

The types of omissions and over-generalizations mentioned above are the most problematic aspect of the book for an academic reader, but then I have already noted that it isn't really directed to the academic reader. The tone of the volume is appropriately set in the brief Foreword by Bill Reid when he praises Stewart for accomplishing "the difficult feat of telling of the wonder of the cedar tree with the same loving awe experienced by us for whom it forms a constant part of our lives. . . ." It should be appreciated on its own terms, and on those terms it is a fine contribution and a very good read.

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The Tsimshian: Images of the Past: Views for the Present, edited by Margaret Seguin. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984. xx + 343 pp., 40 b/w photographs, 27 drawings, 5 maps. \$37.95 (cloth).

The Tsimshian is a collection of fifteen articles, written by twelve authors, dealing with the Tsimshian Indians of the northwest coast of British Columbia. Most of the articles were first presented at a conference held in 1979 in the Southern Tsimshian village of Hartley Bay; others have been added later to expand particular subject areas.

The articles are grouped into four major categories: "Recent Tsimshian Ethnohistory," "Reconstructed Social Organization," "World View and Shamanism," and "Material Culture." The editor, M. Seguin, provides an Introduction, and the book ends with an Afterword by C. Farber.

The articles contain a mixture of description and theory, ranging from Laforet's paper on Tsimshian baskets (complete with a number of photographs) to Seguin's critique of psychoanalytical interpretations of potlatching. Some of the articles lead the reader smoothly from a general overview of a topic (e.g., Miller), while others (e.g., G. McDonald) engage the reader in the thick of an issue without too much of a warmup. The range of topics covered is perhaps too great to be tied together meaningfully in a single thematic way, although the comments in the introductory paper indicate that the excitement of anthropologists presenting data and interpretations on the Tsimshian at a conference held in a Tsimshian village bridges substantive differences.

Even though the title of the book emphasizes the Tsimshian as a whole, the focus of the contents is on the Southern Tsimshian, with fewer papers on the Coast Tsimshian, one on the Gitksan (G. McDonald), and none on the Nishga. As such, those readers who want specific information on the Southern Tsimshian and some good general overviews of Tsimshian social organization will be satisfied; those looking for the same kind of coverage for the other Tsimshian-speaking groups will have to spend some time going through the bibliography. However, conclusions reached about how Tsimshian society operates, drawn from the Southern Tsimshian data, will be useful for comparative purposes.

The Contents

Margaret Seguin's "Introduction" provides both a context for the articles in the collection, and a succinct overview of Tsimshian culture and society. She stresses that the collection is united by two elements: "a desire for contextualization, both that of culture, and that of the literature; and a concern for locating the particular genius of the Tsimshian" (p. ix). Seguin also points out the intellectual debt contemporary researchers owe to the early ethnographers like Franz Boas (but see J. McDonald's article), William Beynon, Marius Barbeau, Henry Tate and others.

Seguin's overview describes traditional Tsimshian territory, linguistic subdivisions, social organizations, political structures, ceremonies and post-European contact changes. She seems to speak for many of the contributors by commenting that "the evidence presented in the papers in this volume supports the view that Tsimshian were full owners of their lands, which they have never relinquished" (p. xvi).

Ken Campbell's article, "Hartley Bay, British Columbia: A History," leads off the section on "Recent Tsimshian Ethnohistory," and describes the history of the Kitka'ata group of Southern Tsimshian. These ancestors of the Hartley Bay people had left their original settlement in the 1860s and 1870s to reside in the mission village of Metlakatla, to the north, but some eventually returned to their homeland in 1887. Campbell uses archival and historical accounts, coupled with interview data, to provide a picture of Kitka'ata villages and movements from the 1700s through to 1979, and their involvement in the fur trade, canneries, logging, and eventually commercial fishing. Campbell also describes the concerns of the Hartley Bay people in the late 1800s and early 1900s over their land rights.

