

BOOK REVIEWS

*Go Do Some Great Thing:
The Black Pioneers of
British Columbia*
Crawford Kilian

3rd edition. Madeira Park, BC:
Harbour Publishing, 2020.
272 pp. \$26.95 paper.

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THE REVISED third edition of Crawford Kilian's groundbreaking book on British Columbia's Black pioneers is timely and essential reading. It is a critical corrective to omissions and erasure in both academic histories and in popular understandings, not only of the past but also of the present.

The book's most important contribution, as relevant now as when first published in 1978, is in its peopling of Indigenous territories, the lands now known as British Columbia, with Black settlers alongside white and other newcomers. Composed of a melee of ethnicities and nationalities, Black pioneers came from various Caribbean Islands and eastern Canada. They included freeborn Northerners, Southern-born ex-slaves, Californians,

and British subjects. Dispelling the white supremacist mythology of British Columbia as a white settler society, the book introduces, by name, Black businesspeople engaged in a wide variety of professions, skilled as well as unskilled workers, college graduates, teachers, preachers, and fortune seekers. All of them walk off pages of the book and into our imaginations, changing how and what we remember.

The North American focus on forced migration and slavery has led to the neglect of Black migration narratives. Kilian's book shows Black people on the move, in search of opportunities for a better life for themselves and for their families. Like other migrants, some early Black pioneers came and stayed; their families are now among the oldest settler families in the province. Others moved south after the abolition of slavery. If they had come to British Columbia in search of a safe haven, "the increasing hypocrisy and pettiness of English-born Victorians must have been especially discouraging; with an American bigot, at least you knew where you stood" (184).

Yes, Black pioneers in British Columbia encountered, challenged, and resisted racism in churches, saloons, and theatres. But their history is never reduced to what was done to them. It is

their hopes and their efforts that infuse the book. Nonetheless, Kilian is clear in his conclusions: in the 1860s and 1870s, Black British Columbians were largely middle class and their children were well educated; by the mid-twentieth century, Black people in British Columbia had lost economic ground.

The episodic and anecdotal history mapped in the book also shatters the illusion conjured up by the contemporary acronym BIPOC, referring to Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, which might suggest a shared experience or history. Like their white contemporaries, Black settlers pre-empted Indigenous lands, “seized and destroyed Indigenous resources” (103), and, in response, “Black settlers were ... robbed, threatened and sniped at by Indigenous persons” who resented the encroachment on their territories. This happened not because they were Black but because they were settlers.

Documentary accounts of history like this one will help us better understand the world we inherited in all its complexity. Much work remains to be done to recover Black history in British Columbia and to ensure an anti-racist future. Kilian’s book has laid the foundations. It should be in every BC teacher’s repertoire, and its gaps should inspire young historians to write the stories still to be told.

*Kamloopa: An Indigenous
Matriarch Story*

Kim Senklip Harvey

Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2020.
112 pp. \$16.95 paper.

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THE TEXT of *Kamloopa: An Indigenous Matriarch Story* extends well beyond

its own literal and figurative parameters. Syilx, Tsilhqot’in, Ktunaxa, and Dakelh playwright Kim Senklip Harvey offers a thoughtful, funny, and compelling exploration of the complexities of Indigenous community-making and knowledge reclamation by exploring the meeting of three different characters who also embody spirits and figures that guide the characters through their own individual and collective journeys. Focused on the textures of interpersonal relation, *Kamloopa* follows two sisters, Mikaya and Kilawna, who have a chance meeting with Edith (a.k.a. IFN1 – Indian Friend Number 1) that leads them on a journey to the Kamloopa Powwow as each of them explores what it means to be Indigenous in the contemporary moment.

In between hilarious moments of tweeting Anishinaabe actor Adam Beach while reciting lines from *Smoke Signals* or joking about winning money at the bingo hall, the three women also cover such in-depth topics as the complexities of feeling like one is constantly representing all Indigenous people, dealing with anti-Indigenous microaggressions in health care, not feeling truly Indigenous, and being disconnected from ancestral place and ceremony. All three are matriarchs in their own way, each taking on moments of care and wisdom over the other two. In this, the story is cyclical and the power dynamics are fluid. Moments of joy, laughter, and hope animate the page, balancing moments of despair and violence so that the latter don’t become definitive of Indigeneity for either the characters or the reader. As Algonquin Anishinaabe dramaturg Lindsay Lachance writes in the foreword, *Kamloopa* works to “counter the ongoing misrepresentations of Indigenous women in historical and contemporary media” (vii). The play lives up to this promise in spades, offering us a glimpse into the

lives of three women whose experiences are both messy and beautiful, limiting and freeing.

