

BOOK REVIEWS

*Writing British Columbia
History, 1784-1958*

Chad Reimer

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009. 206 pp.
\$85.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

KENNETH FAVRHOLDT

Kamloops

HISTORIOGRAPHY may seem like a dry, pedantic exercise that would only attract a handful of readers. Add to that the seeming lack of history that the subject of British Columbia suggests. But a recent addition to the shelves is Chad Reimer's book, which will become essential reading for students and scholars of BC history. It is also a very readable text for anyone interested in how the writing of BC history has evolved in the province's first 175 years.

Reimer divides the book into what he describes as genres, representing not only different styles of writing but also overarching periods of BC historiography. In his direct and clear style, he states the purpose of the book, to examine "how from its beginnings until the middle of the twentieth century, BC historical writing was part of a larger imperial process" (151).

Chapter 1 describes the earliest accounts of British Columbia, using Captain Cook's posthumously published journal of 1784 as the starting point. The earliest BC histories do not acknowledge the long history of First Nations and their oral histories and, later, only show tangentially how their histories served the purpose of imperial discourse. First Nations stories had no bearing on the early Eurocentric perspective, a gap not corrected until recent decades (and outside the scope of Reimer's book). Reimer uses Cook's accounts as the beginning date of the colonial narrative that is British Columbia. The accounts of those early explorers, however, are significantly more geographical than historical.

American writers contributed to the earliest phase of British Columbia's historiography – writing about the dispute over Oregon, which pitted theirs against British interpretations, the first counter-narrative in the historiography. At this point, and in the next genre, we see the positioning of First Nations in relation to an international discourse. Great Britain, through the Hudson's Bay Company, was seen as benevolent towards the Natives, while the United States was seen as expansionist and warmongering.

Chapters 2 and 3 explore pioneer history, the period of the gold rushes and early settlement. The former produced a sizeable historical literature, for example William Carew Hazlitt's *British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (1858), described by Reimer as part imperial history, part promotional literature. The emergence of guidebooks and directories about British Columbia furthered this genre. Richard Mayne's *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (1862) provided a more authoritative account, with the colonial project front and centre. Both those writers included Native peoples in their narratives, although assimilation was the underlying assumption regarding how they would fit within the dominant discourse, and Hazlitt and Mayne portrayed British Columbia as a benign area for immigrant settlement and a Christian population.

Yet, the early portrayal of British Columbia was tentative until the province was established and the colonial project could be fully implemented. The first full-fledged attempt at providing a comprehensive picture was the 1887 publication of Hubert Howe Bancroft's *History of British Columbia*. This was written from an American perspective, although Bancroft, based in San Francisco, undertook first-hand research, visiting Victoria and interviewing old-timers. This empirical approach to the formulation of history as an evolutionary process continued to negate Native peoples as doomed, although Bancroft, cited by Reimer, was critical of his American colleagues and viewed British Columbia as an anomaly "because of the peaceful working out of the universal process of civilization's victory over savagery" (38). It was not until the 1890s that Canadian historians countered American views and provided a British perspective.

Chapter 3 focuses on what Reimer terms the golden age of Edwardian history, which spawned interest in collecting the past and the establishment of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia in 1908, spearheaded by R.E. Gosnell, E.O.S. Scholefield, and Judge Frederic Howay. Gosnell's *A History of British Columbia* (1906) was followed by Scholefield's *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present, Vol. 1* (1914) and a second volume by Howay. Chapter 4 is devoted entirely to Howay, originally a teacher and lawyer, who became the province's most pre-eminent historian before the Second World War and who had a long list of publications.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on the professional genre of historical writing on British Columbia, coinciding with the establishment of a school of history at the University of British Columbia. W. Kaye Lamb, who later became the provincial and then Dominion archivist, and Margaret Ormsby, who taught history at UBC and elsewhere, were the defining personalities of British Columbia's historiographical evolution from the 1930s onwards. Lamb, who established the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, made the writing of BC history more rigorous. Ormsby, originally from the Okanagan, introduced a hinterland focus in her work and affirmed that the writing of history need not be dominated by Anglo-Saxon males.

Reimer only takes his analysis as far as 1958, avoiding the "messier" or more complicated discourse of postcolonial studies of BC history. Nineteen fifty-eight is an appropriate cut-off as that is when the government celebrated British Columbia's centenary and Ormsby's classic *British Columbia: A History* was published. Reimer's work, of course, benefits by being the product of the

postcolonial turn, which recognizes the “other” and minority viewpoints that were barely portrayed in British Columbia’s first one hundred years.

There is an extensive section of notes and a bibliography accompanying Reimer’s text. One may criticize him for glossing over some historians. One individual mentioned in passing – A.C. Anderson – amassed a great deal of knowledge from his work for the Hudson’s Bay Company and later, including *Handbook and Map to the Gold Region of Frazer’s and Thompson’s Rivers; with Table of Contents, to which is Appended Chinook Jargon – Language Used, etc.* (San Francisco, 1858); *The Dominion of the West: A Brief Description of the Province of British Columbia, Its Climate and Resources ...* (Victoria, 1872); *Notes on Northwestern America* (Montreal, 1876); *History of the Northwest Coast* (<city?>1878); and *A Brief Account of the Province of British Columbia, Its Climate and Resources; an Appendix to the British Columbia Directory, 1882–83* (Victoria, 1883). But this oversight is minor in a book that is a sound and well-written contribution to the writing of BC history.



