Agricultural Land Reserves were products of "Marxian socialists" by pointing out that the Republican government of Oregon had just introduced similar legislation (*Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, BC, 2nd Session, 30th Parliament, 1706). And on 7 May 1992, when the BC government sought to amend the law so that decisions would be rendered less prone to political influence, Bill Barlee, the agriculture minister, remarked: "by the way, the state of Oregon, which is one of the foremost states, wishes they had our agricultural land reserve act, and they're right" (*Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, BC, 1st Session, 35th Parliament, 1350). Meanwhile, no one has yet explained why the west coast of North America, from the Mexican border to Alaska, has been on the leading edge of environmental movements for over a century, spawning organizations from the Sierra Club to Greenpeace, even as the same region has been on the leading edge of conspicuous consumption, consumerism, and waste. If,



to paraphrase Wallace Stegner, people on the west coast are North Americans, only more so, then environmental histories of the west coast states and provinces are particularly useful. William Robbins has given us a glimpse of how true this is.

*A Modern Life: Art and Design in British Columbia, 1945-1960*

Ian Thom and Alan Elder,  
editors

Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press,  
2004. pp. 160. Illus. \$29.95 paper.

RHODRI WINDSOR-LISCOMBE  
*University of British Columbia*

AN EARLY AND STILL not inappropriate epithet for Vancouver is Terminal City. This epithet denotes not only a peripheral cultural as well as a geographical location but also the city's potential for development, despite its tendency to parochialism. Those attributes apply to this handsomely produced book of illustrations from, and essays about, a recent exhibition of the arts and crafts produced in Vancouver in the decade around the 1949 Design for Living show – each, incidentally, mounted at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

The major contribution of the original exhibition and current book is the collection of excellent examples, and colour photographs, of the pictures, sculptures, ceramics, and furniture produced in and around Vancouver from 1945 to 1960. In that respect it considerably expands on the comparable enterprise undertaken in 1983 with *Vancouver Art and Artists, 1931-1983*. The separate chapters written by Ian Thom and Alan Elder,

curators of the exhibition, respectively review the wider cultural context and the important federal link established between what had, in an earlier era in Britain, been described as “Arts and Manufactures.” The postwar West Coast Canadian version of this was of a different mettle. It derived from a new interrelation between the public sphere and the emergent consumer economy situated in the suburban sprawl financed by Reconstruction government investment and Cold War rearmament. They and the remaining contributors touch on some of these factors.

Among those factors meriting fuller consideration are new patterns of Canadian and overseas immigration as well as regional variants on the confluence of social democratic and free enterprise politics. Rachele Chinery provides an overview of the West Coast potter's art that relates the local to the international scene through a judicious moulding of biographical and art historical data. The significance of personal networks and artists' sojourns abroad, coupled with reference to the larger transatlantic art discourse, distinguishes Scott Watson's account of West Coast painting. The relative conservatism of Vancouver painting, and particularly its bucolic and even romantic vein, reflect both the switch to an abstracted version of the picturesque paralleling British practice and the often overlooked biomorphic and spiritual components of the Modern Movement. Aspects of the complex weft and warp of what is generically defined as modernism also figure in the chapters by Alan Collier and Sherry McKay, respectively, on BC plywood furniture and the locally published magazine *Western Homes and Living*. Collier has been responsible for conserving and reinstating the historical no less than the aesthetic value of this

genus of Canadian furniture, which, quite rightly, figures prominently in the book and exhibition. The technology of plywood and, in particular, the innovations introduced into western Canada by the Koerner dynasty could have been further explored, not least in order to illustrate the importance of anti-fascist migration and imported technocracy to the development of Canadian industry and culture during the age of C.D. Howe.

Indeed, much of the triumph of the formal language and visual vocabulary of modernism in North America depended upon the renewed belief in the social benefit of analytical and industrial processes; that is, in the materialist expression of an ethic that allowed the discourse of social reform to appear to be still active amidst the increasing commercialization of every component of social practice. This phenomenon is scrutinized by McKay, who introduces an interesting counterpoint between the domestic scene and the new materials and appliances that either decorated or dominated it, and between the practical and theoretical approaches to its definition. The theorists include Sigfried Giedion, author of the seminal Modernist text, *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941) and Jean Baudrillard, whose books include the *System of Objects* (1996). While the comparison illuminates the way in which we arrive at, or are influenced towards, divergent ways of understanding the objects that figure in our consciousness, the literature of advertising (notably by Vance Packard) and the critique of late bourgeois society (by Noam Chomsky or Alvin Toffler) bear equally on the diagnosis of modernism's relapse into modernity.