Beyond the success of the play itself, what is especially notable is how the commitment to reciprocity that is explored in the text is evidenced in the literal material object of the play itself. Accompanying the play in addition to the rich and informative foreword by Lachance, is Kimi Clark's 'zine "study buddy" that outlines the production of the play itself, including the kinds of protocols and practices that are necessary to realize a production that is true to the commitments of Indigenous theatre. As Lachance writes in her foreword, this play and its production have been built through what she calls "Relational Indigenous Dramaturgies," which she describes as "self-affirming practices that encourage us, as Indigenous people, to look to our own laws, practices, governance systems, and world views to create alternative ways to make our art" (vi). This relationality is built into the text, with participants offering incredibly edifying secondary materials meant as both an act of reciprocity with the play itself and as a guide for interacting with the piece in a reciprocal way. In this, it remains rooted in establishing a reciprocal relationship with the land and its people, much as the play itself focuses on following the sisters and their friend as they learn what it means to be in relation to their traditional territories around so-called British Columbia.

Overall, *Kamloopa* is a notable and exciting contribution to both Indigenous theatre and literatures. Its focus on intra-Indigenous (rather than settler-Indigenous) relations marks it as a unique text that would teach beautifully, given the supplementary materials.

*Inalienable Properties:
The Political Economy of
Indigenous Land Reform*

Jamie Baxter

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020.
226 pp. \$32.95 paper.

JONATHAN BORON
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IN *Inalienable Properties: The Political Economy of Indigenous Land Reform* (2020), Jamie Baxter presents his readers with a puzzle surrounding the inalienability of Indigenous land tenure systems. Baxter asks, "Why does inalienable property persist in some settings and not others?" And, further, "How are both formal and informal limits on the free alienability of land rights sustained by self-determining political communities over the long term?" (5). In working to solve this puzzle, Baxter employs tools from game theory and institutional analysis to develop and to analyze a theory of change and to bring greater focus on the role leadership has played in existing examples of Indigenous land tenure reform.

The book is organized into six chapters, beginning with Baxter mapping out the puzzle for us on the ground and in the literature. Taking a broad approach to the understanding of inalienability – which is a set of formal rules or informal norms that limits the range of market transactions for an entitlement – Baxter effectively refutes Harold Damsetz's (1967) theory regarding the inevitable nature of alienable land transitions. Damsetz posits that property regimes evolve over time from systems of inalienable, communally held property to systems of privately held and alienable rights. Baxter illustrates that there is a greater complexity to collective decision making and that this has driven a

variety of inalienable regimes that persist in current examples of Indigenous land reform.

In the second chapter, Baxter frames the puzzle through a retelling of how current property regimes and institutions that govern these regimes came to be, discussing inalienability through colonial history and highlighting processes of assimilation for Indigenous land regimes. Baxter provides a useful summary of this history and the current state of these regimes – not an easy feat given such a complex history and diverse political geography. Going deeper here, Baxter should further interrogate the institutional power dynamics that exist due to the forced replacement of traditional governance systems by the federal government through the installation of *Indian Act* band councils and how tensions within these institutions at a community level affect decisions on land reform. This would lead to another question of community consent with regard to institutional decisions that are central to the development of communally held Indigenous lands – something that Baxter assumes but does not detail.

Building on the gaps Baxter has found within Damsetz's theory, in the third chapter he adopts an organizational lens to bring a new perspective to the central puzzle, suggesting that land reform in Indigenous communities resembles the dynamics and challenges of organizational teamwork. In this vein, he introduces a formal model that considers team production of institutional change and illustrates how cooperative team production should work through the prisoner's dilemma. Baxter's approach is unique and interesting as he places an important emphasis on exploring the role of leadership as well as the relationship between leaders and the community for which they are making decisions.

Baxter tests this model over the next two chapters, through four comparative case studies. First, he explores land reform in urban/semi-urban locations of the Membertou and the Westbank First Nations. He then revises the model and applies it in more rural cases, exploring the property regimes created by the Nisga'a Final Agreement and the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement with the James Bay Cree. Baxter convincingly argues that leaders who prioritized the preservation of community lands have played a significant role in shaping land reform that sustains inalienable rules while helping to shape political institutions that can maintain these rules beyond the leader's tenure.

I find that Baxter's exploration is missing a fundamental piece of the puzzle by not considering Indigenous perspectives on how land influences conceptions of identity, and how these conceptions inform land reform decision-making. The marketability of land appears to be a key focus of Baxter's understanding as to why free alienability should be pursued but he doesn't seem to provide an understanding as to why Indigenous communities may prefer to maintain inalienable property regimes and forego potential economic efficiencies. While Baxter mentions that a leaders' cultural commitments may be a factor in the type of land reform objectives they present to their community, relationality to land may play a significantly larger role in the type and level of inalienability of the tenure system a leader attempts to establish and a community might support. This missing piece would round out Baxter's poignant insight on the form of political institutions leaders employ for community decision-making based on the type (material vs. non-material) of rent they seek.

