

EDITORIAL

DRAWING UPON A DAZZLING ARRAY of philosophers, from Martin Heidegger through Henri Lefebvre to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, while responding to psychologist James Gibson's ecological approach to visual perception, the British anthropologist Tim Ingold draws a provocative distinction between objects and things. He does so in order to challenge prevailing ideas, traceable back to Aristotle, that we occupy a world constituted by the relations between matter (something "passive and inert" and "imposed upon") and form (something "imposed by an agent with a particular end or goal in mind").

According to Ingold's argument, a thing is not (as is an object) an "externally bounded entity set over and against the world" but, rather, a "knot whose constituent threads ... trail beyond [it], only to become caught with other threads in other knots." Ingold would have us replace the conviction that we occupy a world of objects with the realization that we inhabit a world of things. This world is a dynamic, entangled amalgam of leaky and permeable items, "not a material world but a world of materials, of matter in flux." By Ingold's account, investigating this flux, following the flows, brings us to grapple with "a world that is ... continually on the boil." Rather than thinking of it as "a giant museum or department store, in which objects are arrayed according to their attributes or provenance," he suggests that it be imagined "as a huge kitchen, well stocked with ingredients of all sorts" that are mixed together in various combinations and are transformed, in various ways, in the process.¹

The fundamental point here, which Ingold borrows from archeologist Joshua Pollard, is that "material things, like people, are processes." This is helpful as we contemplate the mix of articles in this issue of *BC Studies*. They are, as usual, very different in topic, approach, and style. But each of them reminds us, in its way, of the entanglements of everyday existence and of the complex ways in which places, things, practices, and lives are constituted historically, spatially, and in relation to one another.

After a long generation of scholarship on the social construction of space and the ways in which colonial administrators abstracted the

¹ These ideas are laid out in Tim Ingold, "Realities Working Papers #15: Bringing Things to Life," available at: <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/realities/publications/workingpapers/15-2010-07-realities-bringing-things-to-life.pdf>.

complexities of local populations, ecologies, and geographies to further the extension of control over territories and peoples, there is no longer anything revolutionary about Darby Cameron's claim that those who surveyed the new lands of European settlement were able to "anticipate change and to superimpose ideology over space." Yet Cameron's extended reflection on the work and life of William Drewry reveals him not only as a "surveyor" but also as a complex figure with a "wide, varying, and overlapping range of views," views that were contingent and, sometimes, inconsistent. Although Drewry was undoubtedly an agent of change whose work turned on an "imaginative revisioning of cultural history," and lent power to large, distant businesses and bureaucracies, the deeper meanings of the maps he drew are only revealed by attending to their historical context and to the shaping influences – "the cartographic principle, the geography, the politics and the complex human aspirations" – behind them. Attending to these things is, moreover, an important first step towards redressing the consequences produced by these and other maps. Understanding how we, collectively, created particular circumstances empowers us, collectively, to change them.

In demonstrating that opposition to conscription on the part of the Aboriginal people of the Nass Valley in 1917 was neither an impulsive gesture nor a matter resolved by the Privy Council decision of January 1918 exempting Aboriginal men from compulsory military service overseas, Katharine McGowan reminds us of the ongoing and many-faceted limitations, challenges, and indignities of "living under the Indian Act." By her reading, the people of the Nass used conscription as a new opportunity to advance a generation-old effort "to protect their land against white encroachment and their rights against non-Native authority." In doing so, they used "the language and logic of wardship and the Indian Act"; however, ironically, their success on this issue served to reinforce, rather than to diminish, the effects of that act. Conscription of Aboriginal men was again a contentious issue in the Second World War, and, again, it was a reflection of the continuing "failure to address the question of legal identity" and the place of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, of their separation under the Indian Act, and of the ignominy of "citizenship withheld."

In her evocative account of the life of Maisie Hurley, and the belated establishment of her collection of Aboriginal artefacts in the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, Sharon Fortney weaves a complex biographical, sociological, institutional, and artefactual tapestry. This is a fascinating story of entwined histories and an acknowledgment of

the dynamic and social qualities of material culture, or of the ways in which carvings, baskets, moccasins, quill- and beadwork-ornamented leather goods, and so on are, in Ingold's terms, less objects than things. Here the 194 items in the Maisie Hurley Collection are seen to reflect (much as did Hurley's life and the newspaper she founded) evolving patterns of Aboriginal-newcomer interactions in twentieth-century British Columbia. We are pleased and privileged to be able to include as a special feature in this issue several coloured illustrations of items from the Maisie Hurley Collection in the NVMA. This also affords a welcome opportunity to recognize the excellent work of managing editor Leanne Coughlin in ensuring proper reproduction of these striking images and in orchestrating the layout and production of each and every issue of *BC Studies*.

Finally, Tracy Stobbe and her collaborators help us to understand why, and how, people farm on the fringe of Vancouver. Where good agricultural land is scarce – barely half of 1 percent of British Columbia falls into this category – and urban encroachment is a constant threat, despite the existence, since 1973, of an agricultural land reserve intended to protect farmland from development, the answers to these questions are far from straightforward. The landscape of the rural-urban fringe is a place in flux, shaped by flows of people, produce, and ideas back and forth across it, and sustained largely because fringe farmers continue to operate for reasons beyond the strict calculus of economic cost-benefit analysis. Although the analytical apparatus deployed by Stobbe and her co-authors may daunt some readers, the conclusions of this research are clear: farming on the urban fringe is a challenge. Those who make their lives and livelihoods there necessarily mix together a range of strategies in various combinations in order to survive. They follow, so to speak, a number of different recipes to sustain this landscape “on the boil.”

Graeme Wynn