*Contesting Clio’s Craft:
New Directions and Debates in
Canadian History*

Christopher Dummitt and
Michael Dawson, editors

London: Institute for the Study
of the Americas, University of
London, 2009. xix, 186 pp.
\$29.95 cloth.

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VIEWING THE historical study of Canada over the past few decades as having put class, gender, ethnic, regional, and cultural conceptions at the heart of Canadian inquiry, contributors to this volume turn to what remains to be done. Six broad areas are presented as requiring attention: two concern the interior lines of Canadian development, three the transnational lines, and one the complicated ground in between.

Defining the in-between area in terms of the Quebec-Canada relationship, Magda Fahrni sees it as constituting “a ready-made case study” for investigators “currently interested in transnationalism” (2). She also views it as seriously under-examined in both Canada and Quebec. Wanting that deficiency remedied, Fahrni presents action to that end (especially if that action is associated with comparative analysis and the techniques of *histoire croisée*) as a step that will improve understanding of the Quebec-Canada whole, deepen appreciation of each of its parts, provide a tighter grasp of qualities shared, and get more fully to grips with rupture and dissonance – as, in short, a step that will be as compellingly particularist as it is strongly attuned to connection, cross-border flow, and entanglement.

Attention to source-use and periodization takes the book to the more straightforwardly domestic domains with which it is concerned. Steven High considers the first of these, concentrating with particular force on the importance of, and what ought to be the nature of, historians' relationship to oral evidence. Intensified appreciation of that relationship's mutuality is seen as especially important: only if historians view oral sources not only as active but also as manipulated agents in the narratives they create can they develop stronger empathy for the situations being examined, produce more sensitive reportage, and generally be more involved and engaged.

Michael Dawson and Catherine Gidney conduct their careful consideration of the periodization issue through examination of the time-based dimension of factorial interactivity, particularly in relation to class, gender, ethnic, and demographic patterns. Identifying that dimension as giving each of these patterns its own rhythm and pace, they stress the impossibility of working to a single temporal frame. Emphasizing, above all, the patterns' lack of congruence with the political chronologies to which they have almost always been assimilated, Dawson and Gidney urge a move away from those often distorting devices. "Breaking free from comfortable and convenient reference points" is essential; only by so doing can we "ask new and challenging questions about Canadian history" (74).

Consideration of the increasingly active transnational area gets the bulk of the book's attention. Concerned with Canada and Quebec in Atlantic contexts, Michel Ducharme's wide-ranging essay sees work in that field as little short of transformative. Having already deepened an understanding of ideological development in the critically

important age of revolutions from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, that work is poised to move discussion even more fully beyond its familiar forms. Involved in redefining the oppositional relationship between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary ideas, in focusing attention on an Atlantic-area consciousness that includes Canada and Quebec, and in explicating complexes of tensely interactive commonalty, difference, and sharing, it stands to do nothing less than "integrat[e] the Canadian and Quebec experience within Atlantic history ... revisit colonial ideological oppositions in a broader context, and give new meaning to local political struggles" (186).

Recommending continuing investigation in the area of postcolonial and new imperial history, Andrew Smith, Adele Perry, and Katie Pickles emphasize that activity's ongoing potential to generate complex perspectives in a number of areas. Extending awareness of system complexity, pointing to backward and forward linkages, emphasizing the periphery's impact on the centre, and stressing resistance's very complicated relationship to hegemony, such activity will – they insist – also produce fresh assessments of the cost-benefit nexus; underscore the bi-directionality of economic, social, and institutional currents; and bring additional attention to both the positive and negative dimensions of feedback: old simplicities will go, complexity will come forward, and a structuring impulse will emerge with an altogether new clarity.

Concern with broadly transnational themes is present throughout the volume. Attention to local-global interaction, the permeability of frontiers and borders, cultural transfer, transcommunity interaction, and

overall mutuality becomes, indeed, its leitmotif: seen as essential to an understanding of Canada itself, scrutiny of these matters is also projected as involving Canadian study in a larger game. Placing that study in a position to “draw more fully on, and contribute to, international historiography” (xviii), such scrutiny will, in fact, situate it in contexts of the most vigorously ample, productive, and enriching kind.

