BOOK REVIEWS

Vanishing British Columbia

Michael Kluckner

Vancouver and Toronto: UBC
Press/Seattle: University of
Washington Press, 2005. 223 pp.
Maps, illus. $49.95 cloth.

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Recently, while speeding along West Broadway on a Number 99 bus, the older gentleman sitting next to me mused that so many buildings have been demolished that young people would soon have no idea of the street's history. He spoke to the same issue of "roadside memory" that is addressed by Michael Kluckner in his latest and perhaps his best book, *Vanishing British Columbia*.

Driving along the back roads of British Columbia over a decade ago, Kluckner began to record "places" that he regarded as "the last tangible link with a significant part of our history and culture" (12). He made on-the-spot watercolour sketches of these vistas, sites, and buildings, and, acknowledging Paul Kane, F.M. Bell-Smith, and Emily Carr as his forebears and Hokusai and Eugène Delacroix as his youthful influences, he finished the sketches in his studio. Later, he started his search for the history of the Native and non-Native peoples who once lived in those places. His own Web site and his appearances on a CBC Radio One program, Mark Forsythe's *BC Almanac*, were of the utmost importance in reaching the families who could provide the necessary oral history, photographs, and documents. *Vanishing British Columbia* is the tangible product of Kluckner's quest to chronicle roadside, and sometimes waterfront and mountainside, landmarks.

But what kind of book is *Vanishing British Columbia*? It is not scholarly enough to meet the standards of architectural historians and historians, and it cannot be classified with *Lost Montreal* (1975) by Luc d'Iberville-Moreau or *Lost Toronto* (1978) by William Dendy, both of which are authored by architectural historians. Kluckner's recording method is too serendipitous for a systematic heritage inventory. The book is much more than local history, travel literature, architectural guidebook, and family history; rather, *Vanishing British Columbia* belongs to a category of popular Canadian non-fiction describing heritage places. The intrepid

Amelia Beers Warnock Garvin, know in real life as Katherine Hale, created the genre eight decades ago: she wrote several books in this style, most notably the classic *Canadian Houses of Romance* (1926), republished in 1952 as *Historic Houses of Canada*. Lillian Gibbons, who followed in Garvin's footsteps, wrote over 300 articles about local historic places for the *Winnipeg Tribune*, a selection of which came out in 1978 as *Stories Houses Tell*. The tradition has persisted to present-day British Columbia with Valerie Green's *If These Walls Could Talk: Victoria's Houses from the Past* (2001) and its sequel, *If More Walls Could Talk: Vancouver Island's Houses from the Past,* about Vancouver Island (2004).

Kluckner shares certain stylistic characteristics with Garvin, Gibbons, Green, and others working in this genre. His subject is historic places, particularly the built environment, and, more often than not, houses. He uses the personal voice to write about the stories of those places and the people who lived there, and the research is more anecdotally interesting than academically rigorous. The title *Vanishing British Columbia* is as tried, true, and captivating as *Stories Houses Tell*, *If These Walls Could Talk*, and Kluckner's own *Vanishing Vancouver* (1990). His grouping of places is by geographical region and then by road map location. Indeed, a curious aspect of Kluckner's book and of the wider genre is the author's reliance upon map and car. As early as the 1920s, as the acknowledgments to *Canadian Houses of Romance* noted, Garvin's husband was "her ruthless chauffeur and best companion of the road" as he drove her throughout Canada in search of historic places.

Kluckner turns the recording of historic places upside down in at least two critical ways. Ordinarily, because the authors are writers of books, newspaper and journal articles, and even poetry, they blend the written and the visual into a literary sketchbook in which the text dominates the illustrations. In Kluckner's case, the opposite is true: his books are watercolour sketchbooks. Hand-drawn maps, historical photographs, floor plans, heritage postcards, and the quietly radiant watercolours engage the reader at first glance, and together they overwhelm the text, nowhere more so than in the lavishly produced *Vanishing British Columbia*. Kluckner's use of the radio and the Internet is yet another technique that turns the tradition on its head.

The most singular aspect of the genre is the authors' shared commitment to the literary and visual memory of historic places. Kluckner is no exception. The reader may well ask where this dedication will take him in the future. Without any doubt, the participants of the Conserving the Modern in Canada Conference held recently at Trent University would encourage him to record the "vanishing modern" architecture, engineering, planning, and landscapes of post-1940 British Columbia.

Atlas of Pacific Salmon

Xanthippe Augerot

Berkeley: University of California Press and State of the Salmon, 2005.
151 pp. Maps, illus. US$34.95 cloth.

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Journalist Timothy Egan once wrote that the Pacific Northwest "is wherever the salmon can get to."

As woefully provincial as he was, Egan unwittingly revealed the absence of an alternative way to regionalize the seven anadromous species of the *Oncorhynchus* genus (colloquially: cherry, chinook, chum, coho, pink, sockeye, and steelhead) that range across the northern Pacific and Arctic Oceans. Xanthippe Augerot's *Atlas of the Pacific Salmon* finally fills that vacuum, radically revising how we spatialize salmon. The *Atlas*'s illustrations offer an integrative, intercontinental perspective on nature and humans. Its maps and charts create an insightful way to understand the geography of salmon runs, people, habitats, harvests, and protection. The book's scope is stunning, and its implications for future research and activism are highly significant. But because the *Atlas* is both a scholarly and a political text, the interplay of these agendas sometimes leads to problems. The graphics are extremely sophisticated, but they are occasionally undermined by a text containing errors, redundancies, and jarring arguments. The book's contributions are truly great, but its limitations are considerable.

The *Atlas*'s primary achievement is a systematic vision of *Oncorhynchus*. Augerot spent a decade at Oregon State University and Portland's Wild Salmon Center assembling and analyzing data from published reports, grey papers, and researcher opinions – what Augerot terms "best expert judgment data" (x). He then used GIS tools to construct a spatial framework that evolved from two major divisions (Artic and Pacific) through finer gradations to a final mapping of sixty-six ecoregions. This spatialization of Pacific salmon reflects a geographical schema informed by "Evolutionarily Significant Units" (20), a concept derived from the scientific and legal reasoning of the Endangered Species Act. Whether this makes scientific, historical, and cultural sense across *Oncorhynchus*'s entire range is uncertain, but the result is impressive. Augerot has created a bioregional perspective that encompasses the Artic from Russia's Lena River to Canada's Coppermine River, and the Pacific from Kyushu Island in Japan to Baja California in Mexico. This vision is both breathtaking and practical. One glance at the amazing scope of these maps, and readers will realize that Augerot has created a framework for making substantive comparisons about species, runs, habitats, harvests, and resilience across *Oncorhynchus*'s entire range. Add to that the artfulness of the maps and photos, and this book has an impressive Wow! factor.

