

research. Virginia Garcia-Acosta explores the historiography of disasters in Mexico, revealing that the reporting of disasters provides a rich set of data for understanding the spatial and social organization of the past. Robert Paine discusses what he labels the “no-risk thesis”: the cognitive repression of risk by those who continue to live in dangerous circumstances, identifying a variety of cultural forms in which this is accomplished. Sharon Stephens also examines the constitution of perception of risks, but as this is accomplished by professional “radiation protection experts.” Susanna Hoffman examines the symbolism of disaster in the discourse and spontaneous shrines that occurred in the aftermath of a firestorm in Oakland, California, using this medium to generate some interesting insights into attitudes towards nature. Gregory Button describes ways in which popular media reframe man-made disasters, emphasizing the ways in which local knowledge becomes marginalized in this process. Finally, Ravi Rajan examines the failures in responses to the Union Carbide gas leak in Bhopal, India. He argues that the problem was not simply that the state actors failed to act effectively to prevent the situation causing many more casualties than were necessary, but that for a variety of reasons the state had not developed the expertise that would have been required to facilitate an effective response, and that these are related to critical fault lines within the society.

While some chapters build on much more detailed and sustained primary research than others, all of the chapters have interesting stories to tell and important points to make. The volume as a whole is carefully integrated and represents a major contribution. Not only those interested in disaster research or applied anthropology will find the book rewarding, but also those interested in how extreme and tragic circumstances help to understand the nature of societies and the intersection between nature and culture.

Sandra Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice, 1900-1950*, Mercury Series Paper 74, Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2001, xv + 335 pages, ISSN 0317-2244 (paper).

Reviewer: *Cory Silverstein Willmott*
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In *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice, 1900-1950*, Sandra Flood investigates the relationship between craft and museum communities in Canada during the first half of the 20th century. Her thesis assumes that museum collections are influential in “assigning cultural and economic value to practice” because they function as the collective memory of a nation’s material culture. She therefore asks to what extent these two communities share an understanding of “craft,” and to what degree Canadian museums recognized craft activity by collecting and displaying craft works (p. 1). She

pursues these two questions through a survey and analysis of contemporaneous published discourse on crafts (chap. 2), a survey of Canadian craft production arranged according to socio-economic contexts of production (chap. 3), a series of detailed case studies of institutions that supported craft production and/or display (chap. 4) and of educational institutions that offered advanced training in craft skills (chap. 5), as well as an overview and case studies of museums that housed and displayed craft collections (chap. 6).

In the first chapter, Flood reminds readers of the fragility and infancy of Canada during the early 20th century. The unification of the fledgling nation was merely a matter of political and economic convenience rather than common cause or enemy. Its development was impeded by vast geographical distances, as well as regional, ethnic and religious differences. It was not until the early 20th century that Canada achieved a cohesive form. Even so, it was still a “Dominion,” that is, a politically autonomous colony of Britain. The sense of “Empire” was reflected in the influence of the British Arts and Crafts Movement on the formation of craft advocacy groups and the immigration of master craft workers from the Mother Country. As well, preferential tariffs and British guilds ensured that the influx of British craft products undersold those produced in Canada.

In order to grasp the meaning of “craft” during the period under discussion, Flood undertook a quantitative analysis of themes that occurred in 92 contemporaneous publications on crafts. These themes are: “concerns about skills and traditions and their loss; the contribution of craft production to the national economy; the contribution of craft to industry through the improvement of design; the benefits of craft as an occupation; handcraft as embracing a universal, participatory community; and craftspeople’s role in the establishment and constitution of a distinctive, inclusive Canadian culture;...the link between craft and rural life;...[and] the changing location of craft in relation to fine art” (pp. 31-32). Flood’s analysis shows that despite rhetoric about the universality of Canadian craft production, the majority of literature emanated from an educated, well-to-do elite centred in Montreal who were primarily interested in the picturesque “folk arts” of the rural Habitants (pp. 54-55).

Recognizing that publications do not adequately represent the extent and scope of craft production during the period, in chapter 3 Flood turns to newspapers, magazines and agricultural exhibition prize lists for additional information. These sources proved fruitful in discovering both the variety and quantity of craft production across the nation. Flood presents her findings for various types of craft, which include textiles, woodworking, metalwork and glass, under several categories of craft production: “Crafts for a living,” “The Domestic Economy [*sic*],” “Leisure activities,” “General craft education and therapy” and “Community projects.” Flood observes that a disproportionate amount of the craft activities reported in these sources consisted of women’s textile arts. Although these were undervalued in

the public realm, in the domestic realm they were used to destruction. These two factors combine to explain why they rarely survive in museum collections (pp. 101-103).

