

Re-considering Margaret Horsfield's *Cougar Annie's Garden*

It is within the context of living in Hesquiaht traditional territories, of being a part of the House of Kinquashtacumlth and a member of the Hesquiaht First Nation, that I analyze Margaret Horsfield's book *Cougar Annie's Garden*. It is from this context that I view the people, events, and places that this book describes. While Horsfield writes of Western/Canadian settlement of Hesquiaht Harbour, and in so doing creates a settler history of the area, I cannot help but notice her many gaps, silences, and inaccuracies. I know a very different history of this area, one that places far less emphasis and importance on the small section of Hesquiaht traditional territory and relatively short time period that Horsfield describes.

Cougar Annie's Garden is written from the perspective of the pioneer settlers, those who in relatively recent times actively colonized Hesquiaht lands. Horsfield effectively writes to a settler audience in search of its own history. It is this audience of "us" that today dominates and holds power in Canada. I read this settler account, however, as one of "them"; that is, as one of those who were/are colonized and pushed aside in favour of the modern settler/developer. Digesting Horsfield's words, I find myself relegated to the margins of a Hesquiaht that is still central to my reality. Horsfield's story of the longest lasting white homesteaders in Hesquiaht Harbour serves as a reinforcement of the North American history/myth of the great white "man" outworking, outliving, outdo-ing (in almost everything) and overtaking dying native America. The arrogance with which she tells her story is the same arrogance that has implicitly fostered racism across the Americas for centuries.

In a Foucaultian view, discourse, rather than being merely language or speech, is a primary way that the power relations and ideologies of dominant society are maintained, shaped, and revealed (van Dijk 118; Tonkiss 373-74; Connell 1). A careful reading of *Cougar Annie's Garden* reveals the ways that white settler culture and knowledge comes to dominate the intellectual and physical landscape of Hesquiaht. The land itself is renamed, individual indigenous people go unrecognized, Christian myths and symbols are applied, Western capitalist concepts of ownership and productivity are imposed, and Hesquiaht Harbour is transformed from an indigenous to a settler world. From an indigenous perspective, and utilizing methods of critical discourse analysis, I read *Cougar Annie's Garden* and ask: How does a Western form of knowledge come to be offered as the dominant perspective in a still largely indigenous landscape? How do Western locations and perspectives move into the centre here and become the norm? How is the Hesquiaht voice excluded in Hesquiaht territories? How is history being created here and who is it being created for?

Invisibility and Displacement

Cougar Annie's Garden begins with a foreword by well-known Canadian journalist/author Peter Newman. From his position of established male authority, he authenticates Horsfield's words to come. Horsfield then provides a short introduction, sixteen chapters accompanied by a collection of "historical" and more recent photographs, acknowledgements, photo credits, and notes on sources. Of the sixteen chapters, only one is devoted to the history of the Hesquiaht people who have lived in the area described since time immemorial. A second chapter is devoted to a history of the Roman Catholic Church at Hesquiaht, which "served" the Hesquiaht people from the later 1800s until the mid-1900s.

On the surface, *Cougar Annie's Garden* is the historical account of Ada Annie Rae-Arthur, the homestead/farm/garden she lived on in Hesquiaht Harbour from 1915 until 1983, and Peter Buckland, the subsequent owner of this property. Because this garden has "endured for over 80 years" (3), Horsfield tells us in her first sentence, it is historically significant. Other history here, according to Horsfield, is "elusive" and "obscured" (3): too mysterious to document. The garden, however, is a "sentinel, a symbol of hope and continuity in an ever-changing landscape" (5). Alone amongst all of the people and places that could be seen as historically significant in Hesquiaht traditional territories, the garden is the "dauntless survivor" (5). It alone is presented as timeless.