The maps are so dazzling, though, that they can mask key technical problems. For example, the goal of the *Atlas* is not only to illustrate the range of *Oncorhynchus* but also to compare runs and habitats via a consistent analytical scale. This is extremely important, yet the underlying science is in places threadbare. As Augerot notes, his reliance on "best expert judgment" for poorly researched areas (mostly in Asia) means that some ecological assessments are prone to "perception bias, which can skew results" (65). Other areas are simply black-boxed, including ocean migrations, eleven Pacific ecoregions, and most Arctic runs. This is a problem because Augerot emphasizes that "salmon distribution is shrinking at the southern edges of the range across the North Pacific" (66), but he pays no similar attention to colonization in far northern streams, such as on Banks Island in the Beaufort Sea, where sockeye and pink salmon recently appeared for the first time in Inuit memory.

This matters because the *Atlas* is both a scientific study and a political tract for elevating awareness of *Oncorhynchus* over its entire range. The concern about southern runs is sound, but the analytical gaps for northern runs present an opening for political foes, who can rightly note that, in some respects, we are observing not simply a shrinking but a shifting salmon range. In other words, the *Atlas*'s blank spots are a rhetorical flaw that cynics can exploit. There is indeed a northward shift taking place, but it is more complicated than critics admit. As anthropologist Randall Schalk noted a generation ago in "The Structure of an Anadromous Fish Resource" (in Lewis Binford, ed., *For Theory Building in Archaeology* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 207-49, the margins of salmon habitat fluctuate in wildly unreliable ways, so the novel appearance of fish in the Arctic is not a signal that all is well. Recent colonizations may or may not be ecologically significant, but by not discussing the issue, Augerot has left an opening for opponents.

In this and other instances, the *Atlas* would have been served better by more careful deliberation. There are not only minor errors (the first Canada-US salmon treaty was in 1937, not 1939 [42]; British Columbia's largest agricultural product is not farmed salmon at C$390 million annually [36] but marijuana at about C$4 billion annually) and irritations (many redundancies in the section on distribution and risk of extinction) but also major flaws. For example, Augerot links cultural diversity of indigenous peoples to the biological diversity of salmon (18-20), employing a form of geographical determinism that geographers shelved in embarrassment a half century ago. He also advocates turning large portions of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula into a park to protect salmon from poachers (99). A key implication of home-stream theory is that transplanting salmon to other streams is highly problematic, and repopulating streams through straying takes place on a geological time scale. Thus setting aside single streams – a suggestion first made in the 1890s by Livingston Stone – offers constrained benefits. Moreover, Augerot's explanation of poaching is circuitous and thinly documented, and he does not grapple with recent scholarship concerning the racist and classist implications of poaching charges in conservation history. Given that he is addressing a region that is coveted by elitist anglers, yet that is home to people who were already harvesting salmon roe when Georg Steller visited in 1740, a loaded issue like poaching requires far greater care than is evident.

The book's achievements are huge. Its conceptual approach is path-breaking, and its spatial frameworks are broadly relevant and highly appealing. For all the value of the maps, however, readers must treat the text with circumspection because its scholarship and politics occasionally collide in messy and unsettling ways.

Maria Mahoi of the Islands
Jean Barman

Vancouver: New Star Books,2004.
104 pp. Illus. $16.00 paper.

The Remarkable Adventures of Portugese Joe Silvey
Jean Barman

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2003. 80 pp. Illus. $17.95 paper.

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The history of Native and non-Native interracial relationships and of mixed race communities in British Columbia has been overlooked. I am a mixed race woman from BC and have never had the opportunity to know of this history until now, when, at close to forty, I have finally come across stories of two pioneers, Maria Mahoi and Joe Silvey, who crossed racial lines and created mixed race communities in coastal BC.[1] Jean Barman is a good storyteller who uses a number of oral and written resources not simply to document their lives, but also to tell the tales of two different mixed race families. In *Maria Mahoi of the Islands,* Barman frames the story by way of her own experience of eating an apple in the orchard of the late Maria Mahoi. This framing device also hints at the importance of embodiment, which is central to Barman's narrative of Maria Mahoi's life as a mixed race woman in early BC history.[2] This opening frame immediately links the writer to the narrative and locates us as readers on the site. In the story of Maria Mahoi, Barman's frame remains mostly unobtrusive. When she addresses issues of race and racialization, her insight into the experience is surprisingly accurate for a monoracial woman. Barman does not theorize the racist assumptions undermining the denigration of non-white stories but rather participates in a counter-hegemonic project seeking to add new narratives of the racially hybrid nation.

Maria Mahoi was born in the mid-1850s, and died in 1936. During her life she raised a large family (thirteen children who reached adulthood) and eventually made Russell Island her home. Barman suggests that her island home became "a centre of community for numerous nearby families who were, like her own family, of mixed newcomer, Hawaiian and Aboriginal descent" (6). Barman's work importantly asserts that this individual woman's story was common in early BC history. With men thronging to BC during the Gold Rush, "[a] paucity of newcomer women meant that men looking to settle down often opted, as had their fur trader predecessors, for an Aboriginal woman" (13). In this way Barman links this *specific* woman's story to the larger history of mixed race communities in BC and, by extension, Canada. Barman rightly argues that "[h]ybridity, the intermingling of Abroriginal and non-Aboriginal genes, is integral to both the province's and the nation's past" (7). Barman's project is to recuperate this past in order to "claim it for ourselves." By outlining the life of this racially mixed historical figure, Barman implies that we can recover the story of this mixed race family and of many others that have been obscured in historical narratives about early BC history.

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[1] Barman notes that Maria Mahoi was of Hawaiian descent, spent much time on Salt Spring island and eventually settled on Russell Island. Therefore the title signifies her link to these three different island communities.

[2] In my own research into Native and non-Native autobiographies, fiction and drama, it is evident that embodiment is central to the experience of racial hybridity and Barman rightly addresses this theme.

One of the most interesting approaches to racial hybridity in *Maria Mahoi of the Islands* occurs when Barman documents the different racial affiliations that Mahoi and other mixed race children had according to their soma texts. These racial affiliations ranged from denying Native and Hawaiian blood and "passing" as Scots to downplaying the presence of "colour" blood in favour of asserting an uncomplicated Canadian identity to proud assertions of Aboriginal descent or Hawaiian blood. Barman claims that many mixed race Aboriginal people repressed their aboriginal heritage and, like Mahoi, claimed a monoracial identity as a Hawaiian (73) or "passed" when possible as white (85, 89). Barman suggests that many of these racially mixed people lived their lives "in that intermediate space between contact and settlement" (77).[3] By documenting these diverse responses, Barman adds much to the emerging discourse on racial hybridity in Canada.