The preceding etymological pun speaks to the potential for a more extensive contextualization and decon-

struction of Reconstruction-era art and craft production in the Terminal City. The oddest omission, either by direct or bibliographic reference, is of the Vancouver architectural scene. All the chapters acknowledge the powerful presence of architecture and the frequent interchanges between architects, artists, and craftspeople. The Design for Living show was, after all, as much about the architectonic fabric of contemporary Vancouver society as it was about the fabrication of objects to ornament its comfortable lifestyle. Several of the artists and craftspeople highlighted are shown to have either architectural training or interests, most obviously Bert Binning, Douglas Simpson, Peter Cotton, and Zoltan Kiss; and it is worth noting that the single West Coast building on the National Register of Historic Monuments to date is the modernist house Binning designed for himself and his wife Jessie Binning with the architect Charles E. "Ned" Pratt of the distinguished Vancouver firm, Sharp Thompson Berwick Pratt. Moreover, the purpose of *A Modern Life* is stated to be a "weaving together" of the disciplines of design and architecture. That purpose is appropriate to the Modern Movement generally and to the West Coast situation specifically. The Design for Living show carried forward the dynamic of earlier radical and commercial initiatives centred on urban renewal and residential improvement. The Art in Living Group that was active in the 1940s had been formed by artists teaching at the Vancouver School of Art who were inspired by the tenets of social reform and aesthetic experimentation that they admired in Continental art and architectural work.

The first display of new architectural space-making, replete with modern

appliances and furniture, was in the Sky bungalow erected to the designs of Fred T. Hollingsworth in the parking lot of the Hudson's Bay Company store; Hollingsworth became an architect after studying at the School of Architecture at the University of British Columbia and doing a stint as a commercial artist. The exigencies of war contributed to a broadly welcomed diminution of the disjunction between so-called high and low art – one reflected in the alliance of business with cultural interests in the expansion of regional infrastructure and institutions. The centrality of architecture, encompassing the confident assertion by the profession of its primacy in the reordering of the total environment of contemporary living, was recounted in the 1997–98 Canadian Centre for Architecture (and Vancouver Art Gallery) exhibition and book *The New Spirit: Modern Architecture in Vancouver 1938–1963*. Also omitted from the citations are Harold Kalman's masterly account of West Coast Modernism in *A History of Canadian Architecture* (1994), such diagnoses of postwar populist taste as Thomas Hine's *Populuxe: The Look and Life of America in the 50's and 60's* (1986), and two other articles by this reviewer that address the ideological range and relation of public and private domain during the period: "Leonard Marsh and Vancouver Modern" (1996) and "The Fe-Male Spaces of Modernism: A Western Canadian Perspective" (2002).

The text of *A Modern Life* would also have benefited by the substitution of additional or expanded essays on the connectivity and contribution of West Coast art and craft instead of by reprinting R.H. Hubbard's rather chatty romanticization of the episode – partly responsible for some of the mythologizing corrected by

Watson. Among the issues worthy of additional study are the reasons for the temporary elevation of the moral and aesthetic suasion of architecture in the transatlantic sphere throughout this era, the shifts in the formal and theoretical discourse of art and architecture, and the genealogy of Canadian design praxis. Vancouver attracted a remarkable number of emigrant designers from Europe and Britain (especially following the Festival of Britain in 1951, which allied the arts of design with a democratized popular culture). But the Vancouver design community remained connected to various nodes of regional modernist enterprise in Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Not only Richard Neutra but also Bernard Maybeck, John Yeon, Harwell Harris, and Paul Thiry contributed to the formation of a local idiom. The supposedly distinctive post-and-beam structure, often regarded as the main feature of the West Coast style, had been anticipated in the 1930s by British, German, and Austrian architects, as published in more than one of the professional journals that affected such local practitioners as Catherine Wisnicki and Peter Thornton. And the reputation of Vancouver as a centre of the arts depended to no small degree upon a talented cadre of local photographers. Their work still awaits comprehensive study in spite of its value to both the cultural and commercial production systems. The slippage of modernism from agent of communitarian ethos to consumerist pragmatics and the associated auto-suburbanization of modernist endeavour also deserves further investigation (alongside the arts scene). The more limited extent of respective practice in Vancouver affords an invaluable opportunity to measure

the internal changes and external pressure operating with regard to the migration of ideas and creativity.