While numerous settler people are identified and detailed in *Cougar Annie's Garden*, Hesquiaht people go mostly nameless and undescribed. The Wheeler family, for example, who attempted to homestead in Hesquiaht Harbour for a very brief period in the early twentieth century, is given more attention than all individual Hesquiaht people combined. In photographs, though even a modest amount of local research could have provided names, Hesquiaht people go unidentified. The author describes at some length the first two priests and an early white trader at Hesquiaht Village before she ever specifically mentions a single Hesquiaht person. In fact, only four Hesquiaht individuals are mentioned in the entire book. In Horsfield's account, events such as the supplying of the Estevan Point lighthouse, the building of local road and rail links, and the creation of traplines and telephone lines, happen without the involvement of Hesquiaht people. If I did not know better, if I had not heard countless local histories to the contrary, I would assume that the Hesquiaht played no role whatsoever in these undertakings.

Horsfield calls Hesquiaht Village “virtually abandoned” (112) when only six families remain there in the late 1930s. *Cougar Annie's*, in contrast, where only one family lives, is presented as alive with activity. Horsfield calls the Harbour empty, yet admits the presence of “Indian shacks” (136) along the shore, and writes of Annie's children visiting and eating with (nameless) Hesquiaht families. Today, the main village of the Hesquiaht people is at Hot Springs Cove, less than ten miles from Hesquiaht Harbour. This move is described by the author as Hesquiaht Village being “abandoned by its own people” (170). Horsfield notes the seasonal and cyclical movement of Hesquiaht people in the Harbour, but does not apply this pattern to the move to Hot Springs. The Hesquiaht family who lives year-round at Hesquiaht Village is described in this way: “If there is a light, it shines from only one house. Dave Ignace and his family are the only ones living here now” (143). Instead of celebrating the Ignace family living at Hesquiaht, as she celebrates Annie, and later Peter Buckland, the author uses a tentative “if,” as though the Ignace family—having lived at Hesquiaht for many generations—is on the verge of disappearing.

While we are asked to remember Annie in concrete terms—her bed, her walkway, her setting traps, her cleaning chickens—the artifacts and activities of indigenous people are presented vaguely, if at all. We consequently get no sense of how they lived their lives over the same period that Annie was making her farm/garden. Hesquiaht ways of life, when they are presented,

are from the distant past. Horsfield writes of herring roe, for example, saying it “was harvested by Hesquiaht people for years beyond number” (200). Yet that Hesquiaht people continue to harvest and eat herring roe today goes unmentioned. When the author talks of Hesquiaht people’s use of the forest, she goes back to the memoirs of Father Brabant from over a century ago to describe culturally modified trees, and makes no note of modern Hesquiaht usages such as cedar bark stripping. Reading the author’s descriptions, we assume that Hesquiaht activities are over.

Cougar Annie’s Garden includes two colour maps of Hesquiaht Harbour, both highlighting the garden. On the introductory two-page map, neither Hesquiaht Village nor Hot Springs Cove is even labelled. In Horsfield’s telling, Hesquiaht territory, almost from the moment Annie arrives, revolves around her. The new logging road, for example, brings concerns about Annie being “outmaneuvered” in her “own territory” (188). The Post Office gradually becomes “Cougar Annie’s post office” (108). As Annie’s homestead is presented as the sole survivor on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the hyperbole mounts. Her garden becomes the most unique, the most diverse, the only hope for the future. The whole of Hesquiaht territories come within its purview. Ultimately, the Boat Basin Foundation—the present owner/manager of the garden property—becomes a means to study the botanical diversity of the whole west coast (245). The name Boat Basin, though Annie’s homestead is outside of the actual boat basin once charted on maps, replaces the name Hesquiaht. Cheryl McEwan argues that it is not by innocent accident that English settler names supplant indigenous names (95). Names are symbols of ownership and control. In the Harbour, Annie predominates as the Hesquiaht people fade.

The great majority of the author’s sources are non-Hesquiaht. History is delivered through the voices of anthropologists, archaeologists, settler historians, fisheries officers, and other white “experts,” speaking about the Hesquiaht. The author relies heavily on memoirs of the first two priests at Hesquiaht and associated church records, acknowledging no possible bias. In one well-known event from Hesquiaht history, for example, Horsfield bases her research solely on Father Brabant’s memoirs, and concludes that the case of Hesquiaht men accused of murdering victims of a shipwreck left “many unanswered questions. . . . Perhaps they cannot ever be answered” (154). The possibility of finding information amongst the Hesquiaht themselves does not seem to occur to her. The possibility of questioning the use/misuse of Canadian law against Aboriginal peoples in the early days of settler-Aboriginal

contact similarly does not occur to her. When her limited evidence falls short, Horsfield quickly assumes that no answers are possible.