Strong in its argument concerning these critical areas, *Contesting Clío's Craft* perhaps misses an opportunity in failing to theorize nation explicitly and as such. Alert to nationality's “fictions,” and very aware of the pitfalls – totalizing syntheses, retrospectively imposed unities, assumed teleological drives – to be avoided in its study, contributors never quite come to grips with the conflicted, fluctuating, yet comprehensively aggregative dynamic whose gathering up of various spatial, temporal, cultural, economic, and institutional simultaneities licenses that study (and the production of this book) in the first place. And not only is this vital matter left in abeyance but so are a number of related issues. In overlooking the border's character as consolidative as well as transgressive, paying no attention to the protocols governing the treatment of communities that are not initially but that will become parts of larger complexes, and setting aside the measure in which postnational perspectives link to and incorporate as well as transcend national ones, the book, indeed, disregards a good deal. These absences are not minor. They make it hard to see – unless one is looking through a purely topical lens – what historical work confectioned in response to Christopher Dummitt's call for a return to encompassing narrative and a “telling [of] big stories that can explain key questions about Canada's

past” (122) will be about. They also leave one wishing that remarks that do suggest a conceptualizing approach to questions of nation (Perry, 139) had been more fully developed. Their existence noted, though, one should not stay too long with them; even in concentrating on reconfiguration and repair rather than on the phenomenon undergoing these procedures, the book does much. Specifying difficulties, indicating ways of dealing with them, and proposing a number of paths towards a more effectively engineered set of representations, it makes time spent in its presence equally a stimulus and a pleasure. Readers will find their contact with *Contesting Clío's Craft* amply rewarded.

*The Encyclopedia of Raincoast
Place Names: A Complete
Reference to Coastal British
Columbia*

Andrew Scott

Madeira Park, BC: Harbour
Publishing
2009. 664 pp. \$49.95 cloth.

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THE PUBLICATION of Andrew Scott's *The Encyclopedia of Raincoast Place Names: A Complete Reference to Coastal British Columbia* in 2009 both commemorates the one hundredth anniversary of Captain John T. Walbran's *British Columbia Coast Names* and continues Harbour Publishing's exemplary dedication to publishing in British Columbia. In the promotional material, *Raincoast Place Names* is described as a “monumental work,”

one that Howard White sees in terms of “sheer magnitude” and “remarkable achievement.” At 664 pages, covering four thousand detailed entries, and the stories of over five thousand place names, Scott’s work lives up to its descriptors. The book is impressive, and in approaching it I was somewhat daunted by its size and extraordinary depth of detail. This was a reaction I expected given that it is, after all, an encyclopaedia. Unexpectedly, as I turned the pages and ranged through the entries, photographs, essays, and maps, I experienced excitement and delight. Scott’s work is more than an encyclopaedia: it is a history and an inspiring work of literature filled with passion, humour, and irony.

In Scott’s helpful “User’s Guide” located at the beginning of the book, he is quick to state that *Raincoast Place Names* is primarily “about the history of the place names, not the places themselves” (21), yet this is a modest claim. While it is certainly true that no explicit “history of place” is attempted, every page in the encyclopaedia does, in fact, provide a history of the place name and, most often, the individual associated with that name. Even a small entry such as “Bonner Islet” provides the information that “Frank Richard Bonner was a seaman aboard CGS *William J. Stewart*, which was conducting survey work in this area in 1937” (79). Taken together, these entries do provide something of a history of place – namely, that of coastal British Columbia.

Aside from looking up a specific entry or casually perusing the volume, an engaging manner in which to approach this encyclopaedia is through one of the twelve entertaining essay-style interludes. In “Naming Rocks the Hard Way” Scott examines the disgrace of having your vessel wrecked

on an uncharted rock or reef – the result being your name “printed on the charts for fellow mariners to chuckle over until the end of time” (46). Despite the many instances of humour, Scott also tackles the serious side of naming – the oppressive colonial practice of supplanting First Nations place names with European place names. He does, however, indicate that progress has been made in redressing this issue, and, in the essay entitled “Nisga’a First Nations Names,” he remarks that, in the years to come, the BC gazetteer “will need extensive revision” because “one aspect of most treaty negotiations involves the restoration of traditional names as ‘official’ names” (421).

In terms of the scope of the volume, Scott states that, “with very few exceptions, only official or ‘gazetted’ names have entries” (21). While this might seem limiting, outdated and local names are listed and cross-referenced with official names. What has been excluded? Primarily it is names for which Scott could find no information or for which the information found proved unreliable. Scott does, however, provide a wealth of sources for further information. Foremost among these sources is the British Columbia Geographical Names Office and its online Names Information System (BCGNIS). Other important sources include Kathleen E. Dalzell’s *The Queen Charlotte Islands: Place and Names*; the *Encyclopedia of British Columbia*, edited by Daniel Francis; and Captain John T. Walbran’s *British Columbia Coast Names, 1592–1906: Their Origin and History*. Scott has appended a D, E, or W, respectively, to indicate when a source has been invaluable to a particular entry. Scott’s inclusion of these sources is crucial considering he has not included a bibliography, an addition that, in his words, “would have

greatly lengthened what is already a very long book and made it needlessly repetitive and formal" (23). What would be quite helpful, however, is a searchable, online component or edition.

While Scott's encyclopaedia is titled a "Complete Reference," I find it to be an exciting starting point for further research and discovery. This book is, in my opinion, an invaluable resource for the academic and student alike, and it deserves its place on the short list for the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize for "the book that contributes most to the enjoyment and understanding of British Columbia."

