

stantial detail, notably, the Lewis gun, the Stokes trench mortar, Mills bombs, rifle grenades, Newton mortars, 18-pounders, 4.5-inch howitzers, tanks, Bangalore torpedoes, poison gas and countermeasures, signalling methods, and the geophone. The greatest strength of *Surviving Trench Warfare* lies less in the purely technological realm, however, than in Rawling's clever integration of this dimension within the wider context of Great War operations. He manages to weave such disparate aspects as German and Allied high-level aims, air force development, Canadian raiding action, and the use of scouts into one comprehensive whole. His treatment of training, organization, doctrine, and combined arms tactics follows a simple chronology and is finely accomplished through the judicious use of primary source material and an easy-to-read style. In short, for gaining a better understanding of Canadian operations in the Great War there is no single-volume work quite like *Surviving Trench Warfare*.

Of course, there are certain assertions in Rawling's book that may prove contentious. One is whether one can safely say that a "creeping barrage" was employed at Neuve Chapelle. Though it "lifted" from objective to objective, it did not actually "creep" forward in consonance with advancing infantry as did the first credited "creeper" during the Battle of the

Somme. There is also the question of the German system of defence in depth. No doubt the Germans did organize their defences in depth in 1915, but not to the extent they did after the introduction of "elastic defence" (by the General Staff) in the winter of 1916-17. Regrettably, Rawling does not appear to have consulted Timothy Lupfer's excellent work *The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine during the First World War* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1981). On a final minor point, the key Brigadier-General, General Staff (BGGs) appointment within the Canadian Corps was held by a highly competent British officer by the name of N. W. Webber (not Webster as indicated in both text and index!).

Notwithstanding these last comments, Rawling's book is an important work that stands in the reputable international company of Lupfer's work, Dominick Graham's and Selford Bidwell's *Fire Power: British Army Weapons and Theories of War 1904-1945* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982) and Bruce I. Gudmundsson's *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914-1918* (New York: Praeger, 1989). For students of Canadian Great War history it is an indispensable text that could also be read with profit by serving officers.

Michael M. Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*

KENNETH L. AMES

Ames, Michael M. *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992. 212 pp., notes, bibliography, index. Cloth \$39.95, ISBN 0-7748-0391-6.

It is hard not to like someone who frankly admits that both anthropology and museums are in trouble. In 14 eminently readable chapters, Michael M. Ames tells us exactly how and why, and in some cases, what we might do about it. But don't read this book if you are looking for quick solutions to current problems. Ames understands museums too well to expect easy or rapid change. In fact, part of what I

found refreshing about this book, even when it dealt with depressing matters, was the author's candor. It is not often that a museum director admits publicly that museum work can be demoralizing, that "despair is ... frequently the shadow to ambition in the museum world" (p. 5), and that people who work in museums "may never be able to surmount their problems, because solutions are frequently outside their control, beyond their means, and alien to their interests" (p. 4). There is no false optimism here.

What there is, on the other hand, is a highly informed and balanced account of the current condition of anthropology within Canada's

museums. Ames paints a picture of a discipline that has more or less steadily lost both status and influence. The cutting edge of anthropology long ago left museums behind. Today, few leading anthropologists work in museums or rely on museum collections. As Ames puts it, "the prevailing attitude today in anthropology towards museum anthropology is that it is drifting about in the swampy backwaters of the discipline" (p. 40).

Those anthropologists who remain in museums find themselves caught in an increasingly difficult situation. Their work may be scholarly, but it must also be popular. As emphasis on being popular increases, opportunities for scholarship decrease. Exhibits are collaborative efforts that favour synthesis, simplicity, and safety, rather than individual voice, complexity, and provocative interpretation. And in any case, exhibitions are not very effective vehicles of education.

Even if exhibitions had greater didactic power, museums themselves are cautious and conservative institutions dedicated to presenting uplifting visions and the positive side of history. Furthermore, museum anthropologists find their authority increasingly challenged and eroded on another front, as the people they once studied now demand to speak for themselves. All of this, Ames notes, "creates incredible stresses and strains" (p. 27) for those who work in museums.

The essays assembled here, about half reprinted from the author's 1986 volume, *Museums, the Public and Anthropology*, and the rest of more recent vintage, record his attempts to understand the changing museum culture, its relationship to the larger world around it, and the roles anthropologists play in it. The picture Ames paints is not particularly attractive. Anthropologists stereotype other people. They are often, wittingly or otherwise, agents of change in the societies they study. Their Eurocentric ideas about art impede an understanding of art in other societies. And both anthropologists and the museums that they work in increasingly react to cultural, social, economic, and political forces and ideologies beyond their control and, perhaps, their understanding.

What does this book have to say about material culture? The message is mixed but ultimately positive. Ames