Jay Miller's article, "Feasting with the Southern Tsimshian," describes variations of, and terms used for, Tsimshian "potlatching" and feasts. He concludes that the ceremony called *yaokw* "best fits with the general notion of what constitutes a potlatch" (p. 28). Miller points out how the transfer of names through formal ceremonies, crucial to Tsimshian society, was maintained in spite of economic, political and demographic changes and pressures. The flu epidemic of 1918 is mentioned a number of times, undoubtedly because it is still in the memory of the elders. Miller's description of the general terms and practices of a variety of Tsimshian ceremonies is excellent, and neatly leads the reader into his detailed account of feasts held in Hartley Bay in 1978 and 1979. Miller concludes his article with a call to view Tsimshian ceremonies as adaptive, able to utilize contemporary resources to meet exchange obligations, yet retain the fundamental integrity of the system. Miller (p. 28) tantalizes the reader with his comment about the *yaokw*, saying that "it was quickly suppressed by missionaries and government agents over a century ago." But this leaves me wanting to know exactly how this suppression was accomplished, and how effective it really was. In a number of places, potlatching simply went underground.

James McDonald's article, "Images of the Nineteenth Century Economy of the Tsimshian," opens the ethnohistory section, and argues that traditional ethnographic accounts of the nineteenth century Tsimshian underrepresent the extent to which the Tsimshian were involved in the capitalist political economy. The article indicates that Boas, and others, did not draw out the nineteenth century context of Tsimshian economy and society. Indeed, Boas (pp. 40-41) is described as "a consultant hired to report on the contemporary conditions of the Indians, in order to avoid potential hostilities during economic development." McDonald cites Knight's (1978) study as the starting point for his own research. McDonald's argument is weakened by his use of historians' uses of ethnographic material — rather than the actual ethnographies. He especially criticizes Usher (1974), who is not an anthropologist. But his basic premise is well taken.

Marjorie Halpin's "Feast Names at Hartley Bay" opens the section on "Reconstructed Social Organization." The article describes Halpin's research in 1980 to compare present lineage names at Hartley Bay with those contained in a list collected in 1939 by William Beynon. The outcome, according to Halpin, was a final list of 236 names, with tape recordings and notes, and an understanding of the strategies involved in acquiring and transferring a name. Halpin's description of the value of

names, how names are managed (especially through strategic marriages and adoption) is an excellent account of what goes on “behind the scenes.”

In the next article, “The Epic of *Nekt*: The Archaeology of Metaphor,” George McDonald describes two connected activities: (1) the archaeological excavation of a fortified site (Kitwanga Hill Fort), and its declaration as National Historic Site, and (2) the epic accounts of a warrior, *Nekt*, who at one time likely had a fort at Kitwanga in the late 1700s and early 1800s (p. 68). McDonald indicates that the historical feats of *Nekt* have merged with mythology in stories which are similar to the better known *Azdiwal*. McDonald also maps out and describes northern interior trading routes, and speculates about the flow of trade goods (especially iron) and the distribution of forts. Forts were built at strategic locations along trade routes in order to control the flow of rare goods. McDonald concludes (p. 79) that almost all of the forts had been abandoned by the 1830s. He locates the origin of the forts themselves in the destabilization of population and territory in the early 1700s, and the emergence of endemic warfare — “motivated by the desire to control a new and scarce valuable resource” — iron, guns, and knives. Kitwanga Fort is presented as a product of those turbulent times, with *Nekt* as one of the “local strong men” whose exploits became the stuff of legend. Firearms spelled an end to this brief fort era, and *Nekt* himself was shot “by a confederacy of Nass River chiefs” (p. 81) with one of the area’s first rifles. McDonald (p. 81) concludes: “These new weapons quickly spelled the end to these forts which, with warriors in suits of armour, hilltop forts, and elaborate defences, constitutes a unique chapter of Canadian history.” I found this article difficult to follow; perhaps a rearrangement of sections would have given it a better flow. The reader is also somewhat hampered by not having a general overview of the archaeological record for the Tsimshian area — something which would put this account into context.

Louis Allaire, “A Native Mental Map of Coast Tsimshian Villages,” analyzes variations of a single myth to indicate how the order in which villages are named reflects the ranking of the villages. Allaire’s premise (p. 85) is that because of Tsimshian emphasis on ranking and hierarchy, the sequence “represented the actual ranking of individual villages by order of prestige in potlatch ceremonies.” The myths further link villages with their form of prestation, falling into two groups: those bringing food, and those bringing food containers (p. 86). Each of these groupings is further subdivided, and all together form “a definite mental map-

ping of distinctive territorial groups." Coast and river groups are symbolically separated, as are Tsimshian and non-Tsimshian. Out of Allaire's reading of the myths comes the suggestion that at one time a separate population centre existed in the middle Skeena River. Allaire's analysis is provocative, and points to some interesting uses of mythic content. However, his chart of the sequence of village names (p. 85) is different from the order given in the myths — villages 4 and 5 should be reversed.