Barman also identifies many of the numerous mixed race families who formed a loose community in southwestern BC. She suggests that racially mixed families provided important labour resources for the area and details some of the experiences of racism that this community encountered, along with socio-cultural beliefs regarding racial amalgamation that were in circulation at the time.[4] Eventually Maria Mahoi and Captain Abel Douglas found their way to the south end of Salt Spring Island, Salt Spring Island where they became part of the growing local Hawaiian community. The existence of large "half breed" families was noted by local newspapers and journals, and Salt Spring was referred to by one Anglican minister in 1895 as a "colony of half-breeds" (63). Barman's *Maria Mahoi of the Islands* does much to expose the contradictory responses to racial amalgamation in one small corner of Canada as well as the social bonds and intimate ways in which these mixed race families built their own community on Salt Spring Island and Russell Island.

The book also outlines the community's numerous responses to these hybrid Canadians. These responses ranged from racist prohibitions against interracial relationships and integration to calls for open integration. Although Mahoi's first alliance with Captain Abel Douglas was never consecrated by marriage, Mahoi and Douglas did live together and have seven children. Interestingly, Maria's second partner, also a racially mixed person with an

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[3] One might also look at the representation of the racially mixed character Tay John in the novel *Tay John* by Howard O'Hagan as a literary representation of early BC mixed race people who lived, as Barman suggests, in the intermediate space between contact and settlement. Racially mixed literary figures perform a number of different ideological roles and their importance in Canadian literature has been underdocumented. See Werner Sollors, *Neither Black nor White Yet Both* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997) for a thorough treatment of interraciality and mixed race figures in American literary history. The same comprehensive assessment of legal prohibitions against interracial relationships and socio-cultural beliefs about blood and amalgamation has yet to be done for the Canadian context.

[4] Barman refers to the 1901 Census definitions which had a category for Canadians "of colour" as one such example of cultural responses to race.

Aboriginal maternal ancestor, was an advocate of interracial marriages and did indeed marry her in 1864.[5] Barman documents the often contradictory responses that islanders today have to their own early Salt Spring history. She notes that although historical photos suggest the important presence of mixed race families, the *official* representation of this early homesteading community has obscured their presence.[6] Thus, a plaque unveiled by Salt Spring Islanders in 1977 at Ganges' Centennial Park to honour early homesteaders excluded the names of many important early residents of colour while privileging those of white "pioneers" (72).

What is lacking from this narrative are Maria's *own* reflections on her experience of racial hybridity or her children's thoughts on growing up "mixed" in a society where people identified as either Native or non-Native, but not both. How did Mahoi understand her own embodiment and subjective experiences as a racially hybrid woman in early BC history? What kinds of experiences did she encounter and what effect (if any) did these have on her sense of herself? How did she define herself over time and within different communities "of colour"?[7] In the absence of writing by Mahoi on her own subjective experience of racial hybridity, Barman's work gives us an excellent glimpse into some of the issues and responses that would certainly have framed Mahoi's sense of herself.

The stories of Joe Silvey and Maria Mahoi are entwined through *The Remarkable Adventures of Portugese Joe Silvey* and *Maria Mahoi of the Islands*. Barman refers to the whaling partnership that developed between Captain Abel Douglas (Maria's Scottish partner) and Joe Silvey. In charting the existence of mixed race communities, Barman suggests that "[a] thousand or more of the newcomer men who stayed on in British Columbia had hybrid families by Aboriginal women" (*Mahoi*, 19). Both stories surface as two *of many* stories of interracial alliances in BC's early history. Barman also uses the personal story of Joe Silvey's life to open a discussion of the various economic, social and cultural forces that shaped early British Columbia communities. Highlights include Portugese Joe's marriage to Khaltinaht, the granddaughter of the late legendary Chief Kiapilano, and various intermarriages that tied the Silveys to the Musqueam and Cowichan people. Several of the Silvey children were multilingual and spoke "Portugese, the trading jargon of Chinook, the local Cowichan language, and English" (45). The Gold Rush, the fishing and logging industries, whaling, Howe Sound, the seine fishing on the BC Coast, the Silvey school for "half-breed" children, Gastown, Egmont, Point Roberts and what would come to be known as Stanley Park are all linked to Joe Silvey's adventures. Like the Mahois, the Silvey family also settled on an island when Silvey preempted 160 acres of land on Reid Island. The family flourished there within the relative autonomy that the island afforded.

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[5] The play "Birthright" written by Constance Lindsay Skinner in 1905 and set in BC also has a character (Mr. Maclean) who is determined to effect change in Ottawa because of his belief that white men who take up with Aboriginal women should consecrate their ties through marriage. This play will soon be published by Playwrights Canada Press (2005).

[6] Other recent research has contributed to our understanding of the important presence of the early African-Canadian community on Salt Spring island. For further research into the presence of African-Canadians in early BC history, see Crawford Killian's *Go Do Some Great Thing* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1978); Joseph Mensah's *Black Canadians: History, Experiences, Social Conditions* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2002); Wayde Compton's anthology *Bluesprint: Black British Columbian Literature and Orature* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2001); and George Elliot Clarke's *Odysseys Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

[7] My own research into autobiographies by racially mixed Canadians suggests that people with multiple racial alliances can often change their racial identity according to the context they are in and how their body is "read." Therefore, when examining racially hybrid people's racial affiliation it is useful to chart racial identity as a process of identification.

Barman documents the pattern of marriage amongst Silvey's children and suggests that "women were expected to submerge their identities into those of their husbands, making a hybrid daughter-in-law just tolerable. In sharp contrast, no newcomer family wanted, under any circumstances, a mixed-race son-in-law" (52). These gender-based racial assumptions informed the patterns of marriage that the Silvey children followed. In addition, these patterns were influenced by the demographics of the day. Barman notes that, "[t]hrough the First World War, British Columbia's newcomer population consisted of two to three times as many men as women. A daughter of mixed heritage could choose between a newcomer of modest means...and another person of mixed race" (52). Again, like the Mahoi descendants, the Silveys did not always define themselves as racially mixed. Some preferred to think of themselves as Portugese, and at times Hispanic, and less frequently as Native Indian. Joe Silvey's descendants, Barman suggests, helped consolidate a "hybrid coastal society that orginated with the gold rush and continues to contribute to the making of British Columbia" (*Portugese,* 77).

The stories of Joe Silvey and Maria Mahoi suggest to me, as a mixed, race Vancouverite, that the idea of interracial relationships and issues of racial hybridity in British Columbia, often referred to as a relatively recent phenomenon, actually has a long history. Barman notes that many newcomers arrived on this coast with racist attitudes and frowned on racial amalgamation. As a consequence, "Natives were scorned and persons of mixed race denigrated as 'half-breeds'" (*Portugese,* 37). Nonetheless, Barman notes that when British Columbia entered Confederation, "a number of families around the Burrard Inlet besides the Silveys consisted of newcomer white men and Native women" (35).

Barman identifies the numerous sources that she consulted in writing these histories, and in their telling demonstrates her skills as an excellent storyteller. Perhaps for traditional historians, the form that this narrative takes is too much a story and not enough of a rigorous and "objective" detailing of facts. For the layperson or literature major such as myself, however, personal stories like those Barman tells us of Maria Mahoi and Joe Silvey bring early British Columbia history to life. This research also conveys new and important insights about the little – explored nature of interracial alliances and racially hybrid communities along BC's southern coast.