Cougar Annie's Garden treats Hesquiaht people differently than it treats white/settler people. Settlers are named individuals. The Hesquiahts are a vague, homogenous mass. Annie and her family live and work on their farm/garden. The Hesquiaht have "seasonal patterns of occupation" (147). For white people, there is "the intense bustle of industry" (177). For Hesquiaht people, there is a "now silent landscape" (177). When Horsfield describes the 1942 shelling of Estevan Point, she tells of the white light-keeper conscientiously, thoughtfully extinguishing the light. The Hesquiaht villagers meanwhile, she describes as acting in "pandemonium" (115). No interviews or first-hand accounts of Hesquiaht people who lived through this actual event are provided. Through such omissions, Horsfield seems to be telling us that only white/settler accounts are trustworthy enough to be noted.

Trinh Minh-ha argues that "them" is only recognized in relation to "us." In *Cougar Annie's Garden*, the Hesquiaht—the "them"—are invisible on their own; they are present only as they affect or interact with whites—the "us." Hesquiaht reality appears as a wholly dependent subset of the greater reality created by the priest and settlers. Marie Battiste calls this cognitive imperialism, a form of "cognitive manipulation used to disclaim other knowledge bases and values" (198). As Horsfield maintains the sole legitimacy of Western knowledge and values, the Hesquiaht people, falling outside that frame of reference, become virtually non-existent.

The Pioneer Settler Story

J.E. Chamberlin writes of North American settlers quickly inventing a "myth of entitlement," to follow their "myth of discovery" (28). Such a myth not only justified their claim to the land, but it also proved them deserving. Chamberlin argues that from a Western perspective, land not used for agricultural purposes is deemed idle and therefore open for colonial ventures such as homesteading. This basic justification, used across North America, is also used in Hesquiaht Harbour. Annie, like countless other settlers, takes up land that local populations are seen as not using productively. Horsfield goes to considerable lengths throughout her book to describe Hesquiaht Harbour as the "middle of nowhere" (3, 243). In such a void, Annie can blamelessly pre-empt her homestead. That this same area is the middle of everywhere for the Hesquiaht is not a fact worthy of recognition.

Cougar Annie's Garden is the story of colonial entitlement to Hesquiaht Harbour. Annie is the ideal Canadian pioneer/settler. Through sheer determination, willpower, and hard work, she conquers a wild land and replaces it with an orderly garden. Horsfield writes: "To establish such a garden was a guiding ambition in the lives of countless settlers hoping to create a private Eden. . . . This dream drove thousands" (243). The theme of survival "against impossible odds" (Newman, Foreword) and of creating order out of disorder runs through *Cougar Annie's Garden*. All that Annie suffers and sacrifices is out of her will to make and keep her homestead, to assert and maintain her claim and entitlement.

Horsfield introduces a long line of white people, each worthy of her praise in specific instances. John Hibberson takes credit for having "found" a rare dwarf trillium beside Hesquiaht Lake (111). Robert Culver, a prospective fourth husband for Annie, is described as "valiant" (122) and a "good and gentle man" (216). Prospector Bus Hansen is described as "A huge man, a great storyteller, a true prospector" (176). A larger hero among this secondary cast is Father Brabant, the first priest at Hesquiaht Village. Horsfield describes him as a "one-man show" who with "extraordinary force of personality, imposed his will and his ways upon the village and its surroundings" (165). "None of his successors were cut from the same cloth" (165), claims Horsfield, adding that "[a]rrogant and dictatorial and insensitive as he was he stayed put, exuding confidence and authority in a world seeming, to the native people of the coast, to be increasingly chaotic and out of control" (165). Horsfield implies that the settler and the priest actually assisted Hesquiaht people. The priest ordered a chaotic world; the settler productively used their land.

