

violence that has always simmered just underneath the surface of the colonial enterprise more generally. I still cringe, however, at the use of the term "massacre" (especially in the title) to refer to Lha tse'sin's offensive against Brewster's road crew, and I thought that the map of the events of the war, which seems to be (whether accidentally or deliberately is not clear) a translation of Waddington's original 1864 *Sketch Map of the Chilcotin War*, would have benefitted from a little more attention to Tsilhqot'in geography, some of which has already been mapped out by the Tsilhqot'in people. That said, the

author does properly acknowledge that the asymmetries in emphasis that still permeate this contrapuntal story must be left for the Tsilhqot'in to redress themselves. Until that time, this book will stand nicely in its own right as a welcome complement to Terry Glavin's *Nemiah: The Unconquered Country* and, perhaps most important, as a desperately needed antidote to (and replacement of) Mel Rothenburger's one-sided, and ultimately racist, polemic *The Chilcotin War*, which, as the Tsilhqot'in have noted, still stocks far too many public school bookshelves throughout the BC Interior. I recommend *High Slack*.

Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History

Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds.

Peterborough: Broadview, 1996. 519 pp. Illus. \$29.95 paper.

By ROBIN RIDINGTON, *University of British Columbia*

READING BEYOND WORDS is a rich collection of twenty-one essays that explore how First Nations experience has been represented as well as misplaced in the texts that make up the substance of conventional history and ethnography. What unites the essays, Brown and Vibert explain in their introduction, "is that texts are not transparent." The facts they present "are socially constructed, moulded by the social and cultural forces in place when the texts were created, and by the later contexts in which they have been reread and reinterpreted" (pp. x-xi). A realistic understanding of texts about First Nations history thus requires an act of authorship on the part of the reader — a reading beyond the words themselves. While acknowledging a debt to postmodern discourse analysis,

these essays tend to business rather than to the arcana of postmodern literary theory. They and the reader are better off for it.

Following genre conventions similar to those of First Nations discourse, each of these essays tells a story. Together, the stories bring into focus a coherent whole that reflects a world of experience beyond the words captured in print. I found the book hard to put down once I had begun reading it, but I also took the liberty of initially sampling essays from each of the seven headings rather than reading it from cover to cover. Frieda Esay Klippenstein's reading of written and oral accounts documenting an encounter between James Douglas and Carrier Chief Kwah reads almost like a mystery story. Frederic W. Gleach makes a convincing case for

"controlled speculation" to unravel the story of what the encounter between Captain John Smith and Pocahontas may have meant in the language of Pohatan ceremony. Bunny McBride reflects on her experience writing the biography of Penobscot dancer and entertainer Molly Spotted Elk. Daniel Clayton takes a close look at multiple versions of Cook's encounter with the Nuu-Chah-Nulth at Nootka Sound. Erica Smith describes an 1863 trial that turns on the linguistic contrast between woman as prostitute and woman as "the angel in the house" (p. 372).

The essays in this collection are rich because of their vivid content and they are stimulating because of the creative and intelligent ways the authors have gone about discovering how documents and multiple narrative voices combine to create stories. Maureen Matthews and Roger Roulette review Hallowell's account of the dream dance led by Ojibwe elder Naamiwan (Fair Wind) in relation to accounts by contemporary Ojibwe people in their own language. Their story is satisfying as history, as philosophy, and as literature. Winona Stevenson describes her very personal quest for reconciling oral tradition and written documents relevant to the life of her great-great grandfather, Askenootow (Charles Pratt). Through her and him we have a window into how Native people subject to the pressures of colonization were able to maintain heteroglossic identities.

The joy of this book is that it is beautifully written. This is particularly wonderful in a collection by so many

different authors. While the ethnographic and historical particulars range widely in time and place, the stories work well together because of a devotion to text and context shared by all the authors. Taken together, the essays make a kind of implicit meta-theoretical statement to the effect that any theoretical insight into how to interpret the past must arise from a close and critical reading of all available texts in relation to whatever else can be learned about how and when they were produced. As Brown and Vibert conclude their introduction:

We hope that these writings will build some new frameworks for doing Native history, and perhaps undermine a few older ones. In reading the essays ourselves, we were repeatedly reminded that we all share not only some common understandings and premises, but also some major concerns about how best to steer a course among the cross-currents, rocks, and whirlpools that beset travellers on this rapidly flowing river. (p. xxvii)

This book is an unusually good read and should become known to readers beyond the disciplines of ethnohistory and anthropology. I have mentioned only a few of the stories it tells; the others are equally interesting and engaging. The book should be required reading for courses dealing with First Nations history, culture, literature, and philosophy and belongs in the library of anyone interested in a wider reading of First Nations history.