

Dyck on the health care experiences of immigrant women are strong articles that apply the agreed-upon holistic concepts of health to actual practice. It is a lack of this approach that Michael Hayes bemoans in his article on the failure of health promotion schemes in Canada: "... the spirit of its rhetoric has not been translated into action..." (p. 223). In a later article, co-authored with Clyde Hertzman, Hayes argues for a way to measure the health of a community based on social infrastructure over disease-based risk factors. Their scheme would support local communities which have specific groups of indicators. Both Dyck, in regard to immigrant women, and Sharon Manson Willms in her article on housing of persons with HIV also argue the need for community-based strategies. Most of the above articles talk around and about health promotion, which is the subject of an article on public policy and smoking by Hollander *et al.*

The last few articles are a disparate group. In chapter 12, Thouez discusses ways that northern communities can properly meet the health needs of the Inuit and the Cree populations. Lillian Bayne discusses why health services planning in the Greater Vancouver Regional Hospital District must be improved. Chapter 16 is an excellent literature review on medical and surgical procedural variations in Canada. The final chapter by Jonathan Mayer compares the Canadian and American health care systems as "cultural artifacts," and argues that health care systems are "socially constructed and culturally interpreted sets of institutions" (p. 400).

There are many worthy articles in this book, but they would have benefited from stronger editing and organizing. Although the purpose of the symposium upon which these articles are based was to explore diverse health issues from diverse research approaches, the book would have been much better had it concentrated solely on the very current issue of community health.

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*Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*, by Michael M. Ames. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992. xvi, 212 pp. \$39.95 cloth.

*Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes* is a collection of reflective essays on anthropology and museums, with excursions into anthropology and

everyday life. It began its existence in 1986 as *Museums, the Public and Anthropology* and its fourteen chapters include six from that earlier version. Both books seek to explore the purpose of museums and anthropology and the relations between anthropology and the people it reports upon, and to locate museums within their social, political, and economic contexts. More than anything, the essays, as Professor Ames writes, "document my own struggles to achieve a practical understanding of a cultural complex in which I was also actively involved, to relate experiences to critique and then to action" (p. 4). It is, then, a subjective book, reflecting an apparent crisis in museum anthropology that itself reflects a similar crisis in anthropology as a scholarly discipline and a crisis in Native/non-Native relations in the Americas and elsewhere.

Michael Ames is director of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia and Professor of Anthropology at that university. His field of anthropological speciality is outside North America, but he writes here as a Canadian museologist concerned largely with the Northwest Coast and as one who has to direct a major Canadian anthropological museum through the pitfalls of contemporary politics. His museum has been almost entirely free of public controversy, perhaps because he has an acute eye for controversies elsewhere: the Lubicon Cree boycott of the Glenbow Museum's "The Spirit Sings" exhibition, the unfortunate fracas over the Royal Ontario Museum's "Into the Heart of Africa" exhibit, and even the Robert Mapplethorpe imbroglio receive his attention. One has the feeling that Ames is a good institutional politician, very aware of the various, often conflicting constituencies that he discusses. This sensitivity gives strength to his essays.

Ames presents some of the most thoughtful and provocative essays available on the difficulties facing contemporary anthropological museums. His piece on "The Definition of Native Art" uses a review of Bill Holm's exhibition on "The Art and Times of Willie Seaweed" to deal with the apparently thorny question of whether Northwest coast artifice is artifact or art. Should they be exhibited as ethnological pieces within their religious and mythological meanings (that is, within their context as anthropological artifacts) or as singular examples of art which stand by themselves and communicate their own terms as creative achievements (that is, as "fine art" objects)? Ames uses Holm and Seaweed to demonstrate that Native art is both, that "good work can be viewed both ways, singularly as artifact-in-context or as art-standing-by-itself," as "creative work possessing both local

history and comparative significance" (p. 75). Ames thus cuts through much of the restricted vision from both sides of a quite silly argument to arrive at a common-sense conclusion.

More might be said. Why need decorative and applied art be "only decorative" (p. 72)? Why need it be relegated to a status inferior to "fine art"? To do so forces many to feel obliged to boost Native art, much of which can only be seen as applied and decorative (what else is a richly carved halibut hook?), up to the vaunted status of "fine art" so that it, its practitioners, and its scholars can have some extra prestige and status. Surely the art of, say, Frank Lloyd Wright, Josef Hoffmann, or Dale Chihuly need not be disparaged as somehow inferior to an easel painting or forced to fit into an inappropriate "fine art" category with the intention to enhance its prestige. Egyptian, medieval or early Renaissance art share many generic characteristics with "tribal" art; museums have been showing these for centuries without the same tortuous problems. If one abandoned the assumption of "only" decorative art, then the torture would be avoided in "tribal" art as well. Do medievalists have the same problem with a chalice or a crucifix as anthropologists and art historians seem to have with a feast bowl or a crooked-beak-of-heaven mask? I think not.

