

in drink, or initiating illicit relations with distant women. We learn of missionaries and foreigners marrying aboriginal women. In some cases, men who already had English wives back home would marry a native woman. After many years of service in the West, some would simply leave their native wives behind to return to their original wives and family in England. The authors noted that "Many men in Fort Vancouver at this time maintained relationships with Aboriginal women, their unions, while not Christian marriages, [were] sanctioned by Chief Factor McLoughlin. The men were permitted to build dwellings for their Aboriginal wives, and the Company allowed rations to be allotted to these women, whose unpaid labour contributed mightily to the fur trade's success."

Later on, we read about a hidden marriage, that of Joseph Grenier, who travelled from 1815 to 1831 through Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Utah. His family had not heard from him for a five-year period ending in 1831. Sadly a few months after his death, by drowning in a whirlpool, with seven other companions, his father pleads with the Company to advise him of his son's fate. Normally the company would have remitted to his family any pay owing to a deceased employee. We then read, "However, investigation in the Columbia accounts reveals there was another heir. Joseph Grenier had married Therese Spokane, a woman of the Spokane tribe, according to the custom of the country. She and her young daughter, Marie-Anne, gradually spent the credit due to Joseph Grenier. The company had an established practice of dispensing funds of deceased employees for the needs of their Aboriginal families so that they would not become dependent on the Company. By 1839 the account was empty . . . and nothing remained for the (distant) grieving family, who may have been completely unaware of Joseph's family in the west."

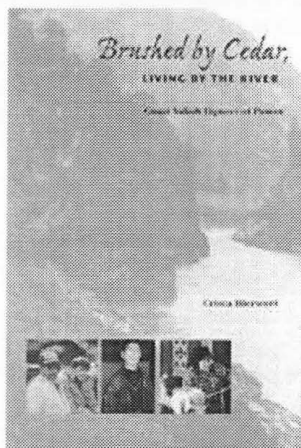
This publication is of interest to avocational as well as professional archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians, as it presents a deep picture of the early Canadian fur-trade. We learn of the over 400 trade posts set up in North America, are introduced to the variety of characters in the fur trade from voyageurs

to laborers and even ship's captains. Often a "dig" presents some clues to the lifestyle or culture of the inhabitants of a location but here we have a detailed written record of the aspirations, concerns and fidelity of families far removed yet tied by blood relations to the fur trade itself. The wealth of detail about life in the employ of the company leads us through many gates, including first-hand depictions of the fur trade culture, Aboriginal peoples, missionaries, post workers, and the families back home.

This publication is well written, thoroughly researched, and offers a comprehensive picture of life in the fur-trade. It should be relished over a period of readings, as with each glimpse one can discover new details.

Art Goyer

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Brushed by cedar, living by the river: Coast Salish figures of power
by Crisca Bierwert
University of Arizona Press,
Tucson, 1999.
xvii + 314 pp., illus., refs., index.

Crisca Bierwert has produced an ethnography that effectively conveys the multiple vantage points of a Coast Salish epistemology. She elaborates a worldview that concerns landscape, religion, and various sources of power.

Mountains, pools, rivers, and transformer stones are such sources—more so, they are agents of power in their own right and have effects upon human relations.

The perspectives in the ethnography are constructed with clear expositions of structural relationships, which are usually discussed in terms of dualities and oppositions, such as culture/nature, clean/unclean, or self/other. Here, the relationships are not polarities but are more often triangulations, incorporating the interventions and influences of the landscape and other powers. When discussing spirit dancing, for instance, the dualism of mind/body—emphasized by psychotherapeutic approaches (e.g., Jilek 1982, Amoss 1978)—is transcended by the agency of *syowen*, the spirit power that is both revealed and involved in the expression of the dance and song.

Another example concerns the multiple modes of knowing and relating to a place. Regarding Lady Franklin rock, along the Fraser River, Bierwert discusses the various representations of this fishing camp: it is at once a natural place, a social one, a place of danger, a historic landmark, and a mythic locus holding great meaning. These "shifting subjectivities" contribute to her experimental method in relating an epistemology.

