

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By Charles Dawson  
*University of British Columbia*

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

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

the future links both volumes and can link cultures.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *Bill Reid*

Doris Shadbolt

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

By Megan Smetzer

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

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