By applying the model to these four diverse case studies, Baxter draws some very useful insights that are particularly relevant to an increasing number of First Nations policy analysts, land managers, and community leaders in British Columbia that are imagining what a self-governed land code for their own people might look like within a Canadian framework. Overall, Baxter leaves us with many valuable considerations from these cases and builds upon our understanding of land regime transitions in Indigenous communities. Further, he directs us towards new questions and veins of thought on the future of inalienable property as we continue to put this puzzle together.

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Captain Cook Rediscovered: Voyaging to the Icy Latitudes

David L. Nicandri

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020.
448 pp. \$45.00 paper.

BARRY GOUGH
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ON 12 JULY 1776, Captain James Cook, Royal Navy, sailed from Plymouth, England, in the three-master collier *Resolution* in search of the fabled Northwest Passage. It was a voyage that swept Cook and the crews of the *Resolution*, and its tender, the *Discovery*, from the icy wasteland of the Arctic to the tropical waters of Hawai'i. It was a voyage that would change eighteenth-century understanding of

science and geography – and of the limits of sailing in frozen waters. Cook might well have remained in England; however, he was unable to turn down the opportunity of this his third voyage to the Pacific – the first had been in 1768 to observe the transit of Venus at Tahiti. A second voyage had determined the existence of the Antarctic and was prodigiously important in the gathering of botanical information, ethnographic descriptions, and artistic observations. This was arguably the greatest of Cook's trio of voyages. The third voyage was hardly less significant, but it went to high Arctic latitudes through the Bering Strait and to the easternmost point of sail at Icy Cape, Alaska. And when Cook was killed on the shore of Kealakekua Bay, the Big Island, the world of exploration changed undeniably, for its greatest proponent and servant had been removed from the scene. David Nicandri calls it murder, and commentators on the events of St. Valentine's Day 1779 will long continue to discuss and dispute motives, mistakes, and misunderstandings of that day. Certainly, soon thereafter harmony was restored, and Captain George Vancouver, mentored by Cook, had smooth sailing in dealings with Hawaiians. Concentration on the events of Cook's death have deflected attention away from the challenges and achievements of these small ships bound on scientific discovery to determine the features of the world's largest ocean, its littorals and islands, its hazards and its economic prospects. It was on this third voyage that Cook sailed his ships into King George's Sound, as he called it, now Nootka Sound, and it was there for a month that observations were made of the Indigenous peoples. Illustrations and charts come from that visit: Cook had lifted the curtain on a world entirely unknown to the European mind.

David Nicandri has ransacked the archives and libraries in order to demonstrate, which he fully does, his view that, although many have seen Cook as an explorer of the tropics, it is in icy wastes and choked channels that Cook was at his best as a careful navigator and observer. Cartographers on board, Henry Roberts and William Bligh (of *Bounty* mutiny fame), added hydrographical details to the charts. Not long thereafter, mariners came to trade for sea otter pelts. The Pacific was becoming smaller, more finite, a place for exploitation. Speculation about a Northwest Passage did not diminish and went on for another century until the Royal Navy solved the bugbear riddle that had commenced in Elizabethan times and in Frobisher's voyages, which had yielded "fool's gold" and no sea lane. The author has used recent appreciations of fellow scholars to welcome effect, and the bibliography and index will help inquisitive researchers of the future to advance their own appreciations. His fine concluding chapter presents a program of requirements that future writers, scholarly and other, will want to examine or omit at their peril.

*A Bounded Land: Reflections on
Settler Colonialism in Canada*

Cole Harris

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020.

332 pp. \$39.95 paper.

KEN FAVRHOLDT

Kamloops, BC

HISTORICAL geographer Cole Harris, professor emeritus at UBC, has in his latest book brought together a number of his articles, some previously published, to focus on the subject of settler colonialism in

Canada. It is of interest primarily to a Canada-wide academic audience.

A Bounded Land: Reflections on Settler Colonialism in Canada is the culmination of Harris's fifty years of study of the settlement of the country and the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. The historical geography spans five centuries and demonstrates the relationship of people with each other and with the land.

Not a new concept, "settler colonialism" has, in the past two decades since the late Patrick Wolfe's groundbreaking work, gained credence as a subject of inquiry as Indigenous topics have evolved. In the book's introduction, Harris provides a simple definition of the concept: "I mean simply that form of colonialism associated with immigrants who became the dominant population in the territories they occupied, and, in doing so displaced the Indigenous peoples who previously had lived there" (3). Harris introduces his own settler background and developing interest in this subject.