John Dunn's "International Matri-Moieties: The North Pacific Province of the North Pacific Coast" suggests that relationships between the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian can be mapped onto a kinship schema, or mental map. In a detailed argument, Dunn argues that to the Tsimshian, the Tlingit are "children of the clan" and the Haida are seen as the "fathers of the clan," creating an "international structure governing noble interethnic alliances [in which] whole families and whole societies came into kinship relationships with one another" (p. 102). Through his analysis of kinship terms from these groups, Dunn concludes that from the Tsimshian position, the Haida are symbolically male, elder, animal, supernatural, unfamiliar and "father"; the Tlingit are symbolically female, younger, human, known (i.e., related) and "little sister." Thus the Tsimshian can view the whole region in terms of how other ethnic groups are mapped onto their kinship and descent model.

The section on social organization concludes with Margaret Seguin's "Lest There Be No Salmon: Symbols in Traditional Tsimshian Potlatch," which examines the symbols in Tsimshian potlatching. To Seguin (p. 111), the Tsimshian matrilineage, *waab*, or "House," is symbolically a box or container, which holds the wealth of the descent group. A feast empties the House, a necessary prerequisite to obtaining a *sm'oigyeyet*, or "real person," name. Seguin leads the reader through the symbols of power and feasting, and concludes with a critique of psychoanalytical interpretations of feasting. The analysis leads one readily to accept Seguin's premise that the Tsimshian feast known as the *yaokw* has an "internal symbolic logic" (p. 130).

The symbolically complex world of shamanism and power in Tsimshian society is described by Marie-Francois Guedon in two articles which should be read together. In the first article, "An introduction to Tsimshian World View and its Practitioners," Guedon focuses on the concepts of *halait* and *naxnox*, both of which defy simple translations into English. For example, the polysemantic term *halait* has been translated as dance, dancer, dancing, medicine man, shaman, initiate, something special, something different, and so on (p. 138). The associ-

ated concept of *naxnox* “applies to any being, event, or ability which appears to exhibit or express some form of ‘power,’ anything connected with abnormal or the extraordinary” (p. 139). Guedon describes two ways of seeking and using supernatural power in Tsimshian society: the individual vision quests of shamans, and the public power quests of chiefs. In her second article, “Tsimshian Shamanic Images,” Guedon elaborates on shamanism, describing how one becomes a shaman, the context of shamanic practices, techniques, songs, myths, paraphernalia, and healing procedures.

Audrey Shane’s “Power in Their Hands: The Gitsontk” follows Guedon’s first paper, although it should perhaps be read after both of Guedon’s. Drawing on unpublished Beynon notes and other material, Shane seeks to show the widespread existence of a category of artists and craftspeople, called *gitsontk*, who occupied a position in Tsimshian society between chiefs and commoners. As Shane (p. 162) points out, the *gitsontk*’s role was clothed in secrecy, leading to scattered and elliptical references in the literature. Identifying the *gitsontk* requires some assumptions. For example, Shane (p. 165) argues that since “only the *gitsontk* could carve *naxnox* material . . . it follows therefore that the name of a *naxnox* carver is the name of a *gitsontk*.” In the appendix to her article, Shane provides a list of Coast Tsimshian, Nishgan and Gitsan *gitsontk*.

In the last section (“Material Culture”), Andrea Laforet’s “Tsimshian Basketry” describes “the principal forms and technical characteristics of Tsimshian basketry,” based on various museum collections. Some types and techniques are common to the area (Coast Tsimshian, Nishga, Gitsan), while others (e.g., the Nass River oolachon basket) had a more localized manufacture. Laforet (p. 249) concludes that while Tsimshian basketry was “distinctive in style,” there also were stylistic differences between the coastal and upriver groups (Gitsan), with the Nishga sharing in both. Laforet’s article is the longest in the volume (65 pages), and contains thirty plates and eleven figures.