Ultimately, however, only Annie is a "living legend" (20). Because she survives and endures, even the "bare outline of her life at Boat Basin is extraordinary" (20). That her first husband is presented as "completely unsuited to being a pioneer" (63) is only proof that success of the homestead was completely due to her. Even her children who row "valiantly" (91) out to the freight boat, are mere accessories. In Annie's dominating presence, all others fade. Only one hero comes close to equaling Annie. Peter Buckland, the man who purchased the property from her and came to live there after her death, is presented as Annie's true kindred spirit. It is Buckland, not Annie's children, not a priest or other settler, certainly no Hesquiaht person, who stays and sacrifices and works endlessly in the garden. In Horsfield's rendition, only he is deserving enough to be Annie's true heir.

Stories abound in Western literature about the pioneer quest to survive in the wilderness, to build monuments and futures in the face of great challenges. *Cougar Annie's Garden* can stand as a classic of the settler-hero genre. Indeed, Horsfield mentions the pioneer spirit and story of “us” against the wilderness twice in her first three pages of text. The determination and courage of settler pioneers, how they “faced the harsh realities of being strangers in a strange and unwelcoming land” (18), is a recurrent theme. Occasionally, Horsfield tries to downplay the “romantic Canadian myth of roughing it in the bush” (4), and suggests that Annie more accurately fits into a “pattern of land settlement and blind hope” (5) that shaped coastal history. In using this argument, Horsfield attempts perhaps to lend her story greater authenticity, to nudge it from the realm of tales into the realm of history. Whether she calls it myth or history however, *Cougar Annie's Garden* is a story to capture the imagination of a particular Western audience. Such an audience can readily imagine itself as settlers/pioneers like Annie or Buckland, but has difficulty conceiving of a non-Western alternative.

The Good

Horsfield gives us a version of Annie that presents all that she did in a positive light. The ways Annie found to make money, many of them illegal, are referred to as “many small-scale enterprises” and “creative wheeling and dealing” (77). The author suggests that Annie was a fair businesswoman, though her own evidence contradicts that conclusion. That Hesquiaht people were charged more in Annie’s store than others, for example, is lightly described: “service in the store was always idiosyncratic and prices tended to reflect Cougar Annie’s whims and prejudices” (88). The author writes of Annie selling rotten eggs and merrily notes that “customers accepted this dubious egg trade good naturedly” (86). Annie, her son Tommy, and Peter Buckland, hang onto the Boat Basin post office, what the author calls “Cougar Annie’s most ingenious operation” (106) and her most reliable source of income (103) through “highly creative accounting” (106) and “noble” (106) efforts, which in reality were lying and manipulation. As cougar troubleshooter for her area, Horsfield tells us, Annie was paid double the normal bounty.

All of Annie’s dishonest doings, however, pale in comparison to the mysterious death of her second husband, who died from a gunshot wound in 1944. Horsfield describes him as “the husband Cougar Annie is rumoured to have killed” (114). Rumours are reported in short, vague detail, and the author

concludes: “Yet there were no witnesses, there was no evidence, certainly no charges were laid” (114). She plants the idea that this husband may have beaten and terrorized Annie. George Campbell marries Annie and is killed in two short paragraphs.

Most of Horsfield’s descriptions of Annie should make us think negatively about her. She may have killed a husband; most of her children fled from her as soon as they were able; she worked her husbands and children unmercifully; she lied, cheated, and committed fraud with no apparent reluctance. Instead, we are encouraged to admire her because she established and maintained white settlement in Hesquiaht Harbour. According to the values that Horsfield espouses, all of Annie’s doings were geared towards the greater good, a colonial mission beyond reproach. Through her unflinching positive description and glorification, the author tells us that this settler/homesteader is above ordinary human ethics and rules. In Horsfield’s hands, Annie—conveniently devoid of feminine characteristics—becomes a settler hero in the tradition of North American, predominantly male, settler heroes. Like the lead cowboys of old Western tales, Annie can also be an outlaw, a law-breaker, because ultimately her goals are justifiable and good.