Chapter 4 examines the relationship between craft makers, women's organizations and government departments in efforts to promote, perpetuate, exhibit and market handcrafts. Set within the general framework of the Arts and Crafts Movement, these disparate groups joined coalitions and developed various networks to achieve mutually satisfactory goals. Yet, the potential for exploitation continually lurked below the surface discourse on economic development. Detailed case studies of individual production, promotion and marketing initiatives show that there was a very fine line between home crafts and industrial piecework (p. 105). Typically, a person of cosmopolitan or urban experience organized a group of local producers to manufacture products that were subtly altered from their original rural and/or ethnic forms to suit urban consumer tastes. Whereas humanitarian motives were characteristic of volunteer craft organizations, they too were compelled to tailor the products of the craft workers they represented to conform to market standards. Investigations of the Saskatoon Arts and Crafts Society and the Canadian Handcrafts Guild (CHG) illustrate the tensions inherent in these organizations' desire to preserve "authentic" craft and to promote its production as an economically viable occupation.

Beginning in 1910, the CHG received modest government grants in support of their craft exhibitions. During the 1920s and 1930s, local women's organizations partnered with provincial Departments of Agriculture in a variety of craft promotion initiatives. At the commencement of World War II, the federal government sponsored an investigation of craft activities that included both consultation with international experts and surveys of Canadian craft activities. The first of its major findings was that "*Canada appears to be alone, among the larger nations of the world, in not having so far established a national service to encourage useful characteristic hand art and craft activities*" (Russell Report, p. 156, underlined in the original). Nevertheless, the federal government responded by downloading the responsibility for craft promotion to the provincial governments and the volunteer organizations.

Chapter 5 documents the role of educational institutions in fostering the development of a class of professional craftspeople. Flood examines eight institutions that offered courses or programs in crafts within either vocational and technical, or arts and design, departments and specialized schools. Although these programs aspired to train people as professional artists to work closely with the manufacturing industries, evidence suggests that most of the graduates did not expect or intend to use the skills for a career. Nevertheless, the programs were "flourishing in the post-war boom at mid-century," and many graduates became instructors and/or studio craftspeople (p. 211). Flood compiled a database of the names of Canadian studio craftspeople working

during the first half of the 20th century. Where possible, she gathered biographic information on individuals whom she discusses with regard to "Class and education," "Income generation," "Self-concept," "Studios," "Exhibitions," "Associations" and "Canadian craft." The institutional milieu of studio craftspeople was "predominantly British" (p. 239), and their "educational level, class and social milieu" was close to that of craft advocates and museum curators (p. 243).

Chapter 6 deals with Canadian museum practice in relation to crafts, giving particular attention to the findings of the Miers-Markham Report (1932) and the Massey Report (1949-51), both of which were undertaken on a national scale. The former identified only four decorative arts collections in Canadian museums. The report also revealed that the total income for all Canadian museums was approximately \$550 000 when London, UK, museums alone spent over \$5 000 000 annually (p. 246). Canadian national museums were additionally challenged by the economic demands of World War I and the burning of the parliament buildings in 1916, which necessitated the closing of the National Museums complex for five years while the government resided in its building (p. 246). For the period covered by this report, Flood examines in detail the collaboration between the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the CHG, the activities of Marius Barbeau at the National Museum of Canada (NMC), the collections of the Ukrainian Museum of Canada and the role of Alice Webster in the handcraft collection of the New Brunswick Museum.

The Russell Report of 1949-51 observed that government support had worsened since the Miers-Markham Report. At this time, the annual budget of the NMC was \$177 500, as compared to the \$1 062 737 annual budget of comparable Smithsonian departments (p. 274). The report found that museums across the country were losing collections due to improper storage facilities and lack of curatorial staff. Nevertheless, the Massey Commission was overwhelmed by the voluntary submission of 44 reports from organizations and individuals that documented a wide variety of craft activities. These findings confirm that craft activity was largely conducted by private individuals, groups and corporate patrons, with little aid from any of the levels of government. Interestingly, contemporary handcrafts, particularly the work of studio craftspeople, was lost in the transfer of collections from these private sources to public museums, presumably because the latter favoured "historical" specimens (p. 283).