In this book, Harris stitches his previous work into a coherent whole. The result is a work consisting of five parts, each of which contains three chapters, beginning with his brief (1997) look at the Fraser Canyon from two perspectives – that of the explorer and that of the Indigenous inhabitants of that space. Part 1 continues with a chapter that offers an overview (2008) of early explorations of Canada's eastern shores and the map-making that went along with them, and it concludes with a chapter on the smallpox epidemic around the Strait of Georgia (1994). Part 2 takes a look at Acadia and the marshland settlements around the Bay of Fundy (2008); the seigneurie of La Petite-Nation west of Montreal is Harris's earliest (1971) work to be included in this collection; and the settlement of Mono Township (1975) dwells on the migration of Ulster farmers to Ontario's Niagara Escarpment. The

themes of Part 3, European beginnings in the Northwest Atlantic (1984) and related chapters on how Europe was simplified in the New World (1977) and how place was constructed in early Canada (2015), introduce theoretical and comparative ideas. Part 4 begins with a short piece on the configuration of British Columbia's Lower Mainland in 1881 (1992). This is followed by "The Struggle with Distance" (1997), which offers a classic thesis on the impact of transportation and communication on settlement. "Indigenous Space" (2002) focuses on reserves in British Columbia and concludes Part 4.

Part 5, "Theorizing Settler Colonialism," is the culmination of Harris's thinking to date and, in his words, "[contains] what are probably my most intricate writings on British Columbia" (17). "Making an Immigrant Society" (1997) demonstrates how societies change in different settings; "How Does Colonialism Dispossess?" (2004) asks, "How was colonial power deployed to achieve this geographical effect?" (236) – meaning the dispossession of Indigenous land. Harris draws on Edward Said (1979, 1993), Michel Foucault (1979), David Harvey (1982), and other thinkers for answers.

The last chapter, titled "Postscript: The Boundaries of Settler Colonialism," sums up the collection and compares settled and unsettled spaces from the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. The view moves to the North, where Indigenous lives were transformed but where Indigenous people maintained the greatest population, and to the present, where Indigenous voices are growing stronger and where their numbers are increasing.

Not all the chapters touch explicitly on the concept of settler colonialism: they were written before the term gained purchase. However, each chapter

is preceded by an introduction that is newly minted and encapsulates Harris's current views. For example, "In my view, migration recontextualized people"; "wherever ... people without means tried to farm where farming was hardly possible, the results were much the same" (68); "In a different place, lives were working themselves out in different ways" (52); "disease and depopulation would transform the terms of the settler-colonial engagement with Indigenous peoples and their lands" (36).

Harris has demonstrated how "settler colonialism in Canada has been a bounded enterprise." I only understood the importance of the term "bounds" when I reached the end of the book. "Settlers could not use most of the land," being bounded by their own imagination and history, while Indigenous peoples could and did use the land but were themselves bounded by reserves and treaties, by government rules and laws, and by the prejudice and growth of the settler population. But Canada's geography itself formed boundaries – the US border to the south, tundra and ice to the north, and the Canadian Shield and Cordillera, which constrained European settlement until technology and modernization eroded some of these natural barriers. Harris touches on the latest form of colonialism in Canada's North without labelling it – extractivism. Historian Allan Greer (2019) expands on this topic.

As it consists of a series of essays, old and new, there is a degree of repetitiveness in Harris's book. Here and there his analysis is dense and requires attentiveness. He states the same thing in different ways, which is perhaps helpful to the reader who is trying to understand his thesis.

The illustrations are important with regard to explaining the text, including reproductions of historical maps and

new ones by UBC cartographer Eric Leinberger. More images would have made the book more attractive. I am thinking of the drawings of Captain George Vancouver's 1792 voyage, showing an Indigenous settlement on the Northwest Coast and, if they exist, images of the Petite-Nation, Mono Township, and Acadia. The notes and readings help to trace Harris's thinking, and they are followed by a concise index.

In *A Bounded Land*, Cole Harris has produced an eloquent compilation of work on settler colonialism in Canada. As a work of historical geography, it follows in the footsteps of Patrick Wolfe (1999, 2006), Allan Greer (2019), and others.

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Civilian Internment in Canada: Histories and Legacies

Rhonda L. Hinthér and
Jim Mochoruk, eds.

Winnipeg: University of Manitoba
Press, 2020. 424 pp. \$31.95 paper.

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There is no single historiography of internment" in Canada, write

Rhonda L. Hinthér and Jim Mochoruk in the introduction to this ambitious collection of essays (9–10). Siloed histories of particular internments, they suggest, convey episodic violations of Canadian civilians. Instead, they argue that we should see civilian internment as an enduring facet of Canadian history, a "Sword of Damocles" (71) that has continuously threatened those outside the norm. In her contribution on Ukrainian leftists during the Great War, Kassandra Luciuk similarly urges readers to see internment as "emblematic of the Canadian project more generally" (52).