Nationalism from the Margins: Italians in Alberta and British Columbia

Patricia K. Wood

Montréal, Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002, 180 pp. Maps. $65.00 cloth.

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According to Patricia Wood, ethnic studies in Canada – or at least the study of Italian immigrants and their descendants – is at best a marginal or fringe activity in the Canadian academy. She complains, with justification, about the "marginalization that studies of groups other than British and French continue to receive" (xv). It might also be argued, however, that the situation Wood describes is not a continuation but a return to a previous *status quo.* In short, the heyday of ethnic studies that can be seen as the result of proselytizing by the likes of Robert F. Harney and Howard Palmer (both sadly deceased well before their time), Jean Burnet, Wsevold Isajiw, Raymond Breton, Harold Troper, Morton Weinfeld, and others was short-lived. One could argue that the research terrain has shifted (perhaps since the early 1990s), as is suggested by the demise of direct funding support at the federal government level; the emergence of new agencies, in particular the so-called Metropolis Programme and the creation of its Centre(s) of Excellence for Research in Immigration; the virtual disappearance of the terms "multicultural" or "multiculturalism" from the bureaucratic (and, by extension, the academic) lexicon; the rather strict insistence that whatever funding remains available be awarded for research geared to addressing policy issues that are thought to derive from contemporary immigration and migration; and so forth.

Wood, trained as a historian, is a York University geographer who has published a number of articles dealing with ethnicity, nationalism, gender, and heritage. Her study *Nationalism from the Margins: Italians in Alberta and British Columbia* is an ambitious and welcome undertaking, the first attempt to provide an overview of the settlement of Italians in western Canada, where their numbers are exceeded only by their settlements in Ontario and Quebec. Her monograph is a relatively straightforward history of an "Italian" presence in the country's westernmost provinces and is based on a variety of secondary sources enhanced by primary materials, especially oral histories (thirty-four of which were recorded by the author herself), documents from provincial and other archival collections, gleanings from local newspapers, and, somewhat unusually, fictional literature that she deploys in an effort to explore "Italian immigrants' *mentalité*" (15).

Wood's book is divided into seven chapters, the first of which is a general overview of the study of Italians in Canada in which she comments unfavourably, as noted, on the marginality of ethnic studies and sets out her own concerns. She discusses, for example, her dissatisfaction with the use of "botanical metaphors" like "uprooted" and "transplanted," and her preference for the term "relocation" in the study of migration and immigration, and she also presents her interest in theories of identity and the "socio-intellectual negotiation of identity." Chapter 2 turns to a history of Italian settlement in Alberta and British Columbia from the late nineteenth century – beginning with Italians as miners in British Columbia – to the First World War. In Chapter 3, Wood continues the historical narrative through the interwar period, an era that she describes as nativist and racist, and she closes the chapter with a discussion of the internment of "several hundred Italian Canadians," including twenty who were actually Canadian born (52). In Chapter 4, Wood considers various aspects of post–Second World War immigration to and settlement in western Canada and argues that newly arrived Italians of this era did not develop localized "pan-Italian identities" but, rather, pan-Italian identities based on their provincial and even "western" residence in Canada. This discussion of identity formation is then expanded in the last three chapters of her study, which deal with the position of Italian Canadians in the wider context of regional identity formation, the post–Second World War history of Canadian nationalism, and debates about Canadian identity.

In Chapter 5, Wood discusses the welcome accorded to Italian immigrants in western Canada after the war and presents a fairly "traditional" political science reading of the creation of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission and the multicultural policy that was part of its outcome. In her second-to-last chapter, Wood is concerned with the emergence of an Italian-Canadian identity in British Columbia and Alberta in the post–Second World War period – particularly in the 1960s and 1970s – and how this was "negotiated" within the context of Anglo-Canadian neonationalism. In the last chapter of this study, she is concerned primarily to present the effects of "relocation" (across space and over time) on the formation of an Italian-Canadian identity in British Columbia and Alberta. Finally, in a three-page conclusion, Wood attempts to gather the various strands that she has followed through her text, insisting that the study of Canadian nationalism "must include the presence of other voices [beyond the French and British] in the identity debate" because she has shown in her study that "Italian immigrants' relationship to Canada was historically and spatially produced in a way that challenges previous conceptions of national identity and citizenship" (134).

Despite its general value and importance as the first undertaking of its kind, Wood's study presents difficulties. The most common of these derives from the nature of the sources consulted and the observations and conclusions the author makes from them. Second, but not unrelated, assertions are made in the text for which little if any supporting evidence is cited. In her opening remarks about the "mentalité of migration," for example, Wood presents migrating or sojourning Italian workers as potential immigrants whose responsibility was to find work (income) wherever possible, and if "it was better where they went, the family followed as soon as it was financially possible. If it was not, the workers continued to return home periodically, but could be away for years at a time" (4). This is an interesting and unconventional reading of the *mentalité* of Italian sojourners who are almost always depicted as seasonal labourers, migrants whose goal was to earn an income to fulfill specific economic needs (pay off debt, provide a dowry, purchase a piece of land, and so forth) before returning to their *paese* (village or area of origin rather than "region of Italy" as translated by Wood). The lack of clarity here in distinguishing between migrant and immigrant is compounded later in her text (19) when Wood discusses the misfortunes of six "immigrant miners" who were killed in 1884 in an explosion in one of the Vancouver Island coal mines. Her description of these unfortunates clearly states that they were all bachelors with no family in Canada. Why, then, are they described as "immigrant miners"? Indeed, what evidence allows us to conclude that they were potential immigrants? Do the hard-won earnings in their possession at the time of their deaths suggest an intention to settle in Canada or a mistrust of the means available for remitting those earnings to the *paese*?

Similar concerns about generalizations are raised by Wood's analysis of the reception accorded to immigrants to western Canada after the Second World War. As part of that discussion Wood observes that "Italian immigrants felt welcomed in Western Canada in the post-war [Second World War] period," but this conclusion is based on a limited number of newspaper accounts and a limited number of interviews conducted by Wood herself. For example, the statement that "many [immigrants] arriving in Vancouver in the 1950s and '60s encountered very little or no hostility. Some even went so far as to say that they found Canadians to be helpful, understanding, and very patient with their language and cultural difficulties" (84) appears to be derived from the author's interviews with three informants, with no comment on or assessment of how representative their experiences might have been. Further, in the paragraph immediately following this quotation, it is unclear why Italian immigrants would interpret the emergence of the University of British Columbia's new Romance Languages department, which incorporated Italian, as a "positive, welcoming [sign] from the society beyond the Italian community" (84).

