

century rescue societies aimed to dilute the masculinity of larrikins, while twentieth-century organizations like the Scouts tried to suppress feminine influences on all boys. The public school model of masculinity lay at the heart of the Scouts. Now all boys could learn the middle-class ideals, although the working-class lads were taught to follow their middle-class betters.

*Max the Sport* was too busy being his school's champion athlete and senior prefect to be a Scout. He also had a war to fight and a Victoria Cross to win. No wonder he stared into the distance. Even as a young man, he knew that being the ideal Aussie bloke was a big ask. Thanks to Martin Crotty's book, the rest of us can now also learn why boys like Max were written into the history of Australia.

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*On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871.* By Adele Perry. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 2001. 286 pp. Canadian price: \$24.95. ISBN 0-802-08336-6.

INFLUENCED by feminist, Marxist, postcolonial, and poststructural theories, Adele Perry reveals the mid-nineteenth century history of a part of the Pacific North-West that she designates as located at 'the edge of Empire'. The terminology is part of her important intervention to review Canadian history as colonial history — something that is not emphasized in recent Canadian historiography. The boundaries of the study are defined by 'a specific moment in state formation', the year 1849, when British Columbia became a colony of the British Empire, until it entered Canadian Confederation in 1871.

*On the Edge of Empire* has a clever overarching structure that focuses upon contemporary critiques of the two major groups of inhabitants of the time: indigenous peoples and the invading European white settlers. The discourses for these groups are analysed to reveal the attempts by various white colonizers to reconstruct British Columbia as a white society. The study is infused with the concerns of gender and race analysis, revisiting established themes in women's history such as assisted female migration, and also intervening in the newer areas of the influences of mixed-race relationships, miscegenation, homosocial culture, and women and imperialism.

The book has a forthright and serious tone; in one sweep, revising British Columbian history and sketching out an alternative. There are some quirky theoretical interventions. 'Deracinated' white men who married First Nations' women and the 'nuclear' family appear. In an interesting, but tenuous connection, after Foucault's study of surveillance, a map of a rectangular female barracks is compared to a panopticon.

Amidst the use of discourses, doses of local lore are also welcome. Particularly enjoyable are the professional dancers known as 'hurdy-gurdies', cast by Perry as 'icons of regional identity', performing the energetic 'mazy dance' to the tune of a fiddle. The 'bride ships' of 1862 and 1863, bringing single white women settlers to British Columbia, also appear. The Norwegian using the British flag as a tea towel, and the excellent use of photographs, sketches and newspaper excerpts also contribute to a thoroughly and diversely researched book.

The time-period, colonizing power, and theories of settlement all bear resemblance to another edge of empire, New Zealand. The tales of homosocial cultural behaviour in British Columbia are familiar, with Perry making light reference to Jock Phillips's path-

breaking work. The white settlement ideals are also similar to New Zealand, with the theories of Edward Gibbon Wakefield putting in yet another appearance. Historians of New Zealand will find Perry's sources very traditional, with indigenous voices gleaned from the archival sources of the colonizers, and the perspective of First Nations' people themselves missing. Yet, in the Canadian context, her suggestion that there was an indigenous presence in British Columbia prior to European settlement, and that the area was 'reconstructed' as white, is an important intervention in British Columbian historiography. Likewise, her argument that indigenous dispossession and white settlement were intertwined, while assumed in New Zealand, is new and important in the Canadian context. *On the Edge of Empire* concludes with a direct plea for the need for British Columbia to break out of the legacy of its racist past.

Despite the frequent assertion of 'edge of empire', what is actually meant by edge and empire appears to be leaning upon traditional understandings of imperial history. Perry makes local governance her priority, but also frames her study within British Columbia's 'failure' to live up to imperial expectations. Through the pages, the British Empire itself remains a shadowy and undeveloped hollow centre, with the impression of an absent colonial hand creating 'colonialism', in a process removed from the inhabitants of British Columbia. The assumption is of connections back to Britain, rather than to California, Australia and New Zealand.

This is an ambitious and useful book. It reveals much about the politics of gender and race in the making of a colonial society. It deftly weaves a sophisticated history out of many fragmented sources. In the 'white settler society' of New Zealand, the story is somewhat familiar, although despite the call for empire, Perry's is still very much a Canadian-centered history. And looking in from beyond the edge, the American wild west influences appear as appropriate as those of British colonialism.

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