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Bruce Braun. *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada's West Coast.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. xiii + 347 pp. $75.00 (textbook), ISBN 978-0-8166-3399-9; $25.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8166-3400-2.

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The War in the B.C. Woods

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In the summer of 1993, the largest civil disobedience campaign in Canadian history took place on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Hundreds of protesters from throughout North America courted arrest to stop the logging of one of the last remaining stands of uncut forest on the Pacific coast. The protest flashed across television screens in Canada and abroad, assuring Clayoquot Sound its place in late-twentieth-century environmental history. The 1993 protests were the most visible flashpoint in a process that goes back into the nineteenth century and continues today, one stage in an on-going conflict over how people with divergent interests and values view British Columbia's great forests, particularly those along the coast.

Bruce Braun, assistant professor of geography at the University of Minnesota, presents the Clayoquot Sound conflict as one, albeit internationally well-known, example of the often intemperate "debate" that has raged between governments, First Nations, business, and environmentalists over the future of the temperate rainforests of the Northwest Coast. Business and government, in his view, see the forests as fiber waiting to be processed into consumer goods to sustain the standard of living British Columbians have come to expect. For First Nations, they are the physical expression of millennia of Aboriginal life on this coast. For environmentalists, they are the threatened remnants of the great forests that covered North America before the arrival of Europeans. A more recent voice added to the cacophony is that of ecotourism (or adventure travel) which sees the waters and woods of the Sound as a suitable playground for urban dwellers seeking to reconnect with nature. Braun says that participants in this intemperate debate over the Clayoquot "wilderness" see only part of a larger picture, not just of tree farm licenses, homeland, or recreational area, but of a landscape that different people can use in a manner which ensures that what draws people to Clayoquot Sound today will be available for future generations.

The author regards the debate from stage left, writing for a scholarly audience and showing greater sympathy for the environmental and First Nation actors on stage than for their business or government protagonists. His main point is a simple one–that the attempt to defend

"wilderness" within a framework that separates nature from culture represents a potentially dead end for the environmental movement which could wind up achieving the opposite of what the activists who blocked logging trucks in 1993 intended. In this, he contributes to the continuing academic debate on "wilderness" that William Cronon initiated a decade ago–about the same time the less theoretical debate Braun writes about was raging in the B.C. woods.

Professor Braun makes the point, at considerable length, that there is no such thing as "wilderness" or even "temperate rain forest." These are terms that describe human visions rooted in history, expressed in production and consumption at different times. He proposes an alternative vision based on the notion of "social nature" to inform a radical environmentalism attuned not only to the impact of people on the environment, but also to the relations of power and domination that infuse environmental ideas and imagination (p. x).

The book is organized into five "episodes" or chapters focused on human visions for the temperate rain forest, specifically Clayoquot Sound. Each one starts with an event, artifact or image drawn from contemporary struggles over the production and consumption of nature in the rainforest (p. 5), which is placed in its historic context. All chapters could stand alone (indeed two have already appeared in print) and all but the fourth chapter serve to advance his argument.

The entry point for the first event, which is chapter 2, is the testimony of Simon Lucas, then chair of the West Coast District Council of Indian Chiefs, to a Royal Commission on Forests in 1975. This chapter ranges deep into the past and comes up to the present, telling the story of the spatial displacement of First Nations from their homelands by the Canadian nation, manifested in the west coast forests by the province of British Columbia. Central to such a displacement was the creation of a business and state image of the forest based on the division of the province's land into vast areas of crown lands and tiny reserves for Aboriginal people. As the cutting of the forest proceeded, particularly after World War II on the basis of the 1945 Sloan Report, the geographical marginalization of First Nations accelerated. British Columbia's post-war forest policy was based on the extinction of the existing forest and its replacement by harvestable tree farms, but this ran up against not only its own contradictions as it moved into the last remaining "old-growth" forests in the 1980s and 1990s, but the reassertion of Aboriginal rights and the environmental demand for preservation of wilderness in the late-twentieth century.

The next chapter starts with the image of Clayoquot Sound put forward by the Western Canada Wilderness Committee in its beautifully illustrated *Clayoquot: On the Wild Side*. It focuses on the uneasy relationship of environmentalists and First Nations, based upon diametrically opposed notions of the relationship between culture and nature. For environmentalists, the image of Aboriginal subsistence hunters in cedar canoes living in longhouses was more consistent with the image of Clayoquot Sound presented than the reality of commercial fishermen living in modern houses. At most, Aboriginal people were a part of nature. First Nations, on the other hand, did not distinguish nature from culture, seeing the latter as protecting the former. However, the image of Clayoquot Sound as pristine wilderness projected by environmental organizations in their publicity marginalized Aboriginal people historically as much as the image held by business and government of crown lands and reserves marginalized them geographically (p. 88).

