

entrepot trades. Again a strong theoretical framework shapes the analysis. Here the key theory is mercantilism, which McNeill uses to judge not just the two cities but the two imperial systems. The French earn a failing grade for tolerating foreign trade and other deviations from mercantile faith, while the Spanish are found more successful in directing Havana's economy.

There are grounds for skepticism here. If Louisbourg was able to "violate basic tenets of mercantilism (p. 201)", this hardly proves "indifference" or "lassitude (p. 208)" on the part of the French Ministry of Marine, for there is scant evidence that it wanted to impose rigorous mercantile theory on its colony. If Louisbourg could help France prosper by selling cod to Spain and Italy, why should it not also sell rum to New England? And perhaps there was more to Cuba's shift from tobacco to sugar than simply the application of mercantile theory by the Spanish authorities, who in other respects seem less efficient than their French counterparts. Despite his own warnings about the term, McNeill often bases his judgments on an assumption that mercantilism was a living doctrine whose adherents acted upon central principles and orthodox precepts. His evidence does not always require such an explanation.

The most spectacular example here of theory actually supplanting evidence is a calculation about the hectares of dairy land needed to match the protein in a metric ton of cod, which leads McNeill to the impression that Louisbourg cod was not far from being the basis of European diet. Yet even a cursory examination of European markets for cod would show that price, dietary habits, and transportation problems greatly limited distribution and consumption of cod. More attention to the details of the European and Caribbean cod trade might have revised McNeill's theory about Louisbourg's alleged shift to entrepot trade as a substitute for fishing.

The risk that theory will sometimes overwhelm evidence is perhaps inevitable in a comparative study that must judge two discrete places by a single set of criteria. Nevertheless McNeill's comparison of Louisbourg and Havana within their respective empires is generally valid and illuminating. He raises interesting questions about military strategy, imperial policy, and colonial commerce, and if his answers sometimes seem hasty, that should only encourage better local work. And simply by introducing New France specialists to the Spanish comparison and vice versa, *Atlantic Empires* performs a valuable service.

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BRIAN MOERAN — *Okubo Diary: Portrait of a Japanese Valley*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985. Pp. vii, 257.

For a long time western study of Japan was confined to a rare breed of people. Not that the investigation of Japan was a late-comer to the scholarly scene; already at the end of the seventeenth century the Westphalian physician Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716) compiled an encyclopaedic work covering in detail such diverse topics as acupuncture, legal codes, botanical rarities and social stratification after his two years of service with the Dutch East India Company there. But while the West was eager to import Japanese porcelain and lacquer ware, there was, apparently, no market for scholarly knowledge of the country. Kaempfer was unable to find a publisher for his two-volume work during his lifetime. Only after his death, when his nephew succeeded in selling the manuscript to Hans Sloane in London, did the work eventually appear as English translation.

Later scholars fared marginally better, but the club of so-called "Japanologists" remained an exclusive one. The American occupation of Japan after World War II produced a new crop of academics, many of whom started their studies in the service of the army. As Ph.D. theses went into print the foundations were laid for a solid body of Western scholarship on Japan. Generally speaking,

however, these works have not attracted a wide readership and thus knowledge of Japan beyond the journalistic and Clavell variety remains confined to a very small percentage of the academic community.

Works like Brian Moeran's *Okubo Diary* might succeed in changing this trend. The book recounts in an extremely readable fashion the life of the author and his family in one of the more remote and consequently more traditional valleys of Japan, providing the reader with a wealth of information about the country in general and the valley community in particular.

Moeran, a social anthropologist, first arrived in the valley to conduct field work on folk craft potters for his Ph.D. thesis; later he returned for post-doctoral research. Having published his findings on pottery elsewhere, Moeran wrote a very personal description of his experience as foreigner in a traditional Japanese community.

In the opening pages we find the author lodged in a local inn having already won the acceptance and friendship of the potter Inoshige. In traditional Japanese fashion Inoshige has taken him under his wing. Buchan, as his name Brian has been Japanized, is taught and assists Inoshige with his often exacting work, and in turn enjoys not only the intimacy but also the care of the family unit. When Buchan decides that he must find a house so that his wife and children can join him, he realizes that Inoshige and his wife have already made inquiries on his behalf (pp. 11-12). The process of renting a house by an outsider in this valley, where everybody is intimately acquainted with each other's family situation, is a tricky one. The foreigner must learn the intricacies and show respect for the traditional procedure of reaching one's goal in a round-about fashion, involving the appropriate go-betweens. Thanks to Inoshige's coaching and assistance, Buchan succeeds in avoiding all pitfalls, finally renting the house of his choice: an old building in a romantic setting (pp. 13-19, 22-29).