Another excellent essay is "How Anthropologists Help to Fabricate the Cultures They Study," in which Ames returns to a theme he dealt with very thoughtfully in *BC Studies* more than a decade ago.<sup>1</sup> Here Ames relates a little of the role which museums, especially his own Museum of Anthropology and the Royal British Columbia Museum, have played in promoting and legitimizing contemporary Native art and artists, even stimulating the Indian demand for artistic products, and of how the line between museum anthropologists and Indian has blurred, with each acculturating to the standard of the other. This is but an example of one of Ames's sub-texts: that contemporary anthropological museums must work in collaboration with Native communities which are now both clients and patrons of anthropology museums.

This point forms part of another excellent little piece on "How Anthropologists Stereotype Other People." Museums reflect, as much as do books, the changing images of other cultures that anthropologists have constructed. Ames is conscious of this at his own museum, and he presents, from his own experience, a Haida view of how museums "don't tell us our view." Indians now wish to be free from glass boxes, to secure control over their own past. Director Ames tells us that we "need to listen," yet not necessarily capitulate.

<sup>1</sup> *BC Studies* 49 (Spring 1981): 3-14.

I do not believe that the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, for example, should attempt to present the "native point of view," which it could never do properly anyway, whether by reconstructed contextualist exhibits or by other means. It is more important for a museum to concentrate on what it can do best, which is to present its own point of view as a professional institution, recognizing the limitations that implies, and to work in partnership with the museums and cultural organizations of the "Native" or indigenous peoples. (pp. 57-58)

Unfortunately, such anchors are too rare. Ames pulls too many punches, implies too often what he might have stated outright, and restrains himself here when he did not elsewhere. His remarks on "The Spirit Sings" controversy are placid and unreflective of the vigorous stand he took, against Bruce G. Trigger, in the pages of *Culture* in 1988. There he claimed for a museum an autonomy that was "the right to govern itself and to choose its own causes," to be free to reject the attempts by interest groups to impose their ideologies and restrictions.<sup>2</sup>

The essays are, moreover, burdened with an ironic paradox. One of Ames's central themes is that "museums are products of the establishment and represent the assumptions and definitions of that establishment" (p. 21). They play "an important role in expressing and authenticating established values and images of society and in affirming the subordination of other values and images" (p. 24). This is, of course, something of a truism, though Ames's presentation makes it sound a little simplistic, leaving little room for historical chance, idiosyncrasy, or individuality, factors which have certainly worked within the history of museums. They continue to work now. A paradox here is that Ames's essays themselves reflect the current values of his own society as transparently as any earlier museums have. The problems are current and the prescriptions, when given, are those generally characteristic of today's anthropological establishment. Even the language — the book is laced with "appropriation," "empowerment," "capitalism," "discourse," "hegemonic," "the politics of representation," and "the question of voice" — is self-consciously *au courant*. If ever "hegemony" was part of the "discourse," it is within these pages.

A second paradox is that, while advocating the autonomy of museums from interest groups, Ames here bends a bit. "Museums must now," he writes, "be more sensitive to national, ethnic, and local

<sup>2</sup> "The Liberation of Anthropology: A Rejoinder to Professor Trigger's 'A Present of Their Past'" *Culture* 8, 1 (1988): 83.

interest, and consider more carefully the prospects of 'repatriating' parts of their collections to the ethnic or national communities from which they were taken"; they must help "populations at risk" (p. 104). And yet Ames's critical stance does not leave him. In a candid aside, he writes that museums "would never dare to subject Native peoples themselves, or the contemporary establishment, to objective scrutiny or critical assessment." Native people, he goes on, "are equally sacred to academic ethnologists" (p. 109). This reveals perhaps too much.

The autumn 1992 issue of *BC Studies* carried an incisive article skewering the Crown's anthropological expert in *Delgamuukw v. B.C.* for her testimony,<sup>3</sup> but Ames's statements are equally troubling. They lend credibility to James A. Clifford's important critique<sup>4</sup> — and force one to ponder whether Mr. Justice McEachern may not have been partly correct, if for the wrong reasons. Such points certainly do complicate the role of the curator, anthropologist, historian, and others involved in "the Indian business," which is precisely Ames's point.

There is a great deal in *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes* to provoke and stimulate the mind. Museums are significant scenes of culture, ideas, and ideologies. One can disagree with some of what Ames writes, and even with some of his concerns, but the book does tell us a great deal about the problems of anthropology and its museums, sometimes in ways perhaps unintended.

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*The Alaska Highway in World War II: The U.S. Army of Occupation in Canada's Northwest*, by K. S. Coates and W. R. Morrison. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. xix, 309 pp. Maps, illus. \$39.95 cloth.

There has already been a substantial body of scholarly writing on the Alaska Highway. In addition to a host of articles (conveniently listed in this book's bibliography), papers from a conference celebrating the fortieth anniversary of its construction were published by the Univer-

<sup>3</sup> Dara Culhane, "Adding Insult to Injury: Her Majesty's Loyal Anthropologist," *BC Studies* 95 (Autumn 1992): 66-92.

<sup>4</sup> "Introduction: Memoir, Exegeses," in James A. Clifford, ed., *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1990): 1-28, especially 13-14.