*A Modern Life* nevertheless adds much to the picture of Reconstruction-era Vancouver. The relics of its art and design have an accessible vitality that compares favourably with the sometimes stilted ideological and iconographic artifice of the current Vancouver School and the glitz of much of the recent urban fabric gathered under the neologism "Vancouverism."

*Watara-Dori (Birds of Passage)*

Mitsuo Yesaki

Vancouver: Peninsula Publishing,  
2005. 175 pp. \$15.00 paper.

MICHIKO MIDGE AYUKAWA  
Victoria

*W*ATARA-DORI (*Birds of Passage*) is a biographical fiction of a half-year period (24 June 1915 to 1 January 1916) in the life of a Japanese-Canadian fisher. Mitsuo Yesaki has a thorough knowledge of the Pacific coast fisheries, in particular those in the Steveston area. He is aware of the canneries, the disagreements and strikes, and the racially based legislation that was passed in order to decrease the number of Japanese fishers. Yesaki is the author of *Sutebusuton: A Japanese Village on the British Columbia Coast* (2003); with Harold and Kathy Steves he co-authored *Steveston, Cannery Row: An Illustrated History* (1998); and with Sakuya Nishimura he co-authored *Salmon Canning on the Fraser River in the 1890s* (2000). Yesaki also travelled to his ancestral village in Wakayama prefecture, Japan, where he learned how, for centuries, the inhabitants had fished

for sardines, seals, and other marine life. However, by the beginning of the 1900s these inhabitants were finding it difficult to survive. In this latest book Yesaki incorporates this information as he tells the story of what is likely a period in his father's life.

Jinshiro Ezaki, whose surname was registered as "Yesaki" by an immigration officer in Victoria, emigrated to British Columbia in 1900 shortly after the birth of his son, Miyakichi. He had visited his family just once, when Miyakichi was six years old. Jinshiro was the eldest son in an extended family and thus, according to custom, was responsible for caring for his parents, his unmarried siblings, and his wife and son. With what he earned in Canada he was able to provide his family in Japan with a big house. Jinshiro's dream was that his son would be a good, earnest student and, after completing the compulsory six years of elementary school, would go on to middle school and beyond. Jinshiro would have gladly worked hard and sent back money for this purpose. However, Miyakichi was not interested in higher learning and preferred to accompany his grandfather on his fishing boat. In 1915 Jinshiro finally accepted the fact that his son would only be happy as a fisher, and he sent for his wife and son.

In this novel Yesaki tells the story of his ancestral village and of many of its inhabitants, who had emigrated to Canada. He describes the arrival of Miyakichi and his mother to Victoria, their trip to Vancouver, and their travel by tram to Steveston, where Miyakichi immediately becomes a boat-puller (assistant) for his father. It is a difficult learning experience, but soon he begins to fish on his own. *Watara-Dori* contains a detailed map of the Fraser River delta area, showing the

channels, the locations of the canneries, and the tidal zones. Through it, one can readily follow Miyakichi's movements. Miyakichi is daring and independent. By reading the tides, using his compass, and observing points on the shoreline, he is able to fish in foggy weather, when more prudent fishers remain on shore. One of his happiest days occurs when he opens his own bank account; but he is most proud when he is able to give \$200 to his grandfather for the family's New Year festivities.