Throughout her study, Wood relies strongly on newspapers as indicators of group attitudes and sentiments (page 80, for example), but she uses these primary sources uncritically. In her discussion of the propensity for Italian-language newspapers – and Vancouver's *l'Eco d'Italia* in particular – to ignore Dominion and Victoria Day celebrations (109), she does not mention that "the editors at *l'Eco d'Italia* [had] linked themselves with an Italian wire service in the early 1960s" (111), a fact that, as Wood herself notes, had a strong bearing on the newspaper's content. Similarly, even though she is critical of using the voices of a group's elite as if they were the views of the group in general (94), she does not reflect on the possible elitist perspective of editors and others whose voices are broadcast in newspapers. Also, her use of newspapers to study the group's opinions and attitudes is complicated by the lack of any reflection on the potential role of other media, particularly television. Thus, her discussion about Italian-language press coverage of the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. (112) would be more convincing if it acknowledged the possibility that Canadians in general were as interested as were Italian Canadians but that their interest might have been satisfied through television coverage rather than through print media.

Wood often refers in her study to Italians and to the Italian language as if they were both monolithic or fixed entities. As is well known, however, there were (and continue to be) different "types" of Italians, the differences depending, in part, as

Wood suggests, on their regions of origin. An equally strong component of that difference, particularly in the prewar period, might have been their spoken language. It is likely that this was not so-called "standard Italian" but, rather, one of its many regional variants. Clearly, Wood is well aware of these issues. She notes, for example, that Italian Canadians "were no more monolithic" in their Canadian identity "than in their Italian identity," which was "factured [*sic*] by regional allegiances" (129). This fracturing – perhaps exacerbated by the potentially divisive role of language – needs to be better integrated into her analysis of community and identity formation (see also her reference to these issues on page 20). With closer attention to realities within an immigrant/ethnic group, one could present a more nuanced portrait of an ethnic neighbourhood than is provided, for example, in Chapter 6 (111).

In other instances there is a lack of convincing data to support assertions about observed trends. In her discussion of post–Second World War immigration and settlement, for example, Wood notes that Italian communities in small settlements in western Canada shrank as their members moved to larger urban centres, where populations grew as a consequence of both this internal migration and immigration. She cites the career of an Italian-Canadian who grew up and worked in Powell River and then moved to Vancouver when he retired in 1980. Are we to understand that Powell River's (exurban) Italian-Canadian population shrank in the post–Second World War period? And, if so, when did this occur and how extensive was it? Were Powell River, Kitimat, Port Alberni, and other settlements all "stopping points along a route that ended, almost invariably, in the Vancouver area" (63), with Trail (in the BC interior) being the only exception? At least one example that illustrates the decline of these immigrant populations would give substance to Wood's observations about population shifts from exurban to urban in the postwar period.

To these relatively substantive concerns, one might add others that are relatively trivial but nonetheless irritating. For readers unfamiliar with the geography of British Columbia's southern coastline, for example, the description of the location and isolation of Powell River, one of the province's coastal settlements, is unclear. Throughout the pre–Second World War period, the distance between Powell River and Vancouver, according to Wood, "was measured by a dirt road" (62), but on the following page she reports that in the 1930s residents of Powell River were paying for an overnight steamship trip "to Vancouver for the day" (63). Similarly, and still in Powell River, what is a reader to make of the description of a career that culminated in "programming the machines" (62) before the programmer moved to his employer's head office in Vancouver? Surely it would be useful to know that the employee had been responsible for programming the enormous *papermaking* machines used for manufacturing newsprint in the company's paper mill. The study is also marred by a variety of typographical errors (e.g., "form" instead of "from"); misspellings, particularly of Italian names, terms, and institutions, including *Fogolar Furlani* for *Fogolar Furlan, Società Columbo* for *Società Colombo,* and so forth. There is also some confusion around the proper form of names or titles, as in National Congress of Italo-Canadians (69) rather than National

Congress of Italian Canadians (95), as well as misinterpretations of Italian terminology. For example, the Italian term *circolo*, when used in the title of an organization, is better translated as "club" than as "circle" (67), the literal rendering.

As previously stated, and despite the caveats recorded above, Wood's study of identity formation among Italians in Alberta and British Columbia is a welcome addition to our understanding of western-Canadian history. Above all, it is a reminder of the continued importance of ethnic studies in Canada, regardless of whether the perspective is that of history, geography, or sociology. As Wood suggests, the experience of immigrant and ethnic groups is a necessary counterpoint to the tendency to describe Canadian identity as emerging from an English-French contest rather than from the interplay of a variety of voices that have made, and will continue to make, Canada their home.

High Boats: A Century of Salmon Remembered

Pat Wastell Norris

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour
Publishing, 2003. 250 pp.
Illus. $39.92 cloth.

Keith Ralston
University of British Columbia (emeritus)

The commercial salmon fishery has recently inspired a spate of books on the fading of the salmon industry. This volume fits into that literature. Among its special virtues are its basis in a specific area – the coast of northeastern Vancouver Island, the adjoining smaller islands, and the adjacent Mainland – an area known to its people as "North Island." *High Boats* is also research-based, tracing the fishery back over a hundred years. The author, Pat Wastell Norris, is the ideal person to undertake this review as she grew up at Telegraph Cove, North Island, and her wide local contacts have given her access to the working fishers themselves. Her interviews reflect their point of view, but she is careful not to exempt them from their share of responsibility for the industry's decline.

Norris's thread through the century-long history is the tracing of several pioneer fishing families, especially the descendants of Wes Huson, an American who came to the North Island in the late 1860s, looking for minerals. Unsuccessful in that quest, he sought other ways to exploit its resources. Settling in the fledgling commercial centre of Alert Bay on Cormorant Island with his Tlingit wife and their many children, he became a partner first in a salmon saltery and then a cannery. This latter operation was dependent on the abundant sockeye salmon runs of the Nimpkish River and Lake system on the opposite shore of Vancouver Island.

Huson's cannery, as did many other early canneries, relied on Aboriginal fishers and Aboriginal women cannery workers for its workforce. The changes that this brought to the Aboriginal community were fundamental, and Norris, who saw the results of these during her childhood visits to Alert Bay, gives a sympathetic picture of the Aboriginal people who were caught up in the situation forced on them.

Having established her themes, Norris embarks on a lengthy and detailed survey of the ups and downs of the fishery in the North Island. This is the "High Boat" portion of her review – a tale of "golden years" and "hard times" that alternated for the working fisher. She also includes a layperson's analysis of the effects of changing technology as well as of the vagaries of regulation by the federal department responsible for "sea coast and inland" fisheries (as the British North America Act defines them).

About one-third of the way through her narrative, Norris introduces a present-day representative of the Huson family, David Huson, together with his close friend Barrie McClung (incidentally, Norris credits McClung for her decision to write this book). She traces both their lives from the time they met in Victoria, Huson reluctantly taking his high school education and McClung trying to escape a drunken father. Huson's story comes to centre around his current boat – not surprisingly, as a fisher and his boat are seen as a single entity by many in the industry.

