

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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