Buckland is viewed similarly. Horsfield writes of him “genially” including extra names in the “noble tradition of fudging the figures of the population of Boat Basin” (106). Settler needs supersede legalities. Horsfield’s version of Buckland’s acquisition of the property is presented in the most altruistic terms. He acquires the garden and property out of sheer generosity and the desire to continue Annie’s legacy. However true this may or may not be, the author is so coloured in her praise of Buckland and Annie that any critical reader will surely question the motives and circumstances of the sale.

Perhaps most telling in Horsfield’s positive presentations of Annie and Buckland are her words about the future. Of all the Hesquiaht area, it is Cougar Annie’s garden that has “a vantage point looking to the future” (5). Here are the “fresh plans and ideas . . . emerging with the new millennium” (5). Though the author, in a rare moment of generosity, creates a list of interests that will play a role in the future of the Hesquiaht area (the list includes First Nations land claims, land use studies, etc.) these interests remain unarticulated. According to *Cougar Annie’s Garden* all other dreams have failed or been lost in Hesquiaht Harbour. This leaves Buckland and the Boat Basin Foundation to become the sole caretakers/custodians of Hesquiaht Harbour, the only ones in a position to “go from strength to strength and, with obstinate beauty, continue to bloom in the wilderness” (246).

Western Worldviews

Cougar Annie's Garden is a presentation of Western beliefs and values. When Newman declares that it is "essential" that Cougar Annie's garden be preserved, when Horsfield pronounces that "[t]he bush garden is a powerful symbol in the Canadian imagination" (43), at least a part of the book's audience believes these statements, not because of any evidence presented, but because of the values and associated emotions that they share with Newman and Horsfield. Against this norm, systems of Hesquiaht knowledge and values appear abnormal. Reading *Cougar Annie's Garden* from outside a Western perspective, countering that perhaps gardens are not inherently worth saving, for example, puts one in direct opposition to the author's premises.

Paramount in *Cougar Annie's Garden* is the value of hard work. The garden, Horsfield reminds us "has been created and maintained not by magic, not by imagination, but by unremitting hard work, by bloody-minded perseverance, at times by a desperation to survive" (17). Life is a constant struggle. Sacrifice is noble. Annie's and Peter's hard work, the author implies, has earned them places in Hesquiaht Harbour. I wonder about the unmentioned Hesquiaht people, the ones who according to the author have abandoned their place and, by extension, done no work. What is Horsfield suggesting about their entitlement?

Annie is presented as hyper-protective of her garden and domestic animals. Against the dangerous wild (which includes the Hesquiaht), her farm and flock are in constant need of her protection. As a person who lives in this area, it strikes me that there is no mention of salmon in the book. When and where, and in what numbers, salmon return to streams in Hesquiaht Harbour is vitally important to us. Annie, however, had domesticated animals and domestic plants to depend upon instead. She did not need, nor notice, wild salmon. Two very different worlds with different priorities, different ways of doing things, and very different values collided (and continue to collide) here in Hesquiaht Harbour. One is based on a domesticated agricultural lifestyle; the other is based on the cycles of the natural world. Horsfield describes only one of these worlds. The other world, when she happens to notice it at all, she judges by the standards of the first.

To critically analyze *Cougar Annie's Garden*, a reader needs to look beyond the only reality presented in the book. Examining the oppositions Horsfield inadvertently presents such as the garden-wilderness contrast, not only reveals the author's biases, but also reveals the potential presence of a knowledge and value system that the author does not mention. The garden

with all of its connotations of civilization and Christian ideals, is contrasted with the wilderness and its implied connection to a lack of civilization and anti-Christian belief. The tamed/domesticated stands in opposition to the untamed/chaotic/wild. Horsfield's words carry with them a weight of implied baggage. The term "garden," for example, is associated with safety and order, while the term "wilderness" is associated with chaotic disorder and danger. "Garden" is associated with light; "wilderness" with darkness. In the garden is Christian order and virtue; in the wilderness is the raw sexuality of fecund growth. In Horsfield's own words, the garden is "charmed," "powerful," a "shelter," (3) and a "sentinel" (5) while the forest/wilderness is "rampant growth" (4) and "running rampant" (222). The reality, the Western settler worldview, promoted in *Cougar Annie's Garden*, assumes that Western values are universal. Order is preferable to disorder; control is better than acceptance; hard work is supremely valuable; the tamed has priority over the wild. By turning these supposed universal truths upside down, however, we can gain an inkling of another way(s) to view the world. Perhaps disorder is sometimes preferable, acceptance of the natural world is preferable to anthropocentric manipulation, hard work is only one of many important values, and the "wild" is as vital to our world as the "tame."

