

as a political tool by challenging the narrow view of the Fraser Valley as a "corridor" of urban sprawl, shopping malls, and industry.

Two contributors deserve special mention. Jan Perrier, the book's graphic artist and illustrator, is a large part of the project's success. She integrates maps, photographs, charts, artefacts, and drawings with great artistic skill. The project's "cultural advisor," Sonny McHalsie, is also key. As a member of the Sto:lo Nation, he lends the atlas a strong sense of cultural authority and an insider perspective.

This latter point draws attention to an issue raised by Bruce Miller in his 1989 review of *You Are Asked to Witness*. "McHalsie's careful, pathbreaking research into Sto:lo place-names," notes Miller, "reveals Sto:lo understandings of place, events, and relationships among groups and ultimately provides the beginnings of a history from the Sto:lo viewpoint. Yet *You Are Asked to Witness* is not informed by Sto:lo concepts of history [as it] is not fully of their own making. With time, they may produce such a book" (*Canadian*

Historical Review 79 [2]: 340). The same comment could be made of *The Sto:lo-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*. Other than McHalsie, there are no Sto:lo authors in this volume.

Given this, a Guide to Contributors would be helpful. Beyond individual author's names, the book provides little on the backgrounds and perspectives of the contributors. It would be useful to know details about the individuals who worked on this project, along with their relations to the Sto:lo Nation.

But these are minor concerns. The maps are beautiful; the bibliographic section is comprehensive; and the textual material is full and sophisticated. Unlike most works of BC history, it features few stock photographs. On the contrary, there are photographic and other images that have rarely been seen (e.g., a prophet's notebook [in full] from the field materials of early ethnographer James A. Teit).

Clearly, anyone with an interest in the cultural landscape of British Columbia will want to add this book to his/her library.

Going Native

Tom Harmer

University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque. 2001. 292 pp.

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BY DOROTHY KENNEDY

BC Indian Language Project

GOING NATIVE is a courageous book. It could have gone so terribly wrong for first-time author Tom Harmer, yet this simple story of one man's sojourn among the

Okanagan-Colville First Nations on the US-Canada border is, instead, an evocative bridge to a world view that few non-Aboriginals have had the privilege, or perhaps the time, to

pursue. It is not surprising that Harmer concludes with an Afterword confessing that this tale is not fiction – as if there were any doubt – but actually his personal journey into the spiritual life of his Okanagan-Colville friends, with some literary embellishment to make it “a good story.”

The personal chronicle of this young American draft dodger’s self-discovery under the tutelage of Old Willie, Grandma, Clayton, and a handful of other Indians (yes, they call themselves “Indians,” he points out) is remarkably sensitive and vivid. It is compelling and eloquent in its simplicity. This comes about in part through Harmer’s skilful delineation of the immediate setting, particularly when focused on his deepening relationship with his Aboriginal hosts in a seemingly barren land. Liminality is a constant theme throughout the book, and it is in the mediation of Harmer’s own ambiguous state within this new atmosphere of uncertainties that he so effectively leads the reader into grasping, or at least glimpsing, the Okanagan-Colville world view and its interrelationship with nature. This is the association between humankind and the natural world, the *sumix*, or nature power, that is spoken of so expressly in Harry Robinson’s (with Wendy Wickwire) *Nature Power: In the Spirit of an Okanagan Storyteller* (Douglas and McIntyre, 1992). Also, with the skill of a good storyteller, Harmer enters the realm of *kwil’stn* – the anthropomorphized sweathouse ritual that is central to the Okanagan-Colville people’s physical and spiritual well-being – senses the power, and

emerges an integrated man, aware of his place in the natural world and, as important, of his place in a community of family and friends.

For people familiar with the Okanagan-Colville, the landscape, personalities, and, especially, the humour will be hauntingly familiar. Harmer’s use of the indigenous language is proficient and, with few exceptions, accurate. Even its presentation in his own linguistically naive orthography is not off-putting, for Harmer employs the *nsilxstn* (Okanagan-Colville) language in situations appropriate to the contemporary Aboriginal society within which he found himself. Similarly, Harmer’s dialogue generally captures the particular dialect of English spoken by the Okanagan-Colville, although in a few cases the omission of either subject, preposition, or verb seems more Pocahontas than Okanagan.

Going Native deserves a broad audience, especially among those seeking to comprehend the cultural root of certain sentiments sometimes articulated less directly, or with less clarity, by politically active First Nations youth in British Columbia’s Interior. Apart from providing insight into the sacred domain of Okanagan-Colville society, Harmer elucidates some of the frustration and sense of futility experienced by these people as they witness the ongoing erosion of their cultural landscape. *Going Native* is a defence, both passionate and reasoned, of the importance of more British Columbians and Washingtonians finding power in nature.