Bierwert describes the Coast Salish manner of teaching through oratory, advice, and other traditions, as illustrative of Charles Peirce's method of abduction. In this method, the course of instruction seemingly leads one astray illogically, but in the end the process brings one's understanding into better focus. For the Coast Salish, this method was preferable to Western methods of teaching that are more direct, overt, and matter-of-fact. Within the ethnography, Bierwert employs these abductive methods to exhibit these transformative and protean perspectives. The discussions of landscape and spirit powers seem to extend down unmarked paths, yet ultimately it brings a broader perspective, revealing the framework from within. It is all part of her attempt to create "another awareness" (69-70).

By vicariously viewing the Coast Salish perspectives of landscape, she stresses that "the physical ground comes back" (69)—by seeing the terrain and environment as sources of power, the physical experience and sensations of the landscape become renewed and immediate. It shakes off the theoretical shackles and senses of objectivity.

As Bierwert tries to jostle traditional approaches toward Coast Salish culture, she also attempts to undermine the emphasis of written over oral traditions. She states that oral traditions cast their stories onto the landscape; in a sense, these are conjured from the landforms, particularly from unique ones like transformer stones or mountains. Written traditions, on the other hand, generalize their traditions, loosening the tethers to the landscape and glossing over the particularities. Moreover, when oral traditions are written, their impact is lessened, fixed with a loss in flexibility. This is in great variance to Western conceptions, stemming from ancient Egypt, Babylon, or the bible, where the written words held immense power, often believed to be written from sources magical or divine. This contrast leads to significant implications when considering the demolition of their surrounding landscape to Western sprawl, development, and industrial extraction.

In another strain, Bierwert presents the compounded marginality of the Coast Salish peoples: as First Nations, they have been marginalized within the larger colonial society, but, in addition, anthropologists have marginalized them. Comparative analysts have treated Coast Salish culture as peripheral to the Northwest Coast proper, represented by the Tlingit, Haida, or Kwakwaka'wakw, especially in terms of art. The Coast Salish art has been viewed not as "authentic" but as a diffused Northwest Coast transitional form influenced by its southern and interior neighbors. To counter this past context, Bierwert's treatment regards all aspects of Coast Salish culture in its own terms.

Overall, the chapters did not cohere as well together structurally, however, with discussions of domestic abuse

followed by descriptions of the fishing business, for instance. It did seem slightly disjointed in that manner, though perhaps that may have been part of her plan in conveying shifting subjectivities. Also, she could have refrained from some postmodern terms, which struck me as interjected jargon, couching the ethnography in terms of "authorial presence" or "decentered text[s]" (266-67). I found these terms somewhat unnecessary since she had effectively accomplished these acts through writing the text—there was no need to explain it with such abstract and theoretical trappings; in fact, it serves to remove the reader from the ethnography, which is counter to her aims. In the end, however, these are minor points regarding a work of major significance concerning Coast Salish perspectives.

Bill Angelbeck

References

- Amoss, Pamela 1978 *Coast Salish spirit dancing: The survival of an ancient religion*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Jilek, Wolfgang 1982 *Indian healing: Shamanic ceremonialism in the Pacific Northwest today*. Hancock House Publishers, Ltd., Surrey, B.C.

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ASBC NANAIMO BRANCH BEGINS HANDS ON HERITAGE PROJECT

The Archaeological Society of BC, Nanaimo Branch (ASBCNB) begins this summer a public historic archaeology project at one of Nanaimo's earliest homes. "Hands On Heritage" has been designed to allow participants to experience a full range of archaeological techniques and skills under the guidance of professional archaeologists.

Prior to excavation, workshops will be held at the Nanaimo District Museum. The Project is supported by the following institutions: the Archaeology Branch - Ministry of Sustainable Resources, Snuneymuxw First Nation, University of British Columbia, Malaspina University-College, Nanaimo District Museum, Nanaimo Community Archives, Nanaimo Community Heritage Commission, and the City of Nanaimo.

"Hands On Heritage" is open to the public. All participants must be members of the ASBCNB; memberships are available. For further details, see the Program Schedule <<http://homesites.nisa.net/asbcnb>>, or call 751-2322.

The ASBCNB is a group dedicated to protecting, studying, and conserving the archaeological record in British Columbia. As a society consisting of interested citizens, students, and avocational archaeologists, we provide monthly lectures given by speakers from all over the province offering a wide range of topics.

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