This book began with a conference in 2015, and the strengths of that initiative are apparent. It brings together scholars who have focused on the internments of Ukrainian, Serbian, Italian, and Japanese Canadian civilians. Inclusion of the forty thousand Second World War internees transferred from Britain, including Jewish refugees, reveals the scope of Canada's internments during that era (267). Chapters on political radicalism, gender, and public history connect internments with additional historiographies. Many of the chapters – including Christine Whitehouse's on the ambivalent sexualities of Jewish refugees, Judith Kestler's on the positive reminiscences of interned German merchant marines, and Franca Iacovetta's on the "risky business" of complicating a community's understanding of its internment – are fascinating and, at least to this reader, novel.

British Columbia is represented exclusively in four chapters on the internment of Japanese Canadians. While this is perhaps a weakness of the book (I wonder whether the received understanding of internment in this province might have been complicated by inclusion of other internees), these chapters are strong in themselves. Aya

Fujiwara details the relatively under-examined internment of Japanese Canadians on Alberta farms. Mikhail Borge analyzes Japanese Canadian resistance to the internment. Despite dismissing prior scholarship on the topic (rather than exploding a “myth of quietism,” Borge is better understood as building upon existing work),¹ his chapter remains one of the most compelling in the volume. Art Miki’s discussion of the Japanese Canadian Redress campaign provides a hopeful close to the book. Finally, Grace Eiko Thomson offers perhaps the most profound observation of the entire volume. In a deeply personal essay, Thomson describes an assault that occurred a short time after her family was freed. “I was old enough at that time to know that speaking the truth of what happened was not wise,” she writes (224). The shadow of the internment exposed her as a young woman to additional vulnerabilities and violations.

The origin of this book in a conference is also a weakness. Scholars already working on internment answered the call for papers; they reflect where the historiography has been. None, save descriptive contributions on public exhibitions, bridge internments. More important, the editors offer no reconceptualization of the topic. Claiming that dictionary definitions are “too limited for what transpired

in Canada” (2), the volume offers no alternatives. In fact, the *Oxford English Dictionary* is a good starting point, as is Masumi Izumi’s recent integrative analysis of “preventative detention” in the United States.² Relatedly, the logic underlying the book’s organization into sections is opaque, offering little assistance in structuring a wider field. The fleeting intersection of authors might also explain serious terminological tension among the chapters on Japanese Canadian internment, as Fujiwara and Borge refer repeatedly to “Japanese evacuees,” while Thomson and Miki document the work to cast off such euphemisms for the uprooting and internment of Canadians.

The editors articulate their “profound hope” (16) that the volume will serve as the starting point for a unified historiography of internment in Canada rather than a final word. Given both its strengths and weaknesses, we should join the editors in that aspiration.

*Unmooring the Komagata Maru:
Charting Colonial Trajectories*

Rita Kaur Dhamoon,
Davina Bhandar,
Renisa Mawani, and
Satwinder Kaur Bains, eds.

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020.
352 pp. \$34.95 paper.

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FROM FOOD (Valenze 2012) to crops
(Ali 2020; Rappaport 2019) to

¹ Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976); Jordan Stanger-Ross and Nicholas Blomley, “My Land Is Worth a Million Dollars: How Japanese Canadians Contested Their Dispossession in the 1940s,” *Law and History Review* 35, no. 3 (2017): 711–51; Eric M. Adams, Jordan Stanger-Ross, and the Landscapes of Injustice Research Collective, “Promises of Law: The Unlawful Dispossession of Japanese Canadians,” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 54, no. 3 (2017): 687–740.

² Masumi Izumi, *The Rise and Fall of America’s Concentration Camp Law: Civil Liberties Debates from the Internment to McCarthyism and the Radical 1960s* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019).

commodities (Curry-Machado 2013) to digital cultures (Punathambekar and Mohan 2019) and to empires (Bayly 2003; Hopkins 2003) there has been a steady scholarly commitment to reimagining the relationship between the global/universal and the local, even “theorizing the local” (Wolf 2012). *Unmooring the Komagata Maru: Charting Trajectories*, edited by Rita Kaur Dhamoon, Davina Bhandar, Renisa Mawani, and Satwinder Kaur Bains, offers an interdisciplinary lens with which to re-engage the “local” history of the *Komagata Maru* and place it within contemporary understandings of immigration and racial exclusion on a “global” scale. In joining a growing body of transnational texts, *Unmooring* enriches the field by its methodology of interrogating a singular event through time, space, and a vast array of disciplinary frameworks.

SS *Komagata Maru* sailed to the western coast of the Dominion of Canada in 1914. Its 376 passengers were deemed illegal, were detained, and then 340 of them were forced to return to Calcutta. While the incident created ripples at the time, it receded in popular memory. In the past few decades there has been fresh interest in locating the event within Canadian historiography. This book bases its intervention on the grounds that such approaches have erroneously restricted the history of the *Komagata Maru* within the parameters of a nation. As argued in the introduction, these works have seen the history of the *Komagata Maru* either as a “South Asian migration” story or as a “past racial exclusion” contrasting with “present multicultural inclusion” (8–12). *Unmooring* decentres the event from its current and longstanding territorial moorings and argues that using a colonial analytic, in an additive rather than in a substitutive sense, is necessary

to appreciate the true calibre of this historical event.