Huson's *May S.*, a classic wooden seiner of the 1920s, becomes part of the book's narrative. Huson and McClung take her on a leisurely trip, providing the author with a way to review the past of various ports around "North Island." But this voyage turns out to be in fact a journey back to Victoria, where Huson is forced to sell the *May S.*

This is the point at which this book joins its predecessors in chronicling the decline of the salmon fishery along the whole BC coast. Norris includes a section on current problems – a loss of habitat from clear-cut logging up to the very banks of salmon streams, hydroelectric dams, the threat posed by fish farming, and failures in the regulatory system such as licence limitations and attempts to cut the fleet, which led to increased catching efficiency. All of these point to the "sunset" of commercial fishing and the end of the only life lived by individual fishers like Huson and McClung.

The text is accompanied by numerous illustrations, many from the private collections of the author, of David Huson and of Barrie McClung. There is also an index, mostly names, but a feature often lacking in a volume like this.

Clearcut Cause

Steve Anderson

Prince George: Caitlin Press, 2004.
187 pp. $18.97 paper.

Michael Egan
McMaster University

Struggles over the use of British Columbia's natural resources are a ubiquitous feature of the province's historical landscape. Questions about how we should manage our lumber, fisheries, water, and minerals – and who should manage them – mark recurrent debates in the provincial Legislature and throughout communities that are dependent upon these resources for their livelihood. In *Clearcut Cause*, Steve Anderson offers an account of an environmental protest gone wrong. Set just outside Kaslo, British Columbia, snuggled between Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park and Kootenay Lake, Anderson's novel presents both sides of a logging dispute. Local environmentalists – disparagingly called "greenies" by the loggers – put up a roadblock in order to prevent the cutting of a stand of trees on the edge of a park along Keen Creek. The standoff, then, becomes a showcase for the disparate positions that fuel a local environmental dispute. On the one hand, the logging contractors and their employees are feeling the pressure of new environmental legislation that has eaten into their profits and wages and are desperate to get out the cut; on the other hand, the protesters see only the further destruction of the environment and are critical of the money-first mentality that drives the logging industry. Anderson offers fair treatment of both perspectives and invites his readers to empathize with parties on both sides of the debate.

But in his efforts to be even-handed, Anderson falls into a difficult trap. Too much of his story is simplistic to the point of doing little to hold the reader's attention or interest, and the characters rarely reach beyond their stereotypes. The loggers are, for the most part, honest, hard-working blue-collar types who cuss often, love their children, and just want to do an honest day's work. The environmentalists are a combination of university-educated ecologists and hippies, not terribly organized but resolute nonetheless. A few characters attempt to blur these categories, but they don't succeed. In addition, the dialogue is at times hopelessly contrived. Anderson lets his characters do much of the talking for him, but because none of these characters is particularly complex, their manufactured dialogue establishes their respective rationales for behaving the way they do. However, the novel is more informative than it is compassionate. In sum, Anderson does little to provoke either his readers' sympathies or their passions.

And the story ultimately offers precious little. Rather than letting the standoff ferment to a complicated crescendo, the novel quickly reaches a climax that is abrupt, far-fetched, and predictable. Its denouement, even more so. Further, Anderson conveys little sense of the natural landscape that serves as the backdrop to this book. This is beautiful country and it warrants a story, but the wonders of these forests are lost behind Anderson's wooden characters and their mundane chatter.

Danger, Death and Disaster in the Crowsnest Pass Mines, 1902-28

Karen Buckley

Calgary: University of
Calgary Press, 2004. 226 pp.
Illus. $34.95 paper.

Andrew Yarmie
Thompson Rivers University

The Crowsnest Pass coal-mining communities serve as the backdrop for Karen Buckley's study of danger, death, and disaster. Her objective is to examine personal and community responses to death and to "gain a clearer understanding of how a community develops in the presence of danger in the daily lives of its members" (xvii). Within three chapters, Buckley assesses the major dangers that faced miners, the professional response in the formation of mine rescue teams, the growth of the undertaking business, and the family and community response. Of the three chapters, the first and the third come closest to fulfilling some of her stated objectives.

The book fits into the growing body of literature on coal mining in western Canada. Although it does draw on other regions for supplemental material, more comparisons to the major coal-mining districts in western Canada, particularly Vancouver Island, and in the western US states would help to substantiate Buckley's assertions regarding responses to disasters. On the positive side, Buckley draws upon a wide range of primary sources from provincial and regional archives and enriches her study of the miners' sense of fatalism, their fear of dangers, and the remorse they experienced after disasters by using ballads and songs that effectively capture their emotions. Also, a very readable style is maintained throughout, and relevant photographs are closely tied to the major themes. A couple of weaknesses are the tendency to try to cover too much within a short book and the lack of in-depth theoretical analysis.

Danger is clearly established in the first chapter. Buckley makes good use of government documents and mining histories to explain the mining techniques that increased danger as well as environmental conditions, such as "bumps" and "blowouts," that released methane gas and caused explosions. More important, she acknowledges the high incidence of serious accidents and deaths that affected the miners and their families. Mention could also be made of the above-ground workers who faced equally threatening industrial hazards and, therefore, contributed to the climate of danger in the communities. With their personal choices limited by economic necessity and traditional father/son occupational patterns, few miners could take the most obvious choice of leaving the job when faced with danger. Fortunately, Buckley does not turn those who remained on the job into mythical stoic miner heroes but, rather, investigates whether its was their "risk taking behaviour," lack of safety consciousness, or unforeseeable factors that led to accidents. Within this atmosphere of constant danger, miners developed coping methods by adopting a fatalistic attitude and enhancing traditions of pride in their craft, camaraderie, and independence of spirit to block fears of injury and death. Together, they created a sense of community.

While the section on rescue teams and the professionalization of the undertaking business reveals important responses to disasters, it does not appear able to stand as a chapter on its own. This material feels like it is wedged in between two important chapters and could be integrated into the general response, which would allow the section on personal, family, and community responses to be expanded.

A better sequence emerges as Buckley attempts to analyze how individuals and communities responded to death and disasters. The eleven subheadings in the third chapter, however, indicate that there is more to this area of study than can be covered in sixty-three pages. In some areas, the psychological and sociological theories Buckley harnesses to evaluate individual and community reactions need to be more fully developed and supplemented with more case studies. Trauma studies and the sociology of work could be further explored, especially with regard to issues of masculinity, widowhood, and family breakdown. However, Buckley successfully captures the sense of grief and shock caused by disasters and does not spare the reader the details of death, dismemberment, decapitation, and mutilation. Again her use of ballads, songs, and oral history assists in capturing the feeling of collective trauma. The one problem remaining is that the task of measuring community response is too large to be thoroughly carried out in the allotted space. Some of the subtopics, such as mutual aid societies, fraternal organizations, and unions, deserve a chapter on their own.