Through the story of Miyakichi's first year in Canada, Yesaki portrays the daily life of the fishers: how they fished, lived on board their boats, and attended to their gear. The cost and effort required to mend and weave new nets becomes evident. He describes the company houses, the outhouses, the Japanese-style bathhouses, the way salvaged logs were sawed and chopped into firewood, the food that was eaten, and the New Year celebrations, when special foods were prepared and the men made the rounds of their friends and neighbours. The women have their work too: in the canneries, on nearby farms, and helping with the nets. These details are all woven into the broader history of Japanese immigration in Canada, and they speak of the gradual change from a sojourner society to a family settlement.

It is unfortunate that Yesaki self-published this book. A number of printing errors and unsatisfactory choices of words and phrases have slipped through. The glossary of Japanese words is particularly disappointing. There are a number of errors that would likely have been corrected by a competent bilingual person.

In spite of these drawbacks, *Watara-Dori* is a valuable addition to a rather scant supply of books on the history of the Japanese in Canada. I hope that

Yesaki will write sequels to this story and thus provide us with a much-needed account of later developments in the Steveston area fisheries and in the lives of Japanese Canadians.

*A Stain upon the Sea:  
West Coast Salmon Farming*

Stephen Hume, Alexandra  
Morton, Betty Keller,  
Rosella Leslie

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2004. 304 pp. \$26.95 paper.

LISSA WADEWITZ  
*University of Saskatchewan*

THIS COLLECTION EXPLORES many of the controversial issues surrounding fish farming practices in British Columbia. In five separate essays, the authors illustrate the importance of the precautionary principle in experimenting with new chemicals and processes that could potentially have devastating environmental consequences. This anthology demonstrates that very little is known about the long-term effects of fish farming practices, and the authors advocate both stronger regulations and the need to proceed with care.

The first three essays provide introductions to the environmental concerns surrounding fish farming, the main players involved, and how the industry has evolved. Stephen Hume's "Fishing for Answers" discusses the main points of contention in the fish farming debate: escapement, the use of antibiotics, and the impact of the farms on the wild fish population. Hume interviews a wide variety of people concerned with the industry in order to reveal local understandings of fish farming

practices and their environmental effects. He makes several important points about the potential dangers of introducing Atlantic salmon to the Pacific coast and raises good questions about the government's seeming desire to promote fish farming over wild fish protection. The second chapter, by Betty Keller and Rosella Leslie, offers a detailed recent history of the fish farming industry in British Columbia. They spotlight the industry's reliance on foreign capital and the consequences of lax government regulations. Otto Langer's "Any Fish Is a Good Fish" highlights the failures of the Department of Fish and Oceans Canada (DFO). Langer charges that constant reorganization and political concerns have led the DFO to promote fish farming and to ignore the impact of the industry on the environment. Langer's chapter calls for impartial studies of the fish farming industry and criticizes the government for letting politics direct scientific inquiry.

The last two chapters focus on the scientific evidence available regarding fish farming practices and their potential dangers. Don Staniford presents a long list of toxic chemicals used by salmon farmers and their known – and suspected – environmental impacts. He charges that fish farmers simply turn to new and more powerful chemicals to control the diseases that plague farmed fish. Staniford advocates tighter controls on the use of chemicals – especially in the marine environment – and the need for ongoing studies to identify their effects. Alexandra Morton's chapter is a personal account of how she got involved in fighting fish farms and tracking their impact on wild fish runs. She outlines the steps she took to study regional wild fish stocks and argues for additional research.

*A Stain upon the Sea* is a somewhat polemical critique of how governments, industries, and communities allow economic concerns to take precedence over both the health of the environment and of people. The strength of this collection is in the questions it raises about fish farming practices and our lack of knowledge regarding the marine environment. Still, there are many issues that these authors do not explore – issues that would help to clarify how this industry has developed. A more critical and thorough analysis of the government's motivations and policy decisions would have significantly strengthened several of the chapters. *Why* have the provincial and federal governments been so negligent in their management of fish farms? Who is responsible? Why hasn't public pressure made a difference? As it is, the authors claim that government officials have favoured businesses and economic development over the environment, but they do not offer much in the way of direct evidence to support these claims. Likewise, several of these chapters would have benefited from paying more attention to larger political and historical contexts. In particular, it would have been helpful to know more about the relationship between fish farming and the long history of artificial hatchery propagation. Do fish hatcheries confront some of the same challenges as fish farms? Do they pose any of the same dangers? How are they different? Finally, while these authors clearly highlight the paucity of research on the introduction of new chemicals into the environment, there is no discussion of potential organic solutions. Are there any natural/organic methods for controlling diseases among farmed fish? Is anyone studying this possibility?