This book is certainly a pioneering work in a previously unexplored and important field of Canadian history. Yet, it could have been improved in a number of respects. First, this book confirms the admonitions of other publishers not to publish unedited dissertations. Interest and clarity are impeded by awkward and incorrect sentence structure throughout the book. As well, although Flood examined craft collections, the book includes neither descriptions nor illustrations of Canadian craft work. This omission detracts from the book's

potential to redress the lack of government and museum support that it documents. It neither preserves and promotes Canadian crafts, nor demonstrates the scholarly value of material culture collections. Finally, although nationalism is a constant theme of the craft writers Flood cites, her analysis does not refer to the critical discourse on nationalism that would have explained the central role it played in the Canadian craft movement, as well as the failure of the Canadian government to support these efforts to foster national culture. Nevertheless, the book has great value as a research resource. Flood excels in the compilation of a body of otherwise obscure data. Her coverage of the histories of craft organizations, agricultural fairs and craft instruction, as well as her account of government apathy towards museums and national culture, are original and comprehensive. The questions posed and the data presented are invaluable contributions to museum scholarship. Let us hope that this work will stimulate further inquiry into related questions that are of major significance not only to the craft and museum communities, but also to the Canadian nation as a whole.

Anna Grimshaw, *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, xiii + 222 pages (paper).

Reviewer: *William Rodman*
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This is a book as much about ways of knowing as ways of seeing. It is a volume appropriate to the first years of the new millennium, because it carries forward in innovative new directions some of the themes and theoretical advances that emerged during the crisis in representation in the late 1980s and 1990s. In the long wake of Clifford and Marcus's *Writing Culture*, mainstream anthropology remains largely a discipline dominated by words. Anna Grimshaw, a leading British visual anthropologist, seeks a shift in focus from emphasis on the construction of the anthropological text, toward perceptions of the ethnographer's eye and a new way of seeing in contemporary anthropology. She seeks to move anthropology beyond writing culture, toward seeing culture.

The overarching theme of Grimshaw's book is "how visual techniques and technologies have rendered problematic all aspects of anthropology" (p. 89). Her starting point is anthropology's ambivalence concerning vision as a primary source of knowledge. On the one hand, anthropology is ocularcentric: it privileges vision as a means of knowing the world. Fieldwork, for example, is premised on the idea of "seeing" things for ourselves—"I-Witnessing," in Geertz's well-known play on words. Yet anthropologists also tend to be iconophobic, distrustful of images, ever-aware of the possibilities that the truth of images may be illusory, or, at best, partial.

The author relates the history of visual anthropology to broader histories—of cinema, of theory in anthropology. Considering the short length of her book, Grimshaw performs well the difficult task of capturing the grand flow and sweep of anthropology during the last century, from romantic and humanist engagement with the world in the first decades of the 20th century, to consolidation and retreat into specialization in the postwar era, to re-engagement with the world in the new age of participatory, collaborative anthropology. She presents visual anthropology as an unsettling reminder of some of the most difficult and complex questions that lie at the heart of much current anthropological practice. How does what we see give rise to what we think we know? How do our visions of the world inform our claims to ethnographic authority? What are the limits of truth in still photography and film?

Grimshaw has organized her book in an artful way. She conceives of the form of her book as an attempt to strike a balance between two cinematic techniques, montage and mise-en-scene. Montage is a technique based on the idea of radical juxtaposition, a new whole produced from edited fragments. She uses the metaphor of mise-en-scene, or "staging," as a scholarly and substantive balance to creative, intuitive, heady montage. Mise-en-scene implies context, composition, situated knowledge, thick description, and totality of design. In the four chapters in part 1 of her book (the "montage" section), she discusses a film-maker and an anthropologist in the context of each other's work and times: Lumiere and Haddon, Griffith and Rivers, Flaherty and Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Grierson. From these unlikely pairings come some extraordinary insights, such as her provocative but well-argued claim that W.H.R. Rivers' genealogical diagrams owe more to Cubist paintings than to representations of family trees. She also shows how the ideas and techniques of film pioneers Auguste and Louis Lumiere influenced the use of film in the first great fieldwork expedition, Haddon's 1898 expedition to the Torres Straits. Then she goes on to make the highly original argument that D.W. Griffith, the innovative director of *Birth of a Nation*, changed the direction of anthropology, as well as cinema. Griffith "shattered the camera's static pose" (p. 25), and, by so doing, freed Rivers and, later, Malinowski to create a kind of research in which the vantage point of ethnographer's eye is located at the center of the action, in the complex, ever-changing drama of village life. The waxing and waning of romanticism in anthropology is of particular interest of Grimshaw. She clearly prefers the work of scholars and filmmakers she perceives as animated by the romantic impulse (the director Robert Flaherty and Malinowski, and in the postwar era, Jean Rouch) to those—such as Radcliffe-Brown and the documentary filmmaker John Grierson—whose work derives from an enlightenment vision of the world. She values revelation, "the transformation of commonplace understandings" (p. 45), over illumination, which emerges from the enlightenment project and appeals to the intellect more than the senses and emotions.