With Inoshige's backing Buchan, his Japanese wife Kyoko and his two boys are accepted by the locals. Everyday events teach them the contradictions of rural life: the pressures to conform and the stubborn individuality of the farmer, the wide acceptance of male chauvinism and the dictatorship of the aged mother. They take part in all community activities. The local men's club annual excursion, the funeral of a neighbour's teenage son, PTA events, New Year and birthday celebrations, the problems of widening a local road, gossip about marriages arranged and broken, all help to reveal the character of the people in this tightly knit community and the system which permits it to operate in relative harmony.

At the very point where the foreigner's identification with the community has gone so far that he decides to make the valley his permanent home and the locals respond by permitting him to purchase the house he has rented, the seemingly idyllic relationship is tarnished. First Buchan offends the aged mother of a friend by letting it slip out that the arrangements for which he seeks her approval had already been discussed with her daughter-in-law. Even the slightest unintentional deviation from the accepted rules can have endless repercussions and make life difficult (pp. 181-3). Then a dispute with his landlord, although quickly smoothed over with the help of others, once again alerts him to the restraints to which all members of this community must submit (pp. 185-99).

His decision not to purchase the house and "go native" (p. viii) turns out to be a wise one. The initial crack in the harmonic relationship with the community deepens when Buchan's son is seriously injured diving into the school's swimming pool as directed by his teacher.

The intricate networking system through which the foreigner and his family had shared in community life, now works to their disadvantage. No one is willing to accept responsibility for the incident, he and his wife are constantly assured that the utmost will be done for them, but are not even informed of their rights, and finally social pressure is exerted upon them to accept an inadequate compensation (pp. 234, 239-40).

The story is a fictionalized account of Moeran's experience. The unresolved law dispute over his son's injury and the desire to protect his friends in the valley determined this approach. The reader

is assured "that everything related in this book actually happened" and that the author did no more than "to amalgamate two or three living people into single characters and to play such havoc with local geography that, in the end," he "was forced to draw up a chart on the wall to remind" himself "of who was who and what was where" (p. 2).

I am not inclined to question the authenticity of the work on account of the above. What bothers me, though, is the overwhelming use of direct conversation. Granted, one may remember two or even three significant phrases of a conversation; but dialogue spanning several pages, sometimes after an evening of heavy drinking? Did the author constantly carry a tape-recorder or paper and pencil to jot down every word uttered? Reconstruction of dialogue at a later stage is an additional and, for me, unnecessary fictionalization. Especially as English does not permit the expression of the great difference in Japanese speech between women and men, old and young, indirect reporting could have more accurately reflected this extremely important element in Japanese society.

Moeran makes it clear in his introduction that for him anthropology is not a science, but an art (p. 3). "Fieldwork is metamorphosing anthropology into an art form." He concludes that "the only way to write sensitive interpretations of other cultures is to write in the style of the people we study" (p. 4).

Consequently the author chose the style of the classical Japanese diary for his work. It is well suited to present the material. True to the classical form there are no daily entries, but numbered episodes ranging from a few lines to several pages, self-contained yet smoothly building the story. To this he adds a liberal sprinkling of quotations from the Japanese classics, a device frequently used in Japan to evoke the atmosphere of a well-known work. However, great skill is needed to make this more than an echoing of overused phrases and one sympathizes with the author's sigh "Oh, to be able to master the art of poetic allusion!" (p. 233).

A precondition for the effectiveness of this device is the reader's thorough knowledge of the classics so that a few words suffice to recall the atmosphere and message of the original story. In a work presumably directed at those without a thorough knowledge of Japan and her classics, this device comes over as artifice rather than art.

Also at other times the attempt "to write in the style of the people" studied, takes on a self-conscious note. Careful observation of detail to evoke a special mood is a favourite device of Japanese literature. Used here to describe how, for instance, the author stokes the fire of the kiln and then by accident chars the potatoes he planned to roast, it loses its effectiveness (p. 48). Rather than convey the flavour of Japanese literature the author's pre-occupation with himself — "I splash around in the cold bathroom, washing myself clean, and then finally sink into the steaming hot bath, my body trembling with fatigue" (p. 49) — brings out a very Western self-centeredness.

At times there are just so many "I's" — fourteen in a paragraph of twenty-two lines (p. 51) — that it becomes downright annoying. When this paragraph does nothing but describe the freeing of a clogged water-pipe, the reader may wonder why it is there. Again when Moeran's boys upon arrival innocently collect the cultivated mushrooms of a neighbour he complains (the second time in three pages) about the embarrassment he suffers as a father (p. 53, 55). The reactions of his wife, arriving as a city Japanese and spouse of a foreigner in the closely knit valley community, I would have found more informative.