The Christian Parallel and Myth Creation

Most Western literature, however complex or sophisticated, is at its foundation a form of very basic myths or stories. M.H. Abrams defines the term archetype as the narrative designs, character types, or images that recur in a wide variety of literary works as well as in myths, dreams, and modes of social behaviour (201). According to Abrams, archetypes reflect the "collective unconscious, the core or primordial images that have shaped our thoughts, values and beliefs" (201). He calls the birth-rebirth theme the "archetype of archetypes" (202) and suggests that examples of such a story or myth include the Bible and Dante's *Divine Comedy* (202).

Cougar Annie's Garden is modeled—whether consciously or unconsciously—on this basic story of birth and rebirth. Horsfield's tale, with its multiple references to the garden's growth and near demise followed by its amazing rebirth, provide for a very Christian story. The author repeatedly associates Annie's garden with Eden, the first garden of the Bible. The wilderness, in contrast, stands in pagan opposition, threatening always (like the devil) to overtake the goodness and light of the garden. In the last chapter of the book, entitled "Back to the Garden," Horsfield writes that Cougar

Annie's garden is "like every garden before, all the way back to Eden" (246). She implies that gardens are somehow godly or god's salvation for the earth, and tells her readers that "[w]e can still find our way back into this garden" (246). Is she talking about Cougar Annie's garden or is she talking about the Garden of Eden? The lines become blurred. Cougar Annie's garden is called a sentinel, a symbol of hope and continuity (5). There is a photo of a picture hanging in Annie's house of a lighthouse shining over a storm-tossed sea; the words on the picture read "Jesus the Light of the World" (158). The sentinel garden is like the sentinel/lighthouse representing Jesus to the stormy world. The Christian references, the implied parallels, could hardly be any more obvious in Horsfield's work.

If we parallel the Christian story with the Cougar Annie story, we see that Annie, in her ability to do no wrong, is a god-like figure, and Peter Buckland, her heir, is the Christ. Without Peter's sacrifice—like Jesus'—the garden would not have lived. Horsfield writes "the fate of her garden appeared to be sealed. Unless someone intervened, it would die with her" (222). Once Peter settles permanently on the homestead, he reclaims the area when only "the bones of the garden remained" (226). Like Jesus, he raises the dead. The author quotes him: "All I knew was that I had to let it breathe again" (226). Like Annie/God, Peter/Jesus makes sacrifices. Horsfield says he is obsessed by the garden and writes of him working on it every day, all year round. She calls his work "liberating Cougar Annie's garden" (231). "No bush garden is ever achieved without human sacrifice" (243), Horsfield proclaims, though there is absolutely no basis for such a statement. In the biblical parallel world Horsfield has created, however, the garden represents Christian salvation. In a sort of Calvinistic view only through hard work and suffering is that salvation attained.

Horsfield encourages emotional attachment to the garden by invoking feelings of sentimentality, romance, and nostalgia. The book is loaded with beautiful photographs; readers are repeatedly asked to imagine scenes in the garden and in the past. The author shares a genuine sense of sorrow and loss in her descriptions of old, rotting buildings. The conquest of nature is romanticized. The violence of hacking a garden out of the coastal rainforest is presented as a caring and nurturing act. Trinh Minh-ha speaks of how "transformation, manipulations, or redistributions inherent in the collecting of events are overlooked" (120). She contends that story-making becomes history-making, that the fiction implied in story becomes the fact associated with history. Using a number of methods such as an appeal to Western

values, our familiarity and comfort with the North American pioneer story, and our emotions, Horsfield urges us to accept what is really a fictitious story with strong biblical/Christian parallels as a history of Hesquiaht Harbour.

