

and how these can be understood and used scientifically" (p. 165). Transpersonalism, as Cove demonstrates it, is a theological anthropology (formerly two opposed terms) in which the old psychic unity of mankind reappears as mystical sight.

The first words in *Shattered Images* are "This book presents a lie" (p. 1). Among its last are: "this entire book might be seen as a personal, if not cultural, set of projections" (p. 283). It is, I suggest, a cynical (although increasingly popular) anthropology that foregrounds the anthropologist instead of the Indians. Although Cove found it out late, anthropology has always been *about* discovering ourselves through the culturally Other. In return for the privilege we have (I think) a moral obligation to submerge our own concerns when telling their story. This story is, for Cove, a "blend of individual and academic concerns which are for me indistinguishable" (p. 6). Unfortunately, they are also indistinguishable for the reader.

By the way, being human for Cove's Tsimshian turns out to be very like what being human was for the late Ernest Becker.

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*Russia's American Colony*, ed. S. Frederick Starr. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1987. Pp. 420, illus.

British and American sovereignty along the northwest coast of North America emerged out of a complex web of economic and political relations among the British, Americans, Spanish, and Russians that by no means predetermined victory for the former two over the latter. Yet British Columbians have tended to see this contest from a British perspective. While Spain's presence in the region has of late become more sharply etched in our historical consciousness through the work of Christon Archer, the same cannot be said of Russia's bid for coastal ascendancy. *Russia's American Colony* is to be welcomed, then, for offering much that will expand our understanding of the context out of which British and American control of the northwest coast emerged.

The book consists mainly of papers offered at an international conference held in 1979 at Sitka, Alaska, where scholars from the Soviet Union, United States, and Canada met to discuss Russia's presence in North America from 1741 to 1867. Edited by S. Frederick Starr of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, which organized the conference, the volume offers fourteen essays sorted into six sections: the opening of the Pacific

Northwest; the tsarist government and its American colony; Russians and native Americans; cultural life in Russian America; Russian America and the United States; and published and unpublished sources.

Throughout the papers one theme supersedes others: the process by which Russians expanded their colonial reach across Asia into Alaska, and then retreated back across the Bering Sea. Soviet scholar B. P. Polevoi traces Russian expansion through Siberia, interpreting it as the "natural result" of Russia's long-term drive "to meet the sun" (p. 30). York University geographer James Gibson compares Russian expansion in Siberia and America, illustrating both important similarities and crucial differences. In particular, he notes the greater vulnerability of Russian traders in Alaska: the economy was more uniformly based on the extraction of furs, the demographic structure was less mature, with a very small number of Russian women present to create a more balanced European society, and sources of supply remained vulnerable to outside control. More contentious is Russia's departure from North America, with the tsarist government's decision to sell Alaska to the United States long the subject of historical debate. New material presented here merely clarifies the sharply etched lines of historical controversy about the sale, three authors seeing it as a product of co-operation and mutual interest between the two Pacific powers, one other, Howard Kushner, restating his well-known case that seventy years of conflict left Russians no choice but to retire to Asia. Clearly written articles by James Gibson and Kushner outline the various factors to be considered in assessing this historiographical debate. From a British Columbia perspective the two essays also describe usefully the context of international politics in the North Pacific at the historical moment when B.C. was deciding its future relationship between the United States and the new Dominion of Canada.

Four other articles merit attention. Mary Wheeler reassesses the Imperial Government's motives in 1799 for granting to the Russian American Company an exclusive right to hunt and trade in the North Pacific. Carefully tracing the unstable nature of commercial conflict after Grigorii Selikhov, the great Siberian and Alaskan trader, died in 1795, Wheeler argues that the granting of a monopoly not only brought order out of chaos but in so doing enlisted more, not fewer, Siberian traders into the Alaska market. Antoinette Shalkop uses previously neglected church records to illustrate the metropolitan reach of imperial Russia. The central government kept a tight rein on the colonial Russian Orthodox Church, never allowing authorities "to develop solutions that would have been more suitable to their peculiar conditions" (p. 217). The theme of metropolitan influence per-

vades Anatole Senkevitch's study of architecture in Russian America as well. As time passed, he argues, traders expressed "a greater concern for erecting structures that would reflect as closely as possible the architectural traditions of the mother country" (p. 148). Thus, for example, everywhere that Russians settled the ubiquitous *izba* type of structure, "with the characteristic log walls and steep, hipped plank roof . . . predominated" (p. 189). Finally, the best article in the volume, revised from a version published earlier in *Ethnohistory* (1978), is James Gibson's study of "Russian Dependence upon the Natives of Alaska." It traces native-white relations in Russian America through an analysis of structural data on the colony's population, labour force, and trade with the Tlingit Indians. In addition to providing invaluable insight into the nature of colonial Russian society, it is methodologically the most sophisticated piece in the collection.

In fact, Gibson's essay stands out because, by contrast, most of the authors continue to explore traditional historical problems in familiar ways. The latter impression is reinforced in particular by the laboured, essentially narrative, writing style of the Soviet contributors. A comparable volume of essays entitled *Captain James Cook and His Times* (1979), also the product of an international conference, is far more original in scope and method, breaking new ground in analyses of the medical, literary, and scientific implications of Cook's voyages to the south and north Pacific regions. Yet ironically, the differences may simply underline the achievement of the Sitka conference, for they highlight the smaller pool of scholars working on northwest coast studies and the greater difficulty of Russian American historians in gaining access to sources, especially material still unavailable in the Soviet Union.

Despite its limitations *Russia's American Colony* remains a valuable source of information and ideas for British Columbians about development to the 1860s of a geographically close and historically comparable region to the north. It certainly sharpened my sense of the context out of which British Columbia became British.

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