

Totem Poles, by Hilary Stewart. Vancouver and Seattle: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990. 192 pp. Illus., maps. \$29.95 cloth.

As still another example of the "Tradition and Revival" genre of Northwest Coast Native art books, Hilary Stewart's *Totem Poles* is pure formula. Part I describes a traditional culture in the past tense; Part II mixes past and present tenses (see below) in a romanticized discussion of totem poles and the artist heroes said to be responsible for reviving them (*cf.*, the absurd claim that "Several Nuu-chah-nulth artist-carvers have re-established many of the values and ceremonies of their culture. . . ." p. 47); Part III is a catalogue of images and anecdotal stories about 113 poles, most of them carved in the past two decades.

With authenticity confined to previous centuries, twentieth century cultural difference becomes more of the same, and totem poles are celebrated as anachronisms. Notice the use of the past tense in the following sentences from Stewart's section on "The Depiction of Legends":

Some aspects of these legends may seem mystifying in today's world, but that does not negate their reality to a people whose culture encompassed a spiritual and cosmic understanding of their environment. Traditional knowledge lies behind these marvelous stories handed down from early times, and belief in them was as closely held as those of any other deeply rooted culture or religion. (p. 42)

Stewart's *Totem Poles* might have still been useful had Part III been a much needed survey of the "proliferation of new totem poles," including those "placed along highways; at ferry terminals; in parks, gardens and shopping plazas; outside hotels, public buildings, tourist bureaus, schools and, of course, museums" (pp. 7-8). Many of these are indeed here, but many remain uncatalogued. Stewart's purpose here is to present a selection of both old and new poles "useful to the traveller" (p. 8), i.e., marking century-old tourist routes north from the U.S.-British Columbia border to Juneau, Alaska. She does not rationalize her choices beyond referring to "space limitations," the wishes of the villages of Kitwanga and Kitwancool not to be included, letting us know that "several good poles that I would have liked to include have been left out," and "some poles of lesser quality have been included for special reasons" (p. 8).

Not that "quality" is really permitted to matter here, for the catalogue of poles in Part III features Stewart's own drawings. "The different styles of design on totem poles among Northwest Coast peoples may at first look alike," she writes (p. 46) — and indeed they do, for her own heavy style dominates the subtleties of its subjects.

Nor is the text any more respectful. In a review in the *Times Colonist* (10 November 1990, p. A12), Nimpkish band member and former curator of the U'Mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay, Gloria Cranmer Webster, discusses some dozen factual errors (including some in information she personally provided to Stewart) and then writes, "There is neither time nor space to list all the mistakes in her book which relate just to our own cultural area." She concludes that "it is offensive to us that the culture we have struggled to keep alive is presented in so careless and insensitive a manner."

It seems to me important to take advantage of the opportunity such books offer to ponder this question of Respect. Perhaps the escalating political resistance of native and other Others to mainstream appropriation and (mis)representation is anchored here. All re-presentation of people, things, actions, and events is always already interpretation. When offered with respect, re-presentation can enhance and affirm; when it is self-serving, it dominates and diminishes. Those of us in the culture business, including publishers, had better learn the difference.

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A Fruitful Century: The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association, 1889-1989, by David Dendy and Kathleen M. Kyle. Kelowna: British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association, 1990. xii, 207 pp. Illus. \$27.50.

David Dendy's and Kathleen Kyle's *A Fruitful Century: The British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association 1889-1989* is first and foremost an institutional history of one of the province's most enduring agricultural associations. Of perhaps more interest to the average reader, it also offers a history of the tree fruit industry in the Okanagan Valley. Dendy justifies the dual nature of the book by arguing that "the history of the Association would make little sense without the background of the history of the industry it serves." He might have added that the need to provide extensive context also arises from a serious lack of historical scholarship on the tree fruit industry and provincial agriculture in general.

The book is divided into six chapters — the first five by Dendy and the last by Kyle. They are arranged chronologically and represent periods dominated by particular concerns. The majority of the narrative is devoted to the institutional development of the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association (BCFGA) and, to a lesser extent, the growth of the tree fruit industry and regulating legislation. Interesting stories or anecdotes not