Following the introduction are four parts, which are the work of nineteen contributors; three appendices. Understanding the many layers of the *Komagata Maru* incident by placing it within the oscillating pressures of anti-colonial resistance and a determined colonial biopower is the focus of Part 1. The chapter titled “The Politics of Anti-Colonial Resistance in the Journey of the *Komagata Maru*” allows readers to appreciate the transnational legacy of this event. In it, Fletcher presents how the demand for imperial citizenship, often couched as a desire for “another world,” disrupted the tenuous relationship between white settler nations and Indigenous communities (52). Framing anti-colonial sentiments in aspirational terms contrasts sharply with the continued violation faced by *Komagata Maru* passengers even when they reached Calcutta. By looking at the afterlife of the incident in Calcutta, Chattopadhyay’s chapter traces the developments of individual memory to “class memory” and the associated development of radicalism, diaspora identity, and labour movements (50). As Bains sums up this part, immigration restrictions that were structured around the “inassimilability” of South Asians were a not a far cry from the 1890 act that branded Aboriginal peoples as “aliens” in their own lands (77).

Part 2, “Migration Regimes in Colonial Contexts,” takes its cue from the global conversation that the return of the *Komagata Maru* sparked, especially given that the desire to migrate to Canada was not an audacious one. Together, the chapters by Mongia, Hasan et al., and Bhandar explain the historical construction and continuous reproduction of power dynamics to which white nation-states resort not only through the rejection but also through the

conditional and at-will admission of non-white migrants. Mongia shows how the detention of *Komagata Maru* passengers became a key moment for the judiciary to establish the sovereignty of the Canadian Parliament and its power to distinguish between British subjects as it thought fit. There was no legal basis for turning *Komagata Maru* passengers away, and it was even more difficult to place race – the real reason – within legal language. The usefulness of Mongia's reiteration that the "eventfulness" of an event can be ensured only through continuous and critical conversation is well evidenced by the chapters that follow (115). Hasan et al.'s analysis of the discourse on immigrants as model minorities and good migrants, and Bhandar's of border management both highlight the continuation of early twentieth-century racialized and colonized mindsets.

In Part 3, "Colonial Temporalities of Memory and Cultural Production," Mizukami, Spector-Marks, and Hameed all meditate on the function of memory in history and find it to be contingent, refracted, changeable, and an "event" that may not always be a repository of historical truth-claims. Mizukami shows how the Japanese crew on *Komagata Maru* recalled the incident as a problem of Indian colonial history and not Canadian immigration policy (175–76). The San Francisco-based *Ghadr* and London-based *India* newspapers engaged with the discourse on imperial citizenship, though essentially seeing the passengers only as British subjects. Spector-Marks demonstrates how abstracting the will and intention of passengers has come at the cost of this "global event" not translating into any transnational solidarity (191–92). Hameed describes memory as an "image witnessed from afar" and elucidates why such images may resonate with the present but may also remain disjointed (197).

Part 4, "Disrupting Colonial Formations of Nation," exposes the fragilities that lie at the heart of nation-formation and its construction. Dua shows that within Canada's refusal of *Komagata Maru* passengers lay deep-seated fears centred on the body of the non-white woman. An "imagined crisis" that saw Sikh women as a threat to the Canadian family and the nation built around monogamy took roots. Kaur analyzes how the experience of Sikh ethno-subnationalism rooted in historical experience in India manifests itself in the national space of Canada among Sikh Canadians, revealing their different subjectivities. Somani shows how an intended nationalist project of constructing forgetting can trigger memories of exclusion of minorities and reveal racial hierarchies embedded within nationalist projects. Mawani questions the fundamental claim of the Dominion of Canada to deny entry into land that was not unanimously considered to belong to it (288). Mawani articulates how the *Komagata Maru* event functions as "minor history" and is able not only to amplify its impact globally but also to project back locally. Finally, Tariq Malik's poems brood on history, longing, and the denial that lies at the heart of immigration trajectories to the West.

Unmooring is an important transnational text that sheds light on the history of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest as well as their present. While the argument in favour of using a colonial analytic is well evidenced, this reviewer found the implicit hint about the limitations of nationalist history needed more clarification. Since the chapters of the book resonate so well with the central argument, a lofty goal for an edited volume, an epilogue would have made a great addition and would have offered an opportunity for such clarification.