Halpin’s excellent second article in the volume, “Seeing in Stone: Tsimshian Masking and the Twin Stone Masks” (reprinted from Abbott (1981)) further extends the discussion of *naxnox* (see the articles by Guedon), and its relationship to names and masks. Halpin indicates that with the wearing of a *naxnox* mask, the norms of Tsimshian culture can be transgressed. In Halpin’s (p. 298) words:

Naxnox masks are instruments of transformation which turned their wearers inside-out to reveal those attributes of person and action normally

denied, especially to those of high status . . . *naxnox* transform chiefs, members of their families, and other high-ranking people, into rule-breakers, foreigners, animals, and the dead — all of which are *outside* the boundaries of Tsimshian culture.

In her Afterword, Carol Farber describes the activities associated with the conference, which she calls an “event,” and the process which led to the collection (or “artifact,” as she describes it). To Farber, the Tsimshian world has two parts: a “given world” to the native Tsimshian, and a world “to be discovered, to be translated” for the non-Tsimshian researcher. The results of those translation attempts in 1979 are reflected in the articles. Much of Farber’s paper is also best seen as paying homage to what she calls the “Tsimshian genius” (p. 315).

Comments on Contents

One of the strong aspects of this collection is the extensive use of material from the Barbeau and Beynon files. At some point it would be useful to have some of the actual texts published.

While several articles stand by themselves, a number of groupings somewhat different from those of the editor can be made. The complicated and important concept of power, captured in part by the term *naxnox*, is described in the two articles by Guedon and Shane, and by Halpin’s “Seeing in Stone.” Lineage structure and ceremonies — it is often difficult to separate the two — are dealt with in Halpin “Feast Names,” Miller and Seguin. Allaire and Dunn are linked by their common concern with what they call “mental maps,” although their approaches are different. All of the above articles require careful and attentive reading.

Given that several articles deal with the same topic (e.g., power), there is a great deal of repetition. An alternative approach might have been to use one article, with substantial commentary. This would have allowed the reader to get a sense of the interaction during the conference. It appears that this important element of the “event” (to use Farber’s word) is simply not available to the reader, yet seems to be a major reason for publishing the collection. We also have no idea how the Hartley Bay people responded to the attempts to get into their world. J. McDonald’s argument that early ethnographers missed the political and economic context of nineteenth-century Tsimshian life is also not picked up on in the other papers, and I am left wondering to what extent the Barbeau and Beynon material can be used for this purpose, in addition to expanding our knowledge of ceremonies and social organization.

I conclude this section with some specific comments. I am puzzled why Seguin (p. x) writes that “among the Nishga there were generally only three crest groups represented.” I encountered four. Seguin (p. xv) and Campbell (p. 23) both use incorrect figures for the number of judges sitting on the Calder case. There were seven, not nine.

Buzzwords abound in this volume, especially in the Introduction and Afterword. One much overworked term is “contextualize” (e.g., pp. ix, xvix). At one point, Farber (p. 315) refers to the papers in the collection as “tightly interferring” — whatever that means.

Given the variations in spellings of the same concepts and terms in different articles, the reader is advised to check the “Note on Variant Spellings of Native Language Terms” (p. 335).

Beyond the Articles

After reading the collection, I was left wishing for a number of articles which might have provided a broader context for the often focused papers. Given the importance of the works of Barbeau and Beynon, I wanted a chapter on the history of anthropological research among the Tsimshian, and Tsimshian accounts of that research. During my work with the Nishga, I was often given a story about anthropologists. Boas, Barbeau and others were described as people who had come and collected, but had never really understood. The legacy of anthropology is very much a part of Nishga oral traditions, and anthropologists must be cognizant of this. We should remember that Edward Sapir’s Nishga articles (Sapir, 1915, 1920) are based on information obtained when a Nishga delegation was in Ottawa to discuss land claims.