To my mind the book profits greatly from the personal approach the author chose. Nevertheless I would have found the book easier to read if the individual actions and concerns of the author had not loomed quite so large on every page.

Again, I am very much in support of presenting scholarly research in a readable style, making it accessible to the audience it deserves. Yet I do not believe with the author that the hardships of fieldwork are enough to change "the ethnographer from an ordinary member of his or her own society to individual artist" (p. 4). Words written for literary merit only, should be left to the experts in that field.

All this having been said, the author is to be congratulated on producing a book based on solid research with appeal to a wider readership.

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DIANE PAYMENT — *Batoche (1870-1910)*. St-Boniface (Manitoba), Les Editions du Blé, 1983, x, 157 p.

Depuis quelques années, on constate un véritable renouveau d'intérêt pour cette population issue de la miscégenation des Blancs et des Amérindiens et communément appelée métisse. C'est un peu comme si, à l'approche du centenaire de la « rébellion » métisse de 1885 et de la pendaison de Louis Riel on avait redécouvert cette communauté longtemps marginalisée et méprisée ou, le plus souvent, oubliée. Il faut dire aussi que les Métis canadiens eux-mêmes ont su accroître leur visibilité au cours des récentes discussions constitutionnelles sur les droits des peuples autochtones. Malheureusement, on doit constater que l'intérêt est beaucoup plus prononcé chez les chercheurs anglophones que chez les chercheurs francophones. Or, parmi ces rares chercheurs francophones qui s'intéressent aux Métis, Diane Payment tient une place de première importance. M^{me} Payment possède et maîtrise une documentation abondante et variée sur l'histoire et la généalogie des Métis. Il faut aussi souligner non seulement sa sympathie manifeste pour ces gens, mais encore sa volonté de combattre toute trace de mépris à leur égard et ses efforts pour renverser des « mythes » tenaces à leur sujet.

Le présent ouvrage nous dépeint en quatre chapitres l'histoire de la communauté métisse établie sur la Saskatchewan-Sud entre 1870 et 1910. Le premier chapitre nous montre le difficile passage d'une économie de « traite », dominée par la chasse aux bisons et le « frétagé », à une économie agricole et sédentaire. On aimerait avoir des précisions supplémentaires surtout sur la période postérieure à la « rébellion » de 1885. Les trois pages (p. 30-32) consacrées aux « revenus supplémentaires » à l'agriculture après 1885 ouvrent notre appétit sans le satisfaire. Le deuxième chapitre est consacré aux relations entre le clergé et les Métis. Ces relations furent loin d'être toujours faciles et harmonieuses : « les rapports des missionnaires nous laissent entrevoir leur attitude paternaliste et intransigeante envers un peuple qu'ils ne considèrent qu'à demi-civilisé » (p. 49), écrit l'auteur. Mais c'est surtout avec l'arrivée de Riel et à cause de ses propositions de réformes religieuses et de revendication armée que les relations entre le clergé et les Métis s'envenimèrent au plus haut point. Ici on aurait aimé connaître le jugement de l'auteure sur ce qui a le plus contribué à éloigner les Métis des missionnaires: les « hérésies » de Riel ou le comportement des missionnaires vis-à-vis l'armée canadienne? Le troisième chapitre traite de la complexe question des terres : nous sommes ici au coeur du conflit entre les Métis et le gouvernement canadien. Dans ce chapitre, l'auteure entend montrer que « la question des terres... illustre bien les efforts et l'intérêt des Métis à se prévaloir de leurs droits de premiers-occupants et contredit l'hypothèse de leur indifférence à cet égard » (p. 88). Malheureusement ce chapitre est un peu trop court pour démêler complètement l'écheveau de cette question très compliquée. Notre curiosité reste encore une fois inassouvie. Le quatrième chapitre est consacré à la vie politique. Les pages qui nous décrivent les années postérieures à la « rébellion de 1885 » sont particulièrement intéressantes parce que tout à fait originales quoique trop courtes. En guise de conclusion retenons cette affirmation de l'auteure : la défaite de 1885

« ne signifie pas la disparition de Batoche ni la désagrégation de ses habitants... [la population] fait preuve d'une grande capacité d'adaptation et de tentative d'intégration à une nouvelle conjoncture économique et sociale. Le déclin, après le tournant du siècle, est progressif et dû à des forces extérieures sur lesquelles les Métis ont peu de contrôle » (p. 136).