

This leads me to the methodological question raised by this book. This perspective of the child, developed and analyzed in the book, does not come directly from children's discourse, but rather from memories and historical recollections of adults talking about their own childhood. The data come from over 200 interviews carried through the Canadian Childhood History Project at UBC, a certain number of autobiographies, and other related material. The question that I want to raise is: what is the status of these historical recollections in a context where we know from an epistemological point of view that adult memories are not an objective description of the reality of their childhood but a social construction.

The problem that arises from this 'perspective of the child' is precisely that it is a historical reconstruction from an adult point of view and standpoint. How can we put forward that an adult whose childhood happened in 1930 and is interviewed in 1990 – sixty years later – about his childhood experience could discursively express

the 'perspective of the child'? Is the problem mainly a question of accuracy of memory? What is then the status of childhood memory in the constitution of selfhood, specially in late adulthood? From an epistemological standpoint, is it possible to reach a child's perspective once one is firmly anchored in adulthood? In accordance with G.H. Mead, I shall raise the question that a historical reconstruction is always an account of the past from some person's present. What does that mean from an analytical point of view?

I am not sure that I have the answer to these questions. I think that they ought to be risen because those problems need further thinking. The preceding remarks do not diminish in any way the remarkable qualities of Sutherland's book. It is on the contrary a tribute to the tough questions raised by this research and the very creative way that the author stands up to them. Above all, the winds of childhood are blowing all through the book and this in itself is worth reading this monumental work.

### *Environmental Management on North America's Borders*

Richard Kiy and John D. Wirth, editors

College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1998.  
306 pp. US\$19.95 paper.

By Larry Pynn, *Vancouver Sun*

**W**HEN A TOILET FLUSHES, when a slick of oil oozes from a ship's hull, or when a dark cloud wafts from an industrial smokestack, it happens with little sense of geographic direction. Pollutants unleashed into the environment

are known to travel far afield, breaching international borders and ultimately taxing the resolution of more than one nation to clean them up.

With that thinking in mind, *Environmental Management on North America's Borders* is a collection of ten

case studies examining the various ways in which Canada, the United States, and Mexico work cooperatively – or at cross-purposes, as is often the case – on common environmental problems. As well as shedding light on issues such as the maquiladoras industrial zones along the Mexican border, hazardous-waste sites in Texas, and the development of Quebec's hydroelectricity for export to the United States, the book features two chapters that focus on British Columbia's environmental relationship with Washington State.

The first chapter is written by Jamie Alley, a director of fisheries for the province who was instrumental in developing the British Columbia-Washington Environmental Cooperation Council in 1992 to tackle mutual problems, such as air and water quality, flood control, and the introduction of exotic marine species. Alley does an excellent job of outlining the history of this unique bureaucracy, which, while lacking any real power or major source of funding, seeks to resolve issues along cooperative, voluntary lines between province and state – not on a formal nation-to-nation basis.

As part of his presentation, Alley specifically elaborates on progress the council has made in three areas – marine water quality, regional air management, and Columbia River water quality. But he is not as forthcoming about the lesser successes. For example, despite improved river forecasting, the flood risk on Washington's Nooksack River essentially remains as great today as it did in 1990, when it inundated Abbotsford's Sumas Prairie. And despite countless meetings to resolve Washington's concerns over BC farmers polluting the Sumas-Abbotsford Aquifer, nitrate levels

continue to rise. Alley also devotes too little attention to the way in which politics affects the council. Perhaps that's because politics derailed the council's work only during the latter stages of his writing, or perhaps it is because there is a limit to which we can reasonably expect a bureaucrat to criticize his political masters. I refer to the suspension of council meetings for more than two years, ending October 1998, as a result of former premier Glen Clark's fishing dispute with Washington State, resulting from the collapse of the Canada-US Pacific Salmon Treaty.

The other British Columbia chapter is written by R. Anthony Hodge, a teacher of environment and management at Royal Roads University in Victoria, and Paul R. West, director of the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. Hodge and West compare how Canada and the United States jointly manage the Great Lakes system versus the inland waters of British Columbia's Strait of Georgia and Washington's Puget Sound. While serious, long-standing pollution problems in the Great Lakes have given rise to a much more formalized, transboundary management structure, British Columbia and Washington have nothing to be smug about. The Cascadia region's burgeoning population is generating water pollution in the form of human sewage, vehicle emissions, wetland destruction, and overfishing. Yet the authors still conclude there is time to get it right, to create a model of sustainability that could serve countries around the world.

But political commitment remains the missing link, as events continue to show. The Canadian government last December committed \$22 million in new funding over five years to the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative,

a program designed to address the region's growing water and air pollution problems. In return, the province pledged all the good will in the world but not an additional nickel – a decision that underscores the vulnerability of the region's environment to political resolve. Furthermore, as recently as last June, Ottawa completed an embarrassing end run around

the BC government to sign a new Pacific salmon agreement with the Americans. As Hodge and West argue, only through greater collaboration among all sides – including our provincial and federal governments – and perhaps a shift to more formal transboundary institutions can the ecological integrity of the region be assured “now and in the future.”