While *Unmooring* is a transnational volume that links the local with the global, its lateral engagement will be instructive for scholars and students of various persuasions. It dwells on the problems of subjects versus citizens (Mamdani 2018); border fluidity (Mignolo 2012; Sorensen 2018); “cosmopolitan thought zones,” which are transnational public spaces in which disparate groups can converse (Manjapra and Bose 2010); and, finally, equality in nation-states with histories of “past racial exclusion” (Aulino et al. 2013). This edited volume is an important contribution to epistemology as well as to methodology.

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Entering Time: The Fungus Man Platters of Charles Edenshaw

Colin Browne

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IN 2013, the Vancouver Art Gallery’s (VAG’s) *Charles Edenshaw* exhibition brought together three argillite platters made in the late 1880s by *Da.a. xiigang*, Charles Edenshaw – one from the Field Museum in Chicago, one from the Seattle Art Museum, and one from the National Museum of Ireland’s Ethnographic Collection in Dublin – all of which depict an episode in the epic Haida narrative *Xuuyya Kaagang.ngas* (known in English as “Raven Travelling” or “Raven Kept Walking”) as told by *Sgaay*, John Sky, to anthropologist John Swanton and his interpreter Henry Moody at Skidegate in 1900. In this dense, small, and eloquent book, Colin Browne, an acclaimed poet and documentary filmmaker who has written about

the Surrealists' fascination with the Indigenous art of the Northwest Coast,¹ articulates the many profound meanings and wide-ranging interpretations that he discovered in the platters' evocative but somewhat mysterious imagery. "I've asked myself," he writes, "if it is possible to apply the aesthetic criteria to a nineteenth-century argillite carving that I am in the habit of applying to a work of Western classical or contemporary art" (21). This is an important question. Non-Indigenous writing about Northwest Coast styles, attributions, artists, iconography, and symbolic meanings is rarely explicit about the conventions of European art history upon which it is based, and the art historical critique of Indigenous art in general has tended to be a separate, self-enclosed discourse. Browne's study of the three argillite platters demonstrates that, yes, it is indeed possible to apply the same aesthetic criteria, as well as interpretive methodology, to both nineteenth-century argillite carving and Western art. Weaving together a Haida oral history transcribed and published by an American anthropologist, contemporary Haida understandings of the continuing relevance of that history, symbolic analysis that could be applied to the art of the Surrealists and other European art movements, and accounts of those Surrealists and his own settler family's history, Browne has given us a new perspective on an art form, and

possibly on our own histories.

For the book is imbued with a sense of place as well as time. Browne begins with an evocative account of his own colonial family's physical and intellectual isolation in a Vancouver Island village, obviously Cowichan Bay, where his mother excelled on the second-oldest grass tennis court in the world (which is still there) and where the neighbouring Qu'wut'sen people (who are still there too) lived in a different, parallel world. He writes poetically of faded family albums, of relatives who seemed like "startled characters who left the stage at intermission and who were later discovered in another country, heading west" (5). It's a nostalgic story of dislocations, as is the story of a young Surrealist from Paris, Wolfgang Paalen, who would have passed by Cowichan Bay in 1939 on his way to Victoria. The son of a European Jew, Paalen had travelled to the Northwest Coast in search of "an idealized, still enchanted world where the border between the conscious and the unconscious mind was permeable" (13), where Indigenous culture retained the values that his own had lost. Paalen collected Northwest Coast art but not argillite carvings. (Because argillite carvings were made for sale or trade rather than for Indigenous use, he considered them representative of "only the decadent stage at which great art lost its *raison d'être* and degenerates to trifles" [18].) Paalen was critical of Canada's colonial policies. Browne's mother was as well, but her family's lives were shaped by colonial culture. Edenshaw's life within this context is a theme at the heart of the book. Browne shows Edenshaw as the contemporary man he was, successfully navigating the colonial forces that almost destroyed and still threatened his world. Paradoxically and without nostalgia, Edenshaw "kept old ideas alive by embracing the new" (20).

¹ Colin Browne, "Scavengers of Paradise," in *The Colour of My Dreams: The Surrealist Revolution in Art*, ed. Dawn Ades (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery and Douglas and McIntyre, 2011), 245–62, exhibition catalogue; Colin Browne, *I Had an Interesting French Artist to See Me This Summer: Emily Carr and Wolfgang Paalen in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 2016), exhibition catalogue.

The three argillite platters portray the same episode in the creation of the Haida world. They illustrate a Haida story of Raven giving women their genitalia. Raven, half-human and carrying a spear, and his steersman, a bracket fungus, travel in a canoe towards a rock offshore to capture the *tsaw* (female genitalia) that lie upon it. Should Raven be successful in his endeavour, the power of the *tsaw* will be released and the Haida Nation will be created. Raven had tried to capture the *tsaw* before, first with a junco and then with a Steller's jay as his helmsman, but each time Raven and the birds were overcome by the power of the *tsaw* – that is, they succumbed to violent orgasms and were unable to continue. Raven then animated a bracket fungus by drawing or painting a design on it, and Fungus Man was able to steady the canoe. Raven's quest would then be successful and time – the progression of the generations – would begin.