UBC: The First 100 Years

Eric Damer and Herbert
Rosengarten

Vancouver: University of British
Columbia, 2009.
372 pp. \$39.95 paper.

PATRICIA E. ROY
Victoria

WITH ITS HEAVY glossy paper, large format, and copious illustrations, this looks like a celebratory coffee table book. To classify it as such would be wrong. Drawing on previous histories of the University of British Columbia (UBC), the student newspaper (the *Ubysey*), the university archives, and oral histories, Eric Damer and Herbert Rosengarten have written an excellent overview of the history of UBC, its problems and controversies as well as its successes. They have set everything within the context of the histories of the province and of higher education generally.

Those who have read Harry Logan's *Tuum Est*, which commemorated UBC's first fifty years, will be familiar with much of the early story, but Damer and Rosengarten, who acknowledge their debt to Logan, have taken a more analytical approach. Although they mention many individuals by name, lists of members of the Board of Governors, presidents of the Faculty Association, the Alma Mater Society (AMS), and other bodies are consigned to appendices (though the concluding chapters incorporate lists of donors and their projects). Biographical sketches of important individuals, such as presidents and noteworthy faculty, appear as sidebars, often written by scholars other than the authors.

Damer and Rosengarten built their book around six themes: (1) the BC context; (2) government attitudes to the university, especially relating to funding; (3) administrative decisions; (4) the growing diversity of undergraduate studies; (5) the growth of graduate studies and research; and (6) student life. Because they had to paint with a broad brush, they regret their inability to give more attention to the AMS (the student council) and the essential work of the staff, much of it behind the scenes.

That the university has always depended on the good will of the government is abundantly clear. The vagaries of its funding reflect fluctuations in politics and a resource-based economy; increasingly, the government has encouraged UBC to seek more funding from philanthropists and industry. UBC was also subject to conflicting views of the value and nature of higher education. Was there a place for liberal arts or should the emphasis be on applied sciences such as agriculture, engineering, and nursing? As the university grew, especially in the

two decades after the Second World War, new professional programs such as law, pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, and education were added, and offerings in engineering and commerce expanded. At the same time the arts side grew with the addition of music, the fine arts, and more foreign languages. Although UBC has not neglected the teaching of undergraduates, during the war it began moving from being primarily a teaching institution to one whose faculty engaged in research on their own and with graduate students. That trend, which greatly accelerated in the 1960s, created conflict in the professional schools between advocates of “science” and those who favoured “practical” studies (190).

Students and student life are an essential theme. UBC students have followed their motto, “Tuum Est” (“It’s up to you”), on many occasions in dealing with government, as, for example, in the Great Trek of 1922, which helped to convince the provincial government to open the Point Grey campus, and the “Back Mac” campaign of 1963, which persuaded the government to slightly increase the university’s grant.

The number of students grew almost steadily from 379 in 1915, UBC’s first year of operation, to almost fifty thousand in 2008. In its first decade, UBC acted as *loco parentis*. When students failed, their parents were notified. By the late 1920s, despite concerns of deans of women (a position that was not abolished until 1978), the university was doing less to regulate the morals of its students, a policy that it could seldom enforce effectively. Hazing has largely disappeared, along with many traditions designed to foster school spirit (though some new ones were introduced in the late 1990s). Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, and again since the late 1980s, some students engaged

in political protests, but conservatism generally reigned. In another respect, student life changed little. The text and illustrations capture much of the flavour of clubs, sports, and other extracurricular activities.

The demography of the student body has changed. Although female students were always present in significant numbers (except in engineering and a few other programs), by 1980 they were predominant in arts; formed about a third of the enrolment in commerce, medicine, law, and science; and were more than token numbers in engineering and forestry. The first students were “overwhelmingly Anglo-Canadian, Christian, and middle class from homes in Vancouver or the Fraser Valley” (40). By the late 1920s, a few Asians, Americans, and continental Europeans had enrolled. Since the Second World War, the student body has become more diverse as international students began arriving in number in the late 1950s and as immigration changed the face of the province. The student body in the first years consisted largely of the children of the business and professional classes, but, even in the 1930s, some children of blue-collar workers were present, as is illustrated by diverse complaints. Some objected to the lack of parking facilities; others, to long streetcar and bus rides. Despite special funding for students with limited financial resources, the offspring of the middle classes still predominate. Efforts to encourage the First Nations to attend have not fully succeeded: as of 2003, UBC had not reached its target of having one thousand self-identified Aboriginal students.

In sum, putting up with the inconvenience of the awkward format of this physically heavy volume will repay the reader, who will come away with a

great appreciation and understanding of how UBC evolved from a branch plant of McGill to a multiversity with its own satellite at UBCO in North Kelowna. And, incidentally, because of the broad context within which the book is set, readers will learn much about British Columbia's history.

