

century. It will, however, add significantly to our appreciation and understanding of his work. This volume is simply crammed with factual details, background information and, most importantly, primary evidence of Lowry's skill with language. His domain was that of the word — not metre, rhyme, poetic form — and in bringing us his poetry Kathleen Scherf is to be applauded for making a major contribution to Lowry's *oeuvre* and our knowledge. This volume is a gift of literary scholarship for which we should be grateful, a collection to be savoured and consulted again and again: I know that I am — and will.

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Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980, by Kay J. Anderson. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991. x, 323 pp. \$34.95 cloth.

Like her earlier Ph.D. dissertation, Kay J. Anderson's *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* adopts the perspective that "race" categories, rather than being naturally occurring or biological divisions of the human species, are socially and historically constructed. This perspective, largely derived from the British sociologist Robert Miles, allows her to move beyond previous studies of white attitudes and prejudices in British Columbia to examine "racialization," the definite historical process which divided the population of British Columbia into different "races." If for no other reason than that *Vancouver's Chinatown* is the first original book-length Canadian historical monograph to adopt this perspective, it is a significant contribution which deserves to be closely studied.

Anderson argues that the notion of a distinct and readily identifiable "Chinese" district has been a key ingredient in the racialization of people of Chinese origins. She pursues this argument with reference to Vancouver's Chinatown. As she explains (p. 30), "'Chinatown' was not a neutral term, referring somehow unproblematically to the physical presence of people from China in Vancouver. Rather it was an evaluative term, ascribed by Europeans no matter how the residents of that territory might have defined themselves." Thus her study is not of "Chinatown" *per se*, but rather of the idea of such an area created and perpetuated by people of European origins.

This focus on "Chinatown" has several advantages for a study of "race" categories over time. Most importantly, it keeps the task of tracing the racializing discourse to manageable proportions. After all, few statements by Euro-Canadians in British Columbia about themselves or other people were not in some way part of such discourse. By focusing on "Chinatown," Anderson is able to canvass thoroughly a variety of sources, including civic and national archives. The result, in contrast to many other theoretically informed works, is a study which is refreshingly grounded in primary sources. The focus on "Chinatown" also allows Anderson to establish disturbing continuities in the racializing discourse over time. The turn-of-the-century notions of "Chinatown" as the "vice-ridden" antithesis of polite European society and today's more familiar notion of the area as a "quaint" or "exotic" corner of the city, one worthy of being highlighted by tourist promotions, have more in common than one might initially think. Anderson is particularly successful in finding continuities in the efforts of civic officials to vilify the area, whether in the activities of crusading turn-of-the-century chiefs of police or in the more recent efforts of health officials to police the storage of barbecue pork.

In large part, these continuities emerge from Anderson's position that the "state" has been the chief agent in racializing the Chinese. Restrictive laws and regulations, in conjunction with the public relations battles waged by government officials, fixed and lent weight to what otherwise might have been general, amorphous, and possibly impotent prejudices. Not surprisingly, therefore, the work is most successful in documenting the efforts of civic, provincial, and federal officials to police and reform "Chinatown."

However, like any pioneering effort, *Vancouver's Chinatown* raises a number of issues which warrant further consideration. For all that Anderson's work is grounded in a knowledge of theory, her treatment of "the state" is disappointing. She tends to restrict her discussion to government officials and their activities. Consequently she de-emphasizes the role of broader ideological projects and their relationship to government activities. She tends to assume an automatic connection between official activities and broader social attitudes, rather than exploring the exact relationship between the two. Her discussion of "race" categories could also have been expanded. While Anderson is careful to note that few British Columbians were rigorous in their usage of racial terminology, her study does not really come to grips with the shift in the contents of "race" concepts which occur over time. It is not at all clear that usages in the 1870s, for example, included the biological content that they do now.