Despite these criticisms, *A Stain upon the Sea* provides a readable overview of fish farming practices and the problems they pose for community members, government officials, and the wild salmon populations of Canada's west coast. As most of the chapters do not include footnotes and the authors are upfront about their environmentalist agenda, this book will likely appeal most to general readers hoping to learn more about the rise of this controversial industry.

*One River, Two Cultures:  
A History of the Bella Coola Valley*

Paula Wild

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour  
Publishing, 2004. 288 pp. Illus.

Maps. \$34.95 paper.

PATRICIA E. ROY  
*University of Victoria*

**O**NE RIVER, *Two Cultures* effectively summarizes the structure and themes of Paula Wild's study of the Bella Coola Valley. The Bella Coola River dominates the story. Traditional Nuxalkmc (or Nuxalk – Wild uses these terms interchangeably) tales, which have been adapted from Franz Boas and from T.F. McIlwraith's ethnography of the Bella Coola (written in the early 1920s) head each chapter.

The juxtaposition of Nuxalkmc stories and modern work usually works well. Wild links creation myths with research by geologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists to argue that no scientific theory has "the drama of the origin stories of the Bella Coola First Nations – or seriously consider[s] that these oral histories may be based on prehistoric fact" (20). A Nuxalkmc

story of the orphan boy, who was rescued by fish after trying to commit suicide by jumping into the ice-clogged river, opens a chapter describing the commercial fishery, which began in the 1890s. Similarly, a story of how the cedar trees were planted introduces a chapter showing how different residents responded to their environment. The Nuxalkmc people used cedar for canoes, ceremonial regalia, clothing, housing, furniture, and even babies' diapers, whereas the early Norwegian settlers, although they admitted that the forest was useful for lumber and firewood, saw trees as a nuisance that had to be cleared and burned before one could get on with farming. Eventually, the settlers found a market for lumber and logs and made forestry a major industry, though recent changes have caused severe economic depression.

The First Nations people, whom Wild reports refer to themselves as "Indians," appear throughout the book both as mythical figures and as interviewees. Wild asserts that European attempts to assimilate the First Nations had "devastating" effects, and she quotes informants regarding their experiences in residential schools and the loss of their language. Despite living in close proximity, there was limited contact between the "Indians" and what they call the "white guys/girls" (243). Indeed, Wild argues that, despite isolation, "there is still a strong and very separate sense of Nuxalkmc, Norwegians and 'outsiders'" (272).

Yet, all the residents had to contend with the fact that, as one long-time resident observed, "The river goes where it wants to" (165). Early European explorers, including Alexander Mackenzie and Henry Spencer Palmer of the Royal Engineers, and settlers depended on First Nations people and their skill with canoes to

enable them to travel on the Bella Coola River. Frequent floods washed out later roads and bridges, and the river's shifting course forced settlers to move to its opposite side.

Although the First Nations peoples had carved out "grease trails" – so called because they were used to transport ooligan (the preferred local spelling) oil inland – travel inland was only for the adventuresome. Despite some surveying for a road to the Cariboo gold fields and, later, for railways, little was done to improve the old grease trails until the mid-twentieth century. Coastal steamers provided the only real access to the Bella Coola Valley from the outside world. After years of unsuccessfully lobbying the government to build a road, settlers took matters into their own hands. With the help of a small government grant, donations of cash and kind, and volunteer labour, they pushed through what they called the "Freedom Road" in 1955; however, driving on this narrow road, with its steep hills and many switchbacks, remained an adventure.