*Voices Raised in Protest:
Defending North American
Citizens of Japanese Ancestry,
1942-49*

Stephanie Bangarth

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008. 296 pp.
\$34.95 paper.

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VOICES RAISED in Protest provides a comparative assessment of the incarceration of citizens of Japanese ancestry in Canada and the United States during the Second World War, with a particular focus on dissenting voices that emerged during this period. Bangarth posits that the differing constitutional framework of each country explains differences in the way the rhetoric deployed by dissenters evolved over time. She argues persuasively that the Bill of Rights in the United States allowed dissenters there to invoke civil rights as a basis for challenging the internment of Japanese Americans as unconstitutional, whereas the absence of a constitutional equivalent in Canada forced dissenters, over time, to base their challenges increasingly on broader appeals to universal human rights.

Bangarth contends that domestic policy pertaining to citizens of Japanese ancestry in Canada and the United

States was similar in method and intent during its early stages, especially as it pertained to their incarceration, but that it diverged as the war continued. Whereas the US government began to release Japanese Americans from the internment camps as early as 1944, the absence of constitutional constraints in Canada like those articulated in the Bill of Rights made it possible for the Canadian government to proceed with plans to deport Japanese internees and to expatriate citizens of Japanese ancestry born in Canada. One consequence, Bangarth notes, is that, while dissent in the United States was focused primarily on the initial internment and incarceration of Japanese and Japanese Americans in the United States, dissent in Canada only coalesced around the proposed deportation and expatriation of Nikkei. While Bangarth notes the role dissenting voices played in eventually bringing about a policy shift in each nation, a point not explored to the degree it might have been is the extent to which the divergence in the policies of the two governments regarding Nikkei citizens was itself a product of differing constitutional contexts. Somewhat puzzling, as well, is Bangarth's assertion in the opening chapter that both nations developed "policies that were used to defraud the Nikkei of their property," seemingly implying that these were similar in nature and scope (3). In fact, as evidence that Bangarth herself cites elsewhere in the text reveals (e.g., 133), there was no equivalent in the United States to Canada's Custodian of Enemy Property, which enabled the state to seize and sell the property of Nikkei citizens, precisely because of constitutional differences similar to those that she describes with considerable facility in the context of her discussion of dissent—arguably a missed opportunity to extend

her discussion of other implications of the differing constitutional constraints limiting the power of government in each country.

Bangarth's purpose is, in part, to respond to Roger Daniels' call for comparative studies of the incarceration of citizens of Japanese ancestry in Canada and the United States. As such, it makes a welcome contribution to an evolving discussion comparing domestic wartime policy in both countries, which, in turn, sheds light on the parallels and differences in the ways in which "race" and civil liberties were historically understood in each country. The next step in this conversation may well be to analyze these issues within a broader context still, also taking into account, for example, policy in Australia or other parts of the British Empire and Commonwealth with respect to the internment of those categorized or perceived as enemy aliens in wartime.

*Private Grief, Public Mourning:
The Rise of the Roadside
Shrine in BC*

John Belshaw and Diane
Purvey

Vancouver: Anvil Press, 2009.
160 pp. \$20.00 paper.

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TYPICALLY INVOLVING a cross and some flowers, the roadside memorials located along British Columbia's highways catch the passing motorist's attention and instantly raise a series of questions about death and mourning. Who died there? How long

ago and under what circumstances? Who set up the memorial? Do they continue to visit it? These questions are usually forgotten when the demands of driving snap the motorist back to attention, but John Belshaw and Diane Purvey recognize roadside death memorials as a phenomenon deserving closer scrutiny. *Private Grief, Public Mourning* examines why they have become so common in British Columbia over the past fifteen or twenty years, and it seeks to contextualize them within the province's social history.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first discusses the diverse forms of public reaction to death in British Columbia from the colonial period up to the early 1920s. Not only was British Columbia a site of confluence for many cultures but its early history also coincided with important changes in Western attitudes towards death and mourning. Death was increasingly mediated by doctors, hospitals, and undertakers; cemeteries were pushed to the edge of town, away from everyday life. Mourning lost much of its personal meaning and went from being a private to a semi-public affair. However, in a society as divided as turn-of-the-century British Columbia, the use of public space for mourning was usually limited to elite- and state-sanctioned events, punctuated by occasional outpourings of popular sentiment. Many examples are drawn on to illustrate these trends, including the changing deathscapes of Kamloops, Victoria, and Cumberland, and the mourning and memorialization of Robert Dunsmuir, Ginger Goodwin, Pauline Johnson, Joe Fortes, and the fallen of the First World War.