Stephen Bonnycastle comments that “there is a great difference between the myths promulgated by the dominant group in society and those put forward by minority groups. The dominant group’s myths have power on their side. They are repeated from every corner of the world, or so it seems, and they may become especially immune to criticism” (151). *Cougar Annie’s Garden* is such an empowered myth. For those outside the dominant group like the Hesquiaht people, the myth of Cougar Annie is not a positive story of pioneer settlement alive with optimism, hope, and Christian values; it is a story heavy with oppressive attitudes and stifling foreign norms.

Contradictions

Cougar Annie’s Garden contains numerous contradictions and inaccuracies. Hesquiaht Harbour is alternatively referred to as remote (3, 173), and abandoned (112, 138, 170) with a “negligible” (174) population, or as a hub of activity with freight boats, mail service, store customers, and shacks along the shoreline. Horsfield’s conclusions often don’t match up with the facts she presents. Horsfield praises Annie for her stubborn independence and self-sufficiency, for example, yet her descriptions of Annie show her depending upon income from the post office, deliveries from the freight and passenger ship *Princess Maquinna* that came to Hesquiaht Harbour about every ten days from 1913 to 1952, and help from loggers who frequented the area in the 1970s and 1980s. While portraying Annie as a lone survivor, Horsfield admits that “without the *Princess Maquinna*, Cougar Annie would have been at a complete loss” (90).

Though the author states that Annie’s life was largely undocumented—“no record exists of the thoughts going through Ada Annie’s mind” (62)—she claims to know Annie’s dreams and schemes from things Annie left behind like the garden, buildings, and household furnishings (4). With little evidence beyond her own imaginings, the author presents Annie’s love of gardening, her ambition for her bulb nursery, and her hopes for the future. Thomas King talks about how imaginative fancies “help us get from the beginning of an idea to the end” (241). Horsfield repeatedly asks us to imagine along with her and to accept the idea that “history is elusive, obscured in a fog of coastal mythologies” (3) as a substitute for substantiated evidence. In short, she encourages us to accept her fantasies of what might have been.

Because I am a long-time resident of the area that Horsfield describes, and because I am married to someone who has lived his entire life in this area, I know something about Hesquiaht Harbour. I cannot be fooled as easily perhaps as those who have never been here or have only briefly visited. When Horsfield makes a statement like “this garden has become a valuable link within the local scene” (3), I am astounded at her ability to fabricate. When she calls native trees and plants “invasive growth” (224) and treats the imported garden species as the ones that belong here, I am amazed at her abilities to twist truth and reality. When she states that Peter Buckland’s Hesquiaht projects are made possible by the logs that “keep showing up on the shore” (240), I know this to be unlikely, given the number of buildings he has constructed.

For someone making a record of the Hesquiaht area, Horsfield displays an alarming lack of knowledge about the political, social, and natural environments here. Fisheries and marine resources, for example, are described simplistically. Horsfield seems blissfully unaware of the huge and rapid declines in once plentiful Hesquiaht Harbour species like herring, clams, and crabs (Charleson, personal communication). She talks of BC Parks abandoning any hope for the area in the 1970s, yet fails to note that much of the Hesquiaht Harbour shoreline became a provincial park in the early 1990s. No information about recent political developments such as the Clayoquot Sound Interim Measures Agreement is given. Horsfield’s priorities lie with the promotion of the garden. All else is treated with an often casual disregard.

Though Horsfield claims that *Cougar Annie’s Garden* is largely based on primary sources such as interviews and private papers, large portions of the book are based on already published material. Horsfield, however, uses no citations in her text. Instead, she provides five pages of “Notes on Sources” and a list of acknowledgements. Her sources and list are telling. The most heartfelt thank yous are reserved for Peter Buckland. Annie’s daughters and son Tommy are listed, as is her devoted friend Robert Culver, and people “who shared memories and local knowledge” (249). Of over forty names, only three belong to Hesquiaht people.