An extensive bibliography complements *One River, Two Cultures*, and indicates the breadth and depth of Wild's research. It includes memoirs, contemporary local newspapers, archival interviews, and Wild's own encounters with residents in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. Unfortunately, she missed some potentially rewarding sources, such as Douglas Cole's *Franz Boas: The Early Years, 1858–1906* (1999) and the collection of McIlwraith's letters, *At Home with the Bella Coola Indians* (2003), edited by John Barker. For example, she says that Boas decided to go to Bella Coola as a means of getting to North America, where his fiancée lived, whereas Cole implies a less romantic motive, namely, scientific curiosity. Nevertheless, through her

own interviews and observations, Wild has become somewhat of an ethnographer, though the absence of footnotes or other citations impairs the book's value for scholars or as a historical document in its own right. However, *One River, Two Cultures* is eminently readable. Well-chosen and -placed photographs add to its interest and informative value. It is a fine introduction to an isolated BC community with a very long history.

*Healing in the Wilderness:  
A History of the United  
Church Mission Hospitals*

Bob Burrows

Madiera Park, BC: Harbour  
Publishing, 2004. 250 pp. Maps,  
Illus. \$26.95 paper.

NORMAN KNOWLES  
*St. Mary's University College*

**I**N *HEALING in the Wilderness* Bob Burrows recounts the origins and evolution of the medical missions established and maintained by the United Church and its antecedents in isolated communities across Canada. An ordained United Church minister, who began his ministry in 1960 on a mission boat based at Ocean Falls and who later chaired the national church committee responsible for all the United Church's mission hospitals, Burrows is uniquely qualified to recount the stories of the men and women who brought both medical services and "practical Christianity" to the frontier regions of the nation.

*Healing in the Wilderness* is divided into five chronological chapters beginning with the establishment of the first medical mission at Port Simpson



in 1898 and concluding with the greatly reduced work of the present day. Each chapter includes a general overview of the forces and challenges that defined mission work during the period, detailed histories of each of the mission hospitals, biographical portraits of the key figures active in the missions, and a selection of well-chosen photographs. Drawing upon interviews with many of the men and women who served in the hospital missions as well as research in the United Church Archives in Toronto and Vancouver, Burrows has produced an evocative account of the commitment, courage, perseverance, and resourcefulness of the doctors, nurses, and hospital staff who worked in the missions and their important contributions to the life and well-being of remote communities, to innovations in rural medicine, and to the emergence of public health care.

As a "popular history" designed to pay homage to the work and contributions of those involved in the medical missions of the United Church, *Healing in the Wilderness* does not attempt to engage the rich historical literatures on missions, Aboriginal peoples, and health care. The result is a largely anecdotal history that lacks critical perspective and that limits Burrows's analysis and interpretation of events and individuals. Aboriginal resistance to the "white man's medicine," for example, is acknowledged but no attempt is made to explain its cause and significance. Burrows simply paints a portrait of faith-driven and altruistic missionary physicians, such as Dr. Horace Wrinch at Port Simpson, who overcame Aboriginal opposition and suspicion through perseverance and good works. Nowhere does Burrows acknowledge the assimilationist agenda, convincingly documented by Mary-Ellen Kelm and Maureen Lux in their recent histories

of the encounter between Aboriginal peoples and Western medicine, that defined much of medical mission work.<sup>1</sup> Prior to the Second World War the mission hospital was also a gendered space. Hospitals were almost always administered by a male missionary physician (usually assisted by his wife) who directed a small staff of female medical professionals. Although Burrows observes that tensions and conflicts sometimes afflicted the hospital missions, the gendered nature of those conflicts is passed over, as is the persistent resistance of the Women's Missionary Society to the creation of a single medical mission board. Nor does Burrows participate in the important debate among historians of religion over the nature and impact of secularization.<sup>2</sup> The gradual withdrawal of the United Church from most of its medical mission fields during the postwar period is not presented as a sign of growing secularization but, rather, as a response to declining need and the Church's policy of encouraging community responsibility for health care. The increasing difficulty the Church experienced recruiting doctors and nurses willing to serve in isolated communities suggests, however, that a

<sup>1</sup> Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998); Maureen K. Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); and Nancy Christie and Michael Gavreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

significant change had taken place in the outlook and priorities both within the church and within the wider society.

Despite these limitations in analysis, *Healing in the Wilderness* is a well-written work that will be of interest to anyone wishing to learn more about

the history of medical missions and the delivery of rural health care services. British Columbians with an interest in local history will find the histories of the United Church's long-standing medical missions on the north coast and in the central interior especially informative.