An article on the relationship between Tsimshian studies and anthropological theory also was missed. I’m not quite sure, after reading the articles, if some anthropologists haven’t merged into Tsimshian society. I get the feeling that the Tsimshian have captured anthropology, rather than anthropology capturing, through its models, the essence of Tsimshian society. Perhaps because of the substantive nature of the papers, Mauss, Van Gennep, Lévi-Strauss (in his kinship version), and others did not make appearances. However controversial, books like Rosman and Rubel’s (1971) create a necessary theoretical distance. I have found that the geographically removed but structurally close Trobriand Islanders provide a means of thinking about Tsimshian society (especially Hutchins (1980) and Weiner (1976)). More specifically, Seguin’s excellent article “Lest There Be No Salmon” begs comparison with Goldman

(1975) and Walens (1981) — recognizing that the latter book appeared after the conference. In this collection, though, theory perhaps waits until the excavation of the Barbeau and Beynon material is complete.

Five other topics are conspicuous by their absence: (1) a discussion of conflict resolution, especially with respect to competing claims to land; (2) a history of the emergence of Native political organizations, especially the role of Tsimshians in fishing and land claims organizations; (3) a section with comments by the Tsimshian themselves; (4) an overview of the archaeological record in the Tsimshian area; and (5) no detailed information is presented on the material basis of Tsimshian social formations, and the importance of contemporary harvesting of marine and terrestrial resources. Given the hope of the editor that the volume will aid the Tsimshian in land claims, this is an important omission. Daniel Raunet's (1984) excellent account of the history of Nishga land claims shows the amount of data available for this topic.

The Tsimshian as a Unit of Study

It is clear from the articles that a number of comparisons can be made between the groups which make up what we call "Tsimshian." Perhaps it is time to break out of the box of northwest coast ethnology, empty it, and start anew. Simply mentioning that the Nishga, for example, are different, is not enough. We need to delve into the differences to see if they are variants of an underlying order, or completely different structures and social formations, perhaps based on a lineage mode of production. The Nishga and Gitksan are underrepresented in the collection, but studies among them have raised some interesting questions. For example, Adams (1973:27) identifies a Gitksan social unit known as *wilnad'ahl*, and the same term appears among the Nishga. It would be interesting to see where else this level of organization appears. Our very terms used for describing social organization need clarification; moiety, phratry, crest group, clan, lineage, local lineage segment, house, etc., are used in a variety of ways. The excellent articles by Halpin, Guedon and Seguin indicate the extent to which Tsimshian terms can be analyzed. How we use those terms in anthropology is important, as Duff (1973) cautioned a decade ago.

The research being carried out under the direction of various tribal councils for land claims may very well generate the comprehensive ethnographies we need for the Tsimshian area. The need for understanding how land rights operate in lineage-based societies may also force us

to compare the northwest coast with similar societies in other parts of the world. Then, I would argue, the Tsimshian (or perhaps more appropriately the Nishga, Gitksan, Coast Tsimshian and Southern Tsimshian) will have revealed their true genius.

Conclusion

The Tsimshian will appeal to students of Tsimshian ethnography, especially those with an interest in social organization, ceremonies and shamanism. The emphasis on these topics, and the focus on the Southern Tsimshian, means that this book can be seen as an addition to the growing literature on the area but cannot be taken as a statement about general Tsimshian society and economy. Given the regional differences, such a volume is perhaps not possible. However, the articles in this work will provide important points of departure for future studies of the larger Tsimshian language group. Because the articles engage the readers at a fairly dense level, this book is not for those first entering the Tsimshian world. But those of us who have been there will likely want to have a copy.

Like all University of British Columbia publications I have seen, this book is well manufactured, with crisp type and clear photos. Perhaps, though, a paperback edition in the future might make owning a copy easier. Given the range of topics presented in the articles, many readers may not want to buy the hardcover version for the two or three articles they want — or which are required for a course.

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Early Maritime Artists of the Pacific Northwest Coast, 1741-1841, by John Frazier Henry. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984. Pp. xvi, 240; 16 colour plates. \$40.00. Cloth.

Although specialists in northwest coast history may have access to a portion of the printed drawings and illustrations of some early expeditions, this is the first major compilation that brings together the product of many voyages of Russia, Britain, France, Spain and the United States. The overall impact of Henry's study is considerable — both in terms of the plates reproduced from a diversity of artists and for the detailed biographies of the individuals who sketched their impressions of the North Pacific littoral and its inhabitants. While only a few of the artists