Generally, the reader is left with the impression of tight-knit communities that pulled together in the face of disasters. However, while Buckley captures many of the communal responses, some of the divisive issues need to be further developed. One response that requires attention is the anger and bitterness created by a large loss of lives. More labour historiography could be added in order to establish the class-based nature of the communities and the miners' opposition to company attitudes, which put profits before safety. The strikes and protests that erupted after disasters reveal this response. Also, the unions' role in bringing the community together and, in particular, placing pressure on the coal companies to live up to their obligation to improve the mines deserves more attention. And even if ethnicity, as stated by Buckley, "did not become the sole defining character of the area" (xv), after the 1902 Coal Creek disaster and during the First World War ghettoization, biased newspaper coverage, and flare-ups were significant indicators of tensions. The extent to which class and, in this case, disasters, overcame ethnic differences requires more investigation.

Nonetheless, Buckley presents a good outline of some important issues. The very short conclusion could be expanded to provide a clear picture of how the communities developed in the face of danger and whether they were different from other one-resource towns. By the end, Buckley partially achieves her stated objectives and provides a book of interest to both the specialized and general reader.

Surveying Northern British Columbia: A Photojournal of Frank Swannell

Jay Sherwood

Prince George, BC: Caitlin Press,
2004. 166 pp. Illus. $29.95 paper.

Fran Gundry
Victoria, BC

Frank Swannell was a distinguished BC land surveyor whose career in the province extended from 1899, when he came west after completing a two-year course in mining engineering at the School of Practical Science at the University of Toronto, through the Second World War. He had a successful, full, and interesting life, but one suspects that no part of it was more satisfying than the seven successive seasons, from 1908 to 1914, he spent as a relatively young man in charge of survey parties in north central British Columbia under contract with the Department of Lands. Swannell was a keen and gifted photographer, and his collection of over 5,000 photographs, with diaries and other papers, was given to the British Columbia Archives by his sons after his death in 1969. Jay Sherwood has drawn on this material to document those years.

From 1908 to 1911 Swannell surveyed townships and First Nations reserves in the Nechako Valley, carried out triangulation surveys in the Lakes District, and travelled up the Stuart River system to Bear Lake. His ability to survey large areas with extreme accuracy in the difficult conditions that the photographs in *Surveying Northern British Columbia* document led to his being chosen to carry out exploratory triangulation surveys in the northern part of the province in 1912, 1913, and

1914, working north from Fort Saint James and Finlay Forks to survey the watersheds of the Omineca, Ingenika, and Finlay Rivers. British Columbia, *Topographical Sketch Map of the Omineca and Finlay River Basins*, five miles to the inch, 1917, which can be viewed on the British Columbia Archives Web site, is based largely on his work and shows the area he covered and the exactness of his surveys.

Sherwood, a teacher librarian who lived for many years at Vanderhoof and who has travelled in some of the areas Swannell surveyed, has selected 149 of Swannell's photographs, grouped them by year, and drawn on Swanell's diaries to describe for each of the years, from 1908 to 1914, Swannell's routes of travel and surveys. He provides an introductory chapter on surveying in British Columbia, quotes from Swannell's diaries and from the instructions Swannell received each year from the surveyor general, and includes copies of some pages from Swannell's field books and a copy of the map that accompanied his 1913 report to the surveyor general. The photographs are mostly half or one-quarter page in size and are interspersed with the text.

Swannell's beautifully composed photographs show the surveyors at work and in camp; the sternwheelers, stages, automobiles, packhorses, rafts, and canoes they used to get around the country; and the people they met – a group riding home to Cheslatta from Fraser Lake through the snow, "Tremblai Lake Joe and his family," a group of First Nations boys (one of whom was dancing) at a Sports Day at Fort Saint James, an old miner at Germansen Creek.

It is unfortunate that it was found necessary to crop many of the photographs, usually only slightly; however, in some cases this resulted in cutting off, or cutting in half, Swannell's descriptions. Also, a more clearly detailed map than the ones provided would have made it easier to follow the author's descriptions of Swannell's travel routes. However, *Surveying Northern British Columbia* presents a good selection of Swannell's photographs and will be enjoyed by those interested in surveying and map making, in northern British Columbia, and in First Nations history. It will also be enjoyed by those who simply like accounts of wilderness travel.

The Wheel Keeper

Robert Pepper-Smith

Edmonton, AB: NeWest Press,
2002. 128 pp. $14.95 paper.

Gabriele Scardellato
University of Toronto

In *The Wheel Keeper*, first-time novelist Robert Pepper-Smith, an instructor at Malaspina University College in Nanaimo, British Columbia, has written an engaging and often enchanting tale that draws heavily on three generations of the Italian migration and immigration experience to western Canada. Judging by one of the surnames on the novel's dedication page, and by many other markers scattered throughout the text, one concludes that there is much in Pepper-Smith's novel that is autobiographical. The novel's narrator, Michael Guzzo, is the third generation in a family that has its origins in late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century Scotland and the south of Italy.

In this novel Pepper-Smith transplants an old-world Italian village setting to a valley in the southern Interior of British Columbia. This transplant, however, is overwhelmed in the New World – literally drowned by modernity – by the building of a hydroelectric dam that floods the valley with its "village" and the surrounding orchards that had been maintained by its Italian-origin residents. It is also a tale about another type of disappearance: a coming-of-age story that chronicles the transition from the innocence of childhood through adolescence to the world of adults. "Children vanish. They vanish through doors, under stairs, in the branches of apricot trees" (5).

The story begins with Old World migrations. A Scottish artisan, a slater and one of the narrator's great grandparents, walks from Dundee, Scotland, to southern Italy (perhaps to the Region of Campania or Calabria) in search of slate for a roof that he is constructing. His quest is more than successful in that he returns to Dundee not only with suitable slate but also with a wife from the village. In time, the couple's son, also a slater and on a quest similar to that of his father, returns to his mother's birthplace where he becomes the wheel keeper of the novel's title. In that position he is responsible for working a wheel mechanism used to receive infants – often from women forced to give them up because they were born out of wedlock – anonymously through the wall of the village hospice. The Scottish-Italian wheel keeper receives the daughter of the woman whom he will follow to Canada after she reclaims her daughter from the hospice – a journey she undertakes in order to join her brother so that she cannot be forced to give up her child born out of wedlock. Their immigration to the unnamed settlement in British Columbia is an act of relocation, or displacement, that will be followed by another when they and their adult children and their families are forced from the valley – uprooted (62) – to make way for its flooding.

Much of the novel is set in the days leading up to that traumatic event and also in the narrator's early adolescent memories of growing up in the village. He is the grandson of the woman – *nostre nonna* – who fled her Italian village with her newborn, followed by the slater, the man whom she would marry and whom she would lose in a landslide in British Columbia in the early 1920s. The novel itself is slender – only a little more than a hundred loosely typeset pages – but it manages to pack a remarkably complex tale within its narrow limits. In fact some readers, like the author of this review, might feel the need to compile a genealogy of the four generations of immigrants and their descendants at the centre of this narrative in order to keep track of them throughout the complicated storyline.

