

Culture



Brian HAYDEN (Ed), *A Complex Culture of the British Columbia Plateau: Traditional Stl'atl'imx Resource Use*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992; 584 pages, \$70 (cloth)

Henry S. Sharp

Volume 13, Number 1, 1993

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1081413ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1081413ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie

ISSN

0229-009X (print)

2563-710X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Sharp, H. (1993). Review of [Brian HAYDEN (Ed), *A Complex Culture of the British Columbia Plateau: Traditional Stl'atl'imx Resource Use*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992; 584 pages, \$70 (cloth)]. *Culture*, 13(1), 104-105.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1081413ar>

Tous droits réservés © Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie, 1993

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

their relations with external forces. Certainly a criterion for chieftainship was the ability to deal with these forces. While he doesn't delve into it, this seems to parallel New Guinea "Big Man" studies. However, the actual extent of an Okanagan chief's power is unclear, although a core part of the analysis rests on the power of the chiefs through their individual initiatives. Because of the emphasis on individuals and their life histories, general processes of change may be overlooked by the reader. One of the more intriguing themes pursued is the extent to which traditional chieftainship could accommodate the positions sought by the Department of Indian Affairs. An interesting aspect of the presentation is the detailed look into the Euro-Canadian settler/rancher community, especially ranchers who married Okanagan women, created their own spheres of political, social, and economic influence, and then married Euro-Canadian women — setting the stage for revisionist settler history.

Carstens relies a lot on African examples (along with some general studies which seem to have very little bearing on the Okanagan material anyway), to illustrate his points, while at the same time seeming to ignore or dismiss other regional anthropological studies and praising the works of selected historians. It's not clear to what extent the cultural patterns Carstens describes (especially the power of chiefs) extend throughout the Okanagan. I see a lack of a critical use of studies in B.C. and the Plateau region in which political economy (a major thrust of Carstens' study) has been used. There seems to be little objective reason provided for the acceptance or rejection of particular works. Others have attempted to deal with the issues raised by Carstens, although perhaps not to the same extent, and much of the recent research conducted in anthropology in B.C. — land issues and Aboriginal rights in particular — has been influenced by many of the issues raised by Carstens.

Carstens' use of biographies to track change is interesting, and undoubtedly will provide the basis for debates within anthropological circles and the community itself, and will be of particular interest to those of us who have worked with Okanagan communities. The myriad of detail and subjective comments, however, may obscure the understanding of some fundamental hegemonic processes.

Brian HAYDEN (Ed), *A Complex Culture of the British Columbia Plateau: Traditional Stl'atl'imx Resource Use*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992; 584 pages, \$70 (cloth).

By Henry S. Sharp
University of Virginia

This edited volume, with its immense quantity of maps, figures, and tables, is a notable attempt to provide a "detailed description of the important aspects of resource use by the traditional cultures in the region" (p. 4) of the Middle Fraser Canyon. It contains 11 numbered chapters with Hayden providing an Introduction (1) that gives an overview of the work, its intentions, and a preliminary theoretical positioning of the work. Hayden ends the book with a well done and provocative summary (11).

Diana Alexander's chapters provide detailed descriptions of the environment based upon its division into "units that are internally uniform in terms of culturally important resources" (2), and "A Reconstruction of Prehistoric Land Use in the Mid-Fraser River Area Based on Ethnographic Data" (30). These two chapters provide a description of the known available resources and create a framework for the interpretation of aboriginal life that is particularly useful in conjunction with Nancy Turner's equally detailed chapter on plant usage (8). These three chapters would have benefited from a more substantial account of climate history and a more thorough physical description of the primary plant species utilized for food that included their size, weight, and edible yield. Dividing the environment into separate zones makes description and comparison with other ecological writings easier but it does make for repetition in presentation. These zones are our scientific categories and they make it harder to see the environment as an integrated system of relationships between species or how native activities cut across zones.