Chapter 4, "Landscapes of Loss and Mourning," focuses on ecotourism, or adventure travel, as another means of human consumption of Clayoquot Sound. Although seemingly complementary both to the environmental vision of wilderness, and the Aboriginal one of homeland and providing space for Aboriginal people to participate in the industry, Braun argues that ecotourism provides few benefits to local people and serves to confirm urban visitors' fantasies of a landscape managed for their visual consumption. The contents of this chapter add little to his overall argument and could have been presented in a more succinct manner as part of the previous chapter.

The next chapter, "BC Seeing
Seeing BC: Vision and Visuality on Canada's West Coast" addresses the legacy of Emily Carr's art in creating the continuing image of British Columbia as primitive. Her paintings provide an image of both British Columbia's (not just Clayoquot Sound's) First Nations and landscape familiar to contemporary readers. A product of her time (early-twentieth century) and place (Victoria), Carr played a similar role in British Columbia to that of the Group of Seven in eastern Canada in sustaining an image of Canadian nationalism based on a northern landscape from which Aboriginal history and contemporary society had been removed. Braun does point out that her paintings of early-twentieth-century Aboriginal society and her writings appear to transcend the racism of

her society. However, it is her later paintings–of a nature that has either absorbed Aboriginal culture or from which humans have vanished–that continue to dominate images of British Columbia, and which still provide the cultural context for North Americans viewing images of the coastal rainforest.

The final "episode" or chapter addresses the scientific argument for the disappearing rainforest. It starts with one of the most successful images used by environmental groups in the early 1990s, an illustration which "shows" the extent of the loss of rain forest from Vancouver Island between 1954 and 1990 (p. 215). Like photographs of the Sound emphasizing its beautiful wilderness character or Emily Carr's paintings of a primitive forest swallowing Aboriginal culture, this is an image created by external observers–the Sierra Club of British Columbia–for a specific purpose, not necessarily the reflection of scientific truth that it purports to be. Although the image has proven a very effective weapon in the conflict over the future of Clayoquot, it reflects an unprovable claim rather than facts based upon ecology. This discussion provides the author with the opportunity to demonstrate the limitations of systems ecological theory based on assumptions of harmony in the face of an alternative approach, the ecology of chaos. By holding onto Romantic fantasies of natural stability and appealing to a scientific position that few ecologists would support today, environmentalists trying to defend the old-growth forest leave themselves vulnerable to a forest industry aware of advances in ecological science and capable of arguing that the disturbance clear cutting represents is not inconsistent with ecosystem viability.

Braun concludes by discussing the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices which the British Columbia government set up in 1993 to end the war in the Clayoquot Sound woods. The panel's final report called for an ecosystem-based approach to planning and forestry that would leave room for a vision of the forests that First Nations, the forestry industry, and environmentalists could subscribe to. By rejecting any idea of dichotomy between nature and culture, as well as notions of the forest as primitive wilderness, the panel established a vision for the twenty-first century of a landscape within which humans play an important role, but where the measure of their impact would be neither preservation nor resource extraction but sustainability. Preservation of stands of old-growth trees, resource extraction by First Nations on their own lands, attractive sight lines for tourists, even clear cutting of selected stands could all be acceptable means to the mutually desired end of a forest that meets human needs today in a manner that ensures its long term sustainability. There could be no place for wilderness fantasies in such a vision of the forest, a vision which comes close to Braun's notion of social nature.

The author makes his case well, and there are few points for more than minor quibbles. The "episode" on ecotourism could have been much shorter and folded into the preceding chapter. Because *The Intemperate Rainforest* is written for an international audience of academics and environmentalists as a case study in on-going debates over nature and culture and over wilderness, its scholarly apparatus may make it inaccessible to local residents or visitors. In terms of presentation, the lack of an index of illustrations, in a book which uses a considerable number of them to good effect, is an unfortunate omission. Moreover, the quality of two important maps, of land use in 1993 (p. 6) and of Vancouver Island in 1954 and 1990 (p. 214), is so poor that they are hardly usable.

The book was researched in the early 1990s, with a brief, optimistic reference to events up to 1998 when the war in the woods appeared to be subsiding (pp. 267-269). Had the book been written later, it could have incorporated what is perhaps the most dramatic challenge to previous narrow visions of Clayoquot Sound's future, the establishment of the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Originally proposed by First Nations in 1995 as a possible solution to on-going disputes which the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Practices could not resolve, the idea of a biosphere reserve got the support of both environmental groups and the forestry industry. After considerable work by local communities, as well as by the Canadian and the British Columbia governments, the Biosphere Reserve was designated in January 2000 to demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature as well as to provide a conservation model which connects protection of biodiversity to the livelihood of local residents. The question is no longer how to reconcile how different groups work out conflicting images of the forest, but rather does the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve reflect a model of Braun's notion of social nature in early-twenty-first-century British Columbia?

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