

ment) and yet less rigid in the matter of jurisdictional questions with Ottawa than that of W. A. C. Bennett (which used federal-provincial confrontation to advantage).

There is much to praise in this book, particularly the broadened perspective it brings to the subject of provincial politics. One of the difficulties of studying another province's politics is to find information that does not concentrate on the legislature, political parties and elections, no matter how important these may be. All of that is here, but there is much more. It is a pity, though understandable, why interest groups are ignored except as they make tangential appearances. The inference to be drawn, however, is that interest group activity in British Columbia pervades and parallels party activity. Perhaps their study is another part of the B.C. Project's research plans. One can only hope so. As it is, *The Reins of Power* enlightens and instructs. One would be querulous to ask for more.

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Indian Art Traditions of the Northwest Coast, edited by Roy L. Carlson.
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Indian Art Traditions of the Northwest Coast is a collection of papers which, in their original form, were presented at a symposium entitled "The Prehistory of Northwest Coast Indian Art" at Simon Fraser University in 1976. The volume, like the symposium before it, is dedicated to Erna Gunther, and one of the papers, Wilson Duff's, is also dedicated to Viola Garfield.

The contributors to this volume are archaeologists and ethnologists, linked by shared experience and a common interest in Northwest Coast Indian art. In this volume all are looking at art in the context of traditional Northwest Coast culture and prehistory.

To understand the nature of the book it is important to have a sense of its organization. There is at the beginning a summary by Roy Carlson of current research in Northwest Coast prehistory, and this is followed by three papers: a discussion by Bill Holm of the formal characteristics of a series of pieces, moving from prehistoric to nineteenth century and discussing the characteristics of regional styles and the relationship between two-dimensional and sculptural forms; a paper by Wilson Duff, which encourages the reader to go beyond the consideration of North-

west Coast art as a reflection of social and religious principles, or as purely decorative form, to consideration of art as a system of generating and thinking about deeper meanings; and a paper by Wayne Suttles, which explores meaning in central Coast Salish art, relating artistic expression in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to four key features of Coast Salish culture: the vision, the ritual word, the ancestors and wealth. In this discussion Suttles also considers an issue which has been raised elsewhere, i.e., the apparent paucity of forms of art produced by Coast Salish people in comparison with forms produced by peoples of the northern and central coast.

These three papers are followed by a section in which authors present overviews of prehistoric art according to category or region: Doris Lundy: rock art; George MacDonald: the northern coast; Roy Carlson: the central coast; Charles Borden: the Lower Fraser region; Ar-noud Stryd: the mid-Fraser and Thompson River area; and Richard Daugherty and Janet Friedman: Ozette. There is a final concluding section by Carlson which summarizes developments in form and themes in interpretation of meaning.

Form and meaning are the themes of this book, and each of the papers has been written with both in mind. The three papers by Holm, Duff and Suttles present issues and problems for considering form and meaning in the context of what can now be known of prehistoric graphic and sculptural expression. The authors presenting data from site excavations and observations of rock art are careful to integrate datum and context of discovery and to enunciate in each case the possibilities suggested and the limitations imposed by this context.

There is always a tension between the impulse to speculate, to act on the infinite possibilities suggested by a piece, elements of whose form connote pieces separated from it by thousands of years, and the academic necessity of building up a measured, cautious and necessarily incomplete picture of the record. Ultimately, the emphasis of the papers which present data is on description, on presentation of form rather than on interpretation of meaning. Of the authors, MacDonald and Stryd offer the most extensive commentary on possible meaning. MacDonald, particularly, discerns links between the prehistoric material and the shamanic inventory of protohistoric Tsimshian culture. This is material which can be discussed in the context of a time sequence which indicates *in situ* cultural development over a period of nearly 5,000 years and development of artistic forms over at least 3,000 years. In this paper

MacDonald outlines elements of an argument which he later developed more fully in his contribution to the Duff memorial volume.

Postulating meaning is trickier in regions where the data are less rich and the sequences less straightforward. Suttles' paper is a model of exposition of the relationship between Coast Salish belief and artistic expression, but it also suggests the enormous difficulties and complexities involved in elucidating the relationship between aesthetic expression and belief, even where the time depth is very limited and ethnographic data exist. Ironically, the writers who are most cautious in regard to discussion of meaning are Daugherty and Friedman, whose Ozette materials are perhaps more fully contextualized and more consistently related to the protohistoric culture of the region than the data at the disposal of any other contributor. Carlson, summing up, concludes that while it is possible to see in the data evidence of concern for crest development and secret societies, the themes that are probably most consistently represented are belief in spirits and shamanic curing.

The search for meaning is endless and the conclusions endlessly debatable. The archaeological record can much more certainly offer data on the development of form. One signal value of this book is in bringing this material together, in giving pieces known through other formal and informal presentations a context that comprises the known time depth and spans the length of the coast.

For a work of this kind there can be no suggestion that the last word has been written in regard to either data or interpretation. In archaeology, perhaps more than in any other discipline, there is always the promise of fresh discovery. More generally, the possibilities suggested by Holm and Duff cannot be fully addressed at this time, and they remain to be addressed in another volume and probably in several volumes.

This is a useful and stimulating book. It is pleasantly laid out, and illustration and text are integrated in each paper so that the argument can be followed without flipping pages. It is a collection of scholarly papers in archaeology and ethnology, but the writing is clear and it will be a valuable source of information for specialist and non-specialist alike.