Nevertheless, these chapters provide the analytical core of the book. Throughout the book, the analytic isolation of subsistence activities into discrete activities separately considered creates a fog of confusion around the pursuit of subsistence activities as a dynamic system of choices; a fog that is most obscure regarding the interrelationship of the activities of women and children with those of men.

These three chapters, combined with Steven Romanoff's chapter, "The Cultural Ecology of Hunting and Potlatches among the Lillooet Indians", (9) and Tyhurst's chapter on land use (7) provide the best insights into the pursuit of subsistence as a dynamic system of interrelated human activities. I am not entirely sure what to make of the fact that the interrelationship of activities, while never particularly apparent, is far more conspicuous in the use of land than it is in the use of fish resources.

Salmon fishing is the single activity that receives the most attention. Michael Kew's chapter (4) begins with a valuable and necessary overview of salmon both as individual species of differential utility to humans and with the dynamics of the variation — historic and prehistoric — in their populations and migration patterns. Unfortunately, the chapter degenerates into a quixotic consideration of the logical 'evolution' of fishing technology that is out of character with the rest of the book and its stated intent. Steven Romanoff's chapter (5) and Kennedy and Bouchard's chapter (6) provide detailed information about the mechanics of fishing and inventory the locations utilized for fishing. Their material is invaluable but does not pay sufficient attention to the context of the activities that surround fishing and to the allocation of labour to activities — other than preserving the fish — that occur during fishing episodes. The consideration of fishing ends with Aubrey Cannon's provocative but not entirely convincing analysis of raiding for salmon as a deliberate and logical economic strategy.

The accomplishments of the book, the pulling together of so much information about the environment and practices of the peoples of such a small region, is a substantial accomplishment and I have little doubt that it will become a standard reference work that will be utilized for years to come. It is a frustrating lesson of ethnographic research that people are generally much better at doing things than they are at providing reasons for why they do them. This book has much the same problem. Hayden's Introduction does a yeoman's job of attempting to summarize the theoretical context within which a book like this makes sense but is an impossible task. At places, as with the discussion of generalized hunter-gatherers (p. 12), the lack of space leads simply to inadequacy. At other places, as with the discussion of competition (pp. 14-15) or that of the analogy of natural selection in an ecological perspective (pp. 7-9), it is harder to tell. The discussion of competition

is terribly compressed and strange. The use of natural selection as an analogy in the analysis of culture is a complex issue fraught with difficulty. It simply is not clear whether it is the lack of space that creates the impression of an overly rigid view of the environment as a thing apart from the actions/choices exercised by particular species or if it is an accurate presentation of Hayden's theoretical perspective. I suspect that these problems are not Hayden's alone but reflect the state of development of that theory ambitious enough to attempt the integration of material and cultural explanation. The interim product of that attempt, this book, is a useful work whose doing is superior to the explanation of why it should have been done.

Satya SHARMA, Alexander M. ERVIN, and Deirdre MEINTEL (eds), *Immigrants and Refugees in Canada: A National Perspective on Ethnicity, Multiculturalism and Cross-Cultural Adjustment*, Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, and Montréal: University of Montréal, 1991; 316 pages. \$20.00 (paper).

By Norman Buchignani
University of Lethbridge

This edited volume is an eclectic offering based primarily upon revisions of papers presented at the 1988 meeting of the Canadian Anthropology Society (then still the Canadian Ethnological Society). These were augmented by several others evidently solicited thereafter. The editors of *Immigrants and Refugees* (who also are key authors) identify two basic goals for this volume. The first is broadly topical, as suggested by the title: to present a "national perspective" on key Canadian immigrant and refugee issues. The second is to provide readers with a sense of "anthropological" approaches to the study of ethnicity, again with a focus on immigration and settlement. These are worthy objectives, the former particularly because there have been few conscientious attempts to link the quite divergent 'micro-level' ethnic studies discourses of anglophone and francophone Canada, the latter because, as the editors note (p.1), previous edited volumes on Canadian ethnic issues primarily have been sociological in