Vancouver's Chinatown also has more in common with previous studies of European prejudices and nativism than might initially be expected for a work which is attempting to move beyond them. Like the earlier studies, *Vancouver's Chinatown* has not succeeded in incorporating the objects of the racializing discourse, in this case the "Chinese" people of British Columbia, as actors within it. As a consequence, Anderson is not as successful in documenting the creation and operation of European dominance as she might have been. At times there is even a certain ambivalence as to whether the work is a study of the physical area of Chinatown, itself, or of the European discourse about the area. While Anderson insists that she is only documenting European conceptions, she sometimes falls into language which suggests that she is in position to "know" Chinese activities as well. In fact, it is doubtful that she is in a position to render some of the judgements that she does about the "Chinese." Even her claim that European constructions of "Chinatown" were distinct from "Chinese" ones is problematic in this regard. They may well have been, but she has insufficient evidence to establish the claim.

The problem here is one of sources. Anderson has had to rely upon the English-language historical record. Although she has been careful to incorporate into her account the statements of Chinese spokespeople as they appear within that record, she has not been able to come to terms with Chinese activities. In part this is because those English-language sources on the Chinese which she has consulted do not provide an adequate picture of the community. This includes the English-language *Chinatown News* for the 1960s and 1970s and, for the 1920s and 1930s, the translations found in the Chinese Canadian Research Collection of the UBC Library's Special Collections Branch of the Chinese-language daily, *The Chinese Times*. Instead of being a newspaper devoted to covering the Chinese community, *Chinatown News* tends to be an advertising sheet aimed at second and third generation Chinese Canadians who do not live in the area. The Chinese Canadian Research Collection is an extremely valuable compilation of materials on the Chinese communities of British Columbia, but the selective and sometimes uneven translations of the *Chinese Times* suggest that they are best used as a table of contents for the paper. Studying the internal dynamics of the Chinese community requires consultation of the original Chinese. The result, ironically, is that like the earlier studies it is seeking to replace, *Vancouver's Chinatown* underestimates the activity of the members of the Chinese community in challenging the dominant discourse, since their activities generally go unacknowledged by English-language sources.

This is most striking in the later chapters of the work dealing with the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Anderson argues that Chinatown was able to survive the slum-clearing efforts of the 1960s only after “a new image of Chinatown was forged by a non-Chinese reform lobby in Vancouver sympathetic in outlook to the Trudeau government” (p. 210). It seems likely that this reform lobby would not have been mobilized, or for that matter the Trudeau government would not have adopted a more sympathetic attitude towards “Chinatown,” without the efforts of the residents of Chinatown-Strathcona to forestall urban renewal at the expense of their community. Nor would it have occurred without the efforts of Chinese Canadians over the preceding one hundred years to participate on equal terms within government institutions. One also suspects that appeals from Parliament had very little influence on the decision of the CTV television network to apologize for the racist portrayal of Chinese Canadians in W-5’s 1979 “Campus Giveaway” program. Both the parliamentary resolution, and the apology, took place after Chinese Canadians across Canada achieved an unprecedented level of mobilization and organization, and had begun to discuss boycotting the program’s sponsors.

Thus in the end, Anderson’s work points to the need to incorporate non-Euro-Canadian sources and activities into British Columbia’s historical record. *Vancouver’s Chinatown* has gone a long way in moving the study of the history of racism in British Columbia from examinations of Anglo-European attitudes to consideration of Anglo-European activities, but it has not gone far enough in recognizing that others, including the “Chinese” people of British Columbia, have also been actors within our history.

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British Columbia Local Histories: A Bibliography, eds. Linda L. Hale and Jean Barman. Victoria: British Columbia Heritage Trust, 1991. 196 pp. \$20.00 loose-leaf binder.

At first glance no one could be critical of this bibliography of 1,044 local histories of British Columbia communities. And this is not a phantom bibliography. Every listing is publicly accessible; no item was included “unless it could be physically located where it could be consulted by the general public.” (n.p.) The body of the bibliography is an alphabetical