The novel's unnamed BC village is presented as an Italian enclave. Almost without exception the narrative focuses on its Italian-origin residents, with only a handful of references to its non-Italian features: the Swede's barn (7), Mackenzie Avenue (44), Modern Bakery (45), Bruski's store (65), and the Swede's house (65). Throughout, Pepper-Smith's language is evocative and compelling: "I can still smell the burning dill. It had a sweet smell, the grey smoke that drifts on the river while my uncle plays his yellow *zerocetti*. The dill torches hiss as they strike the river among the flowers sent out for the festa" (61).

As in this example, standard Italian terminology abounds in the text: for example, a *festa campestra* rather than a picnic (55), *commare* for godmother (56), *bambina piccola* for young baby girl (22), the wheel keeper himself is the *ruotaro* (9), and so forth. Its usage may be intended to impart an Italian atmosphere to the narrative and, to some extent, this is successful. Unfortunately, this terminology is also often reproduced "ambivalently." In the examples cited above, and in others, the terms are presented in accurate, standard Italian. In many other instances, however, it is not clear whether a deviation from this form of the Italian language is intended – meant, for example, to convey what linguists call a language shift that occurs in language use by immigrants and their descendants – or whether it is the result of inattentive editing.

Throughout the text, and as cited above, the narrator refers to his grandmother as *nostre nonna* rather than *nostra* (our) *nonna* or grandmother. The standard Italian spelling *gnocchi* is always reproduced as *gnocci*; a young male baby is described as *bambino piccola* rather than the masculine *piccolo*; a priest in Italy mocks the ways of his village parishioners and dismisses their celebration as a *festa paesane* rather than a *festa paesana*; and so forth. In one rather crucial instance, the text renders the sign, or marker, of recognition that was attached to a newborn about to be passed into the hospice through the wheel mechanism as *segni* (plural) *di riconoscimento* rather than as *segno* (singular) *di riconoscimento*, and on the very last page of the text, an otherwise moving dedication to future generations is marred by the misspelling(?) *signe*: "I offer this signe to our children; may it guide them under the tongue" (118). Similarly, the hospice in the Italian village of origin is printed as *ospizia* (feminine) rather than the standard Italian *ospizio* (masculine). The migrant workers (said to consist of Italians, Québécois, and Portuguese) who return annually to the BC valley for its harvest and who are a central motif in the narrative are called *golondrinas*, which is translated as "swallows" in the text; however, this is not standard Italian either for the birds themselves or for migrant workers, who are usually referred to as *rondine* or *rondinelle* (diminutive, little swallows). Are these spellings intended to convey language shift – perhaps starting from the original language of Campania or Calabria spoken by the immigrants and learned and remembered by the text's third-generation narrator – or are they editorial oversights?

For this reader, questions like these are distracting and do a disservice to a text that deserves, and will amply reward, a reader's undivided attention. Pepper-Smith has written a novel that provides a moving glimpse – made up of many memorable images – of a world in transition from old to new, both in Italy and in Canada.

Murder in the Monashees: A Mystery

Roy Innes

Edmonton: NeWest Press, 2005.
277 pp. $10.95 paper.

JOCELYN SMITH
University of British Columbia

RUSSELL MONTGOMERY, an office worker from Vancouver, has come to the Monashee Mountains for one week in the hope of shooting a mule deer stag. Through his scope, he fixes a buck, seventy-five yards away. He fires, misses, gives up, and begins the descent to his vehicle. In the late afternoon gloom, a flash of colour catches his eye. He walks towards what looks like a bundle of discarded hunting clothing, which turns out to be a decapitated human corpse. "Montgomery recoiled in terror, falling backwards and striking his head against a tree. Stunned momentarily, he saw trees and sky whirl above him. As his eyes refocused, he suffered yet another shock. Grinning down at him, six feet from the ground, was the corpse's head, lashed to the trunk with a yellow poly rope placed between the teeth ... creating a macabre expression. Just above the head, pinned by a large hunting knife, was a piece of waxed cardboard upon which was written a sign in large black letters: "DON'T FORGET THE TROPHY" (6).

A woman from the nearby town of Bear Creek recognizes the victim, or rather the victim's head. It is that of Dietmar Kraus, a German student at the University of Victoria and radical environmentalist who advocates tree-spiking, a form of sabotage in which ceramic or metal spikes are driven into tree trunks to deter logging. The killer's identity and motive are not known, though a likely candidate is a local property developer who is also a keen hunter. The investigation falls to the local RCMP Detachment and the Vancouver Homicide Unit. More killings and attempted killings follow, each apparently random. Fear overtakes Bear Creek.

Roy Innes, the author of *Murder in the Monashees*, is a retired physician who lives on Gabriola Island. He takes on large issues in this novel: homosexuality in the RCMP, tree-spiking, foreign involvement in the BC environmentalist movement, post-traumatic stress syndrome, masculinity, and the expansion of residential neighbourhoods into undeveloped countryside. Is a murder mystery an appropriate vehicle for these issues, and can *Murder in the Monashees* hold up under their weight?

Perhaps, and no. A more experienced writer might choose one or at most two of these issues as underlying themes for a murder mystery. A mystery novel that tackled all of them successfully would be a tour de force. It is more likely that each issue would receive only superficial treatment and that a writer would resort to clichéd characters and situations to represent all the issues and points of view that he wanted to cover in his work. And so in *Murder in the Monashees,* we have the RCMP constable who is afraid to admit that he is gay; the spunky, red-haired female reporter whose eyes are "an extraordinary emerald green and twinkled now with mischief" (54), the buxom waitress, the supercilious German businessman with an "aquiline nose and startling blue eyes" (143), and the bored housewife who finds a new purpose in life caring for a widow and two children. That is not to say that such characters do not exist in real life. There is a certain truth in all clichés, simply because they represent characters or situations that we encounter again and again. The challenge for a writer is to portray fresh characters or to find new ways of looking at known characters. Roy Innes grapples with the challenge bravely but success stays just beyond his grasp.

Murder in the Monashees has its moments. A long section in which a member of the Vancouver Homicide Unit travels to Victoria to find out more about Dietmar Kraus's life is excellent. Skilfully and with obvious expertise, Innes gives us a disquisition on the wines of British Columbia and California, told from the point of view of this homicide investigator (I have noted the names of several of the vineyards that Innes mentions and look forward to trying Blue Mountain champagne from California). In addition, passages that are narrated from the killer's point of view show a keen understanding of motivation and are written with a depth and force that are missing elsewhere in the novel. And, as one would expect from a writer who is also a physician, the medical details are convincing. Unfortunately, these strengths are not enough to redeem *Murder in the Monashees* from its oversimplification.