Browne's account is based on the version of the story, and the explanation of what is happening in it, by *gid7ahl-gudsllaay lalaxaaygans*, Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson in the VAG's *Charles Edenshaw* catalogue.² Browne's elaboration of the narrative draws out its complexity and many levels of meaning. His interpretations draw on many additional sources – quotations from William Blake and Jacques Derrida at the beginning of the book testify to Browne's wide-ranging intellectual arsenal – but primacy is given to teachings from contemporary Haida that emphasize the continuing importance that the *Xuuya Kaagang.ngas* narrative holds in Haida thought. For Williams-Davidson, for example, there is an instructional purpose

to the story: it “teaches respectful conduct of men to female sexuality” (85).

Along with interpretations of the platters' iconography and symbolism, Browne manages with apparent effortlessness to include a review of relevant literature, original research, a critique of colonialism and the government's assimilationist mechanisms (“a system of legally entrenched inequality and racism” [60]), a brief history of argillite carving, meditations on the nature of Raven and interconnections between the natural and supernatural worlds, an overview of Edenshaw's life and times, details about the Indigenous art market, iconographical and formal analysis, other works by Edenshaw, and other methodologies that are no doubt applications of the aesthetic criteria that Browne usually applies to works of Western art. We learn about Edenshaw's interaction with anthropologists and collectors; his Christianity; how he spent time at the canneries where his wife, *Qwii.aang*, Isabella, an accomplished weaver, did seasonal work; and the death of many of their children and the relationship of those losses to the platters' theme of human reproduction. We are encouraged to examine the form and meaning of Raven's Killer Whale crest hat. We see that the figure under Raven's canoe may represent *Konankada*, the Chief of the Undersea World. It is pointed out that the platters' triangular compositions suggest the axis mundi connecting the realms of ocean, earth, and sky. Browne mulls the sequence of the platters: whether the move is towards naturalism, in which case the Chicago platter would be the last of the series, or towards complexity and character development, which would make the Dublin platter the most recent. All is based on a variety of sources, including Emily Carr's account of her 1912 trip to Haida Gwaii, Alan Hoover's study of the

² *gid7ahl-gudsllaay lalaxaaygans*, Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, “How Raven Gave Females Their Tsaw,” in Vancouver Art Gallery, *Charles Edenshaw* (London: Black Dog Publishing), 6, exhibition catalogue.

three argillite platters in *American Indian Art* magazine, Robin Wright's work on argillite carving and Haida carvers, Karen Duffek and Bill McLennan's insightful publications on style, and the biography of Edenshaw's daughter, Florence Davidson, as published by Margaret Blackman. The voices of contemporary Haida artists such as Edenshaw's great-grandson *guud san glans*, Robert Davidson, and Chief *7Idansuu*, James Hart, have equal weight throughout.

Because Browne is intrigued by the role and character of Fungus Man in the tableaux depicted on the platters, there is information about fungi in the book. In the forests of Haida Gwaii, Browne goes in search of the type of fungus that Raven turned into Fungus Man. On a forest walk a shift in perception reveals that, while the bottom of the bracket fungus *Ganoderma applanatum* is white and smooth, the top is ribbed like a clam shell. This connects Fungus Man with another of the Raven creation stories: Raven discovering humankind in a clam shell (or cockle shell as the linguistic basis for the English translation of the shell that held the nascent humans is considered), that is depicted on an argillite chest by Edenshaw in the Royal BC Museum and is the subject of Bill Reid's *Raven and the First Man* in the UBC Museum of Anthropology. For Browne, these connections go beyond similarities of form and content. They indicate a way of understanding the world: "The ability to identify the ways in which one thing is analogous to another, or to its contrary, is at the heart of being – and all poetry and art – and will be critical to our survival" (112).

Browne is a documentary filmmaker, and his reading of the argillite platters is cinematic. He notes that Raven and Fungus Man break the fourth wall, looking out at us and implicating us in

their journey. What is depicted on the platters is not simply an engraved design: it is a drama that takes place in its own mythic time, which becomes our time. The book's title, *Entering Time*, refers not only to the Haida story but also to Browne's own intellectual journey. By his passionate engagement and beautiful writing, he carries the reader along with him on that expedition – what Karen Duffek describes (on the back cover), as "an enthralling journey into time and history . . . across the realms of epic poem, oral narrative, science, art, and detective story."

Much of the information and many of the interpretations in the book come from other sources. But Browne's masterful drawing-together of those sources, his astute observations, creative speculations, and poetic writing, combine to give a new perspective on three masterpieces of Haida art. There are informative notes and references and an extensive bibliography. All in a beautifully designed 21.5 x 12.5 cm book of fewer than two hundred pages.