Chapter 2 outlines the global context of spontaneously built shrines and memorials. Chapter 3 presents photographs and findings from a survey

of nearly fifty roadside memorials on Vancouver Island and between Kamloops and Prince Rupert. Here memorials are examined as material culture, with commonalities and differences suggesting underlying attitudes towards mourning and memory. Common features include the use of crosses, identifying the deceased by name, and the placement of wreaths, flowers, notes, and photos. Teens and young adults (especially males) are often memorialized as children, with stuffed animals and toys, while other memorials use beer cans and liquor bottles to express a "rough" masculinity. The authors point out stylistic flourishes that assert the deceased's individuality, while also detecting a general trend towards permanence, with memorial-builders using more durable materials and even setting memorials in poured concrete bases. Noting that British Columbia's traffic fatality rates have declined considerably since the 1970s, Belshaw and Purvey suggest that the recent rise of the roadside memorial can be interpreted as an attempt to make meaning out of a form of death that seems meaningless. Friends and family are able to show that the deceased was someone who mattered and is remembered but without making claims to respectability according to established social or religious conventions.

The final chapter considers British Columbia's roadside death memorials as examples of modern mourning, particularly in the context of religion, secularism, and the media. It argues that, while roadside memorials and the attitudes towards mourning that they express predate the death of Princess Diana in 1995, they were powerfully validated by media coverage of that event. People have subsequently become more willing to claim public space for

displays of mourning, and government agencies have learned to tread carefully when dealing with them. In a sense, the roadside death memorial has made a transition from vernacular to popular culture over the past fifteen years. More "nuts and bolts" information about the roadside as public space could have been helpful here. For example, what are British Columbia's regulations about signs in highway right-of-ways? Might the rise of the roadside memorial be connected to a lack of uniform standards in highway maintenance since those services were privatized in the 1980s?

By Chapter 4, a significant chronological gap is apparent. Chapter 1 covers up to the 1920s, and Chapter 3 reaches back to the 1970s, but it was during the intervening half-century that British Columbia developed a modern road network and culture of automobility. This was when British Columbians became familiar with the roadside as a communicative space and with death-by-automobile as a seemingly inevitable cost of "progress." More discussion of driving, death, and mourning in the period between 1920 and 1970 would have strengthened Belshaw and Purvey's linkage of roadside memorials to British Columbia's earlier history. This is a minor shortcoming, however. *Private Grief, Public Mourning* is an important contribution to the study of vernacular and popular culture in British Columbia. It provides an insightful, sensitive, yet rigorous treatment of a delicate topic. Historians, geographers, and anthropologists of British Columbia will want to have this book on their shelves, and its images, accessible prose, and familiar topic also make it of interest to a broader, non-academic audience.

*Up Chute Creek:
An Okanagan Idyll*
Melody Hessing

Kelowna, BC: The Okanagan
Institute, 2009. 208 pp. \$20.00 paper.

THERESA KISHKAN
Madreia Park, BC

IN THE EARLY 1970s, Melody Hessing and her husband Jay Lewis bought acreage in the south Okanagan near Naramata. They called their property the Granite Farm. They were idealists, hoping to build a house and a life in place. *Up Chute Creek: An Okanagan Idyll* is the chronicle of that pursuit, detailing the difficult and exhilarating work of creating foundations, framing walls, and learning a new terrain. It is also an admirable treatise on the shifting nature of our relationship to places we love and aspire to know.

The Okanagan that Hessing and Lewis moved to was a place of “stucco motels, benchland orchards and fun-in-the-sun tourism” (6). This was before the estate wineries, the lavender farms, the artisan cheesemakers, the purveyors of speciality honeys. Yet it was always a storied place. I think of Sandy Wilson’s wonderful film, *My American Cousin*, based on her late-1950s childhood at Paradise Ranch; or even earlier, the Home Theatre of Carroll Aikins in Naramata, where productions of *The Trojan Women* and Sygne’s *The Tinker’s Wedding* took place in a theatre over a fruit-packing shed, officially opened in 1920 by then prime minister Arthur Meighen.

This book is lively and original – part photo album, part journal, part musical score: the Chute Creek Falls Overture (35) and the Torch Song (174) – in A minor if you want to hum along – are

unexpected delights. The use of lists is one of the pleasures of this book, and their cumulative effect is not unlike that of a birder’s life-list: close observations and encounters with the natural world that form a provisional calendar. In their seasons, weeds exasperate, birds entertain and annoy (a red-shafted flicker drilling into the wall ruins sleep). And the landscape is alive with predators: an amusing little riff on predator control from the perspective of coyotes, cougars, rattlesnakes, and so on makes a serious point about interspecies relationships.

Melody and Jay find ways to fit into the human community, too. But, as a couple, they have difficulty attaining an ideal balance between the hard work inherent in homesteading and outside employment that utilizes skills long in the learning and that provides necessary income. Melody continues PhD studies and teaches at a local college. Two children are born and the balance shifts again. “Time flies; things change. Home is where you can make a living. Over the next two decades I teach Sociology in Vancouver at various colleges and universities; Jay works at different jobs; the kids are in school” (137).

The adjustments at the Granite Farm mirror the transformations in the Okanagan Valley itself. When Melody and Jay bought the property in the 1970s, road access was a little problematic, though the neighbour selling the land was willing to allow them continued use of an existing access point. But one day, that changes: “Bit by bit, fences chopped the landscape into subdivisions and orchards, pasture and vineyards, fragmented and subjugated to human use. When we purchased the steep land on the northern fringes of HARRISES’, we assumed an entitlement founded on word, nuance, and better times,

on a friendship attenuated by shifting relationships, market values and the passing of time.” (143).