Conclusion

If one were to take the time to explore Hesquiaht Harbour, one would surely notice Cougar Annie’s garden. It is not more beautiful, or somehow more interesting or amazing than other parts of Hesquiaht Harbour. It stands out because, like the clearcut mountains above, it is an anomaly. It is a

Western-style garden in the midst of a seemingly natural landscape. If the garden existed in an urban area, it might scarcely even be noticed. Here in Hesquiaht Harbour though, where the natural environment still dominates, the garden is noticeable because of its difference. What is unfortunate, from an indigenous perspective, is that gardens (and farms, ranches, etc.) are viewed by Westerners as progress, as signs of man's making good use of the land. Ironically, to those same Western eyes, indigenous use of the land is not even noticed. In Hesquiaht Harbour, where thousands upon thousands of trees living within the forest show evidence of past usage, Aboriginal use and management of the lands and waters is so integrated within the landscape, it is virtually invisible.

Invisibility of Hesquiaht use, and indeed of Hesquiaht people themselves, is a hallmark of *Cougar Annie's Garden*. As a member of a large Hesquiaht family, I cannot help but be amazed at the importance attached to a single white settler (albeit someone with husbands and children) who happened to live in what was—and continues to be—a predominantly Hesquiaht landscape. Horsfield's failure to notice Hesquiaht presence is the same failure to notice that has afflicted Westerners in North America for centuries. In order for the settler way of life to quickly predominate, traditional territories are viewed as wilderness, as devoid of humanity and culture (Braun 88). A dehumanized landscape almost invites settler conquest.

Cougar Annie's Garden reassures settler people that they belong here, that through their hard work, perseverance, and determination, they are entitled to the land. In sad contrast, indigenous people—through abandonment and a lack of dedication to settler ideals like farm labour—seem to have lost that right. In Horsfield's hands, *Cougar Annie's Garden* is the story of whites/settler people moving into the future, and of the indigenous Hesquiaht people receding into the past. It is the story of Western values and ways of interacting with the land and its people overtaking and displacing Hesquiaht connections and knowledges here. In Horsfield's "history," Hesquiaht traditional territories are transformed into Boat Basin, a Western pioneer settlement/development, that has come to assert the power to act, name, represent, and speak for Hesquiaht Harbour. McEwan argues that texts of development are often "imagined worlds bearing little resemblance to the real world. Development writing often produces and reproduces misrepresentation" (96). *Cougar Annie's Garden* is an example of development writing creating a history and myth, and in the process, pushing aside the histories and myths that have previously prevailed.

Hesquiaht people are clearly not human beings. In the simplest of terms, that is the message that *Cougar Annie's Garden* presents. In Horsfield's account, the Hesquiaht are depersonalized, vague, mostly silent presences in the background. Certainly, they are not acting and thinking individuals like ambitious settler characters. While books are written and praises sung to the survival of white settlers, the survival of Hesquiaht individuals over the same timespan and for centuries before, is worthy of meager mention. This book would not bother me if it were relegated to some obscure scrapheap. Instead, the tale of *Cougar Annie's Garden* is upheld by Peter Newman, an undisputed popularizer of Canadian history; it is awarded the Haig-Brown Prize in 2000—an award presented annually to a book that “contributes most to the enjoyment and understanding of British Columbia” (BC Book Prizes). The book's sale is actively promoted by the current managers/developers of the garden (Boat Basin Foundation). A Western perspective is being sold as *the* history of Hesquiaht Harbour, with the merest of acknowledgements of far older, more complex, and sophisticated indigenous histories. Horsfield's poorly recorded sources, her embellishments, exaggerations, contradictions, and imaginings serve to legitimate the settler story. As Newman and the Haig-Brown Prize validate her story, so does her growing reader audience. *Cougar Annie's Garden* is as an example of continuing colonial domination, a continuing negation and denial of indigenous reality.

Horsfield credits Buckland with the wisdom to see that a select few native species in the garden “make the whole scene work” (235). I cannot help but see this inclusion of native species—after years of keeping them out—as a metaphor for the way Hesquiaht people are being treated. After years of exclusion, a few select Hesquiaht people are being recruited to join in the development of the garden. In secondary roles, they serve as enhancements, as little bits of local colour like the inclusion of a yellow cedar tree in the garden. To serve the overriding interests of development, the Hesquiaht—having somehow not completely disappeared—are rehabilitated to semi-human guest status in their own home.

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