As a sociologist, Melody Hessing is ideally placed to observe and record the evolution of a community and the small niches within it. When demographics change, the values of a location and its history are remembered in different ways. A remnant of a wooden flume from the old days of the Paradise Ranch occasions a brief meditation on contemporary water use and the way it can polarize a community. Agriculture’s dependency on irrigation doesn’t always keep pace with climate change, the cycles of drought and abundance. The Okanagan Mountain fire that brackets the book is a valuable reminder that landscapes reshaped by humans are particularly vulnerable.

Up Chute Creek is an important book that speaks to issues both broad and particular. It does so with humour and fierce intelligence and moments of pure poetry: “Right now, peach-pink Kokanee trout are spawning in Darke Creek, already bleached to grey and white. Ghost trout, they are just able to swim in a holding pattern against the flow of water. How much effort does it take to resist, to stay still against the current?” (205).



*David Suzuki:
The Autobiography*

David Suzuki

Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2006.
406 pp. \$22.95 paper.

*The Big Picture: Reflections
on Science, Humanity, and a
Quickly Changing Planet*

David Suzuki and
Dave Robert Taylor

Vancouver: Greystone Books and
David Suzuki Foundation, 2009. 272
pp. \$24.95 paper.

MELODY HESSING
Vancouver

FOR CANADIANS, David Suzuki is an earth-household name, our local (think global) brand, our Green Machine. Geneticist, media host, and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation (DSF), the man has dedicated his life to environmental awareness. While most Canadians recognize the name “David Suzuki,” his personal story and the range and character of his observations may be less familiar. These two recent publications introduce readers to Suzuki’s environmentalism.

David Suzuki: The Autobiography introduces the key forces that have shaped his life and work. Deep affection for the family personalizes his writing while it links his observations to the biophysical world. A burgeoning involvement in environmental issues shapes the story as Dr. Suzuki spins academic employment as a geneticist into a broader spectrum of public education through a range of media. Beginning with *Quirks and Quarks* and

It's a Matter of Survival on CBC Radio, Suzuki moved to television with the *Nature of Things*, hosting a succession of television series and film ventures.

Suzuki's involvement in environmental "hot spots" in the Amazon, Australia, and Canada is not only personally formative but also fodder for environmental consciousness-raising. However, he also recognizes the limitations of brushfire tactics as "each crisis is merely a symptom or manifestation of a deeper, underlying root cause" (220-21). In response, with wife Tara Cullis, he establishes the eponymous DSF to conserve the environment through science-based education and advocacy.

The Autobiography reads like a personal road trip with family and work, but it also affirms Canadian values. The internment of the Suzuki family in the Kootenays during the Second World War provides first-hand experience of racism. Membership in a brotherhood of (visible) minorities not only anticipates an emergent multiculturalism but also presages Suzuki's adoption by and connections to First Nations communities. His writing style is congenial, forging career with charisma in a unique blend of hubris, humility, and intellect.

While *The Autobiography* chronicles Suzuki's life, *The Big Picture: Reflections on Science, Humanity, and a Quickly Changing Planet* is just that – a constellation of approaches to preserving life on Earth. Suzuki and Taylor explore the natural systems of the planet and our place in them. The book begins with an overview of science – its analytic and political relevance, its framework a lens for critically understanding "the environment." Biodiversity, climate change, transportation, food, technology, and public policy – each arena is discussed

in a series of short, informal essays. The interconnection of popular science, personal experience, and political perspective, in turn, constitutes a biography of the environment, while it constructs Suzuki's trademark environmentalism.

What are the contributions of these biographies? The familiar yet authoritative "voice" of these narratives attracts a popular audience to a complex and contested array of issues. Both books text/message an "environmentalism" that integrates scientific perspective, public education, and activism (both personal and political) in a commitment to support the planet. Don Quixote Suzuki himself laments his greatest shortcoming. Armed with pen, computer, and camera, spoken word and exotic visuals, the man has devoted a lifetime to tilting at windmills (and alternative energy conservation) to promote an ecologically informed society. In spite of these efforts, society resists the significant ideological and institutional shifts required to protect and promote the natural systems of this planet.

These books introduce the "brand" (the DSF and the man himself), but, more significantly, they construct an environmentalism that celebrates and would protect life on earth. For British Columbia, Suzuki not only puts us "on the map" but also reconceptualizes this place we call home.

*The Manly Modern: Masculinity
in Postwar Canada*

Christopher Dummitt

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007. 232 pp.
\$34.95 paper.

JARRETT RUDY
McGill University

THEORISTS OF modernity have often been particularly blind to the roles of gender. In numerous otherwise thought-provoking theoretical works on modernity, gender either disappears from the analysis or is treated awkwardly. Historians, to a degree, have been more successful. A case in point is *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada*. Christopher Dummitt brings together five diverse BC case studies that elucidate what he calls in his conclusion an authoritative voice of “the manly modern” during the postwar era. He argues that, after the Second World War, technological modernity became the basis for a new hegemonic ideal of masculinity. His work shares much in common with recent writing on modernity. Instead of portraying modernity as a triumphal retooling of capitalism into a more humane system or as one of Walt Rostow’s stages of “proper” development, Dummitt shows it as a dynamic process with contradictions, ironies, and anxieties all inherent to an economic boom and the concomitant transformation of daily life.

In the first case study, Dummitt focuses on a 1947-48 Royal Commission into veterans’ complaints about poor treatment by government agencies and, in so doing, demonstrates that the same sense of authority was seen as both the justification of veterans’ claims and the root of their problems. On the one

hand, veterans claimed that, because of their risk-taking during the war, they were the ideal modern subjects; yet, on the other hand, they claimed that they were treated poorly by the experts and bureaucrats of the modernist welfare state – a state established to manage the risks in Canadians’ daily lives. The second chapter moves to the physical work of building the megaprojects of this postwar modernist project. By focusing on the 1958 Second Narrows Bridge collapse, Dummitt is able to show that views of risk were linked to class-based norms of masculinity, once again leaving some men, largely workers, frustrated with and defiant towards the new norms of risk management and the localization of expertise (among engineers rather than workers) that came with this mega-modernity.

Managing risk was not only done in the workplace. The third case study in *Manly Modern* looks at the growth in popularity of mountaineering as a way in which middle-class men sought to escape the alienation and feminine influence of postwar suburban modernity. Climbing was an opportunity for these men to lead, to evaluate risk, and to triumph over nature: for some, it was an opportunity to perform modern masculinity. Once again pointing to irony and contradiction, Dummitt shows how mountaineers both lobbied for roads in order to open up new possibilities of discovery and lamented the loss of isolation that came with the increasing numbers of climbers that arrived using these roads.

The fourth case study uses capital murder cases to look at the rise of psychology and psychiatry as new fields of expertise that ubiquitously provided a normative language of modern masculinity – a process that

Dummitt calls the medicalization of manhood. Psychologists and psychiatrists presented their scientific explanations before the courts and elsewhere, becoming the leading managers of risks pertaining to men's violent behaviour. They maintained that a man's ability to control his violent urges could be rationally explained by a poor environment slowing his maturity (or, in some cases, racialized primitivism) rather than by his biology.

The final case study focuses on the expansion of car-centred culture in the postwar era, with Dummitt uncovering the qualities of what made a good driver. Cars were the foundation of suburban Vancouver development. They allowed the city to spatially expand and were promoted as family space – with men in the driver's seat. What made a good driver was strikingly similar to what made a good man. Indeed, safety “experts” maintained that traffic safety was a matter of learning how to successfully manipulate the carefully engineered automotive technology. The path to becoming a responsible driver was through driver education and the enforcement of traffic rules, much like the structures of risk management in other case studies found in the book. On the question of car culture, however, a far more radical and sustained critique developed, beyond any of the anxieties discussed in earlier chapters. In *Not Safe at Any Speed* Ralph Nader pointed to technology, not the driver, as the problem. No amount of education, risk management, or sense of responsibility could make cars safe. Car culture was also condemned by anti-urban renewal protestors of the late 1960s and 1970s who challenged the male, bureaucratic “expertise” of those who sought to redevelop their Vancouver neighbourhoods. According to Dummitt, these kinds of

critiques signalled the decline of manly modern authority, which had risen to a hegemonic position in the postwar era.

In all of these studies, Dummitt gives readers impressively nuanced, highly theoretically contextualized insights into questions that have rarely been studied by Canadian historians. Yet, readers of this journal may find that the book tells us very little about the experience of modernity in British Columbia. As Dummitt admits in his introduction, it is not a book about “the history of Vancouver modernity and masculinity but a history of manly modernism as it took shape *in Vancouver*” (26). Still, the questions of what the Vancouver example tells us about masculinity and modernity that studies of other cities would not, and what these case studies say about the experience of modernity in Vancouver, lurk in this reader's mind.

Certainly, some of the case studies do provide insights into these questions, but some leave the reader wanting more. In the final case study, for example, one gets very little sense of the impact of Nader's critiques on Vancouverites (though we hear about a Quebec MP's initiative in the House of Commons). Similarly, it would have been useful to have concrete examples of Jane Jacobs's influence on those fighting against urban redevelopment rather than simply being presented with the suggestion that activists could rely on her work. Were there reading groups? Did she visit? Was greater public consultation built into development projects of the future? More details would have been nice, especially considering that these last two case studies constitute an important part of how Dummitt shows change over time. In conclusion, *The Manly Modern* will leave some readers wanting to know more about whether this kind of masculinity was

similar to or different from identities elsewhere and whether the experience of modernity was similar to that which occurred in other places. Still, Dummitt offers a great deal of creativity in problematizing new historical subjects and proposes useful thoughts on the relationship between modernity and masculinity that will, no doubt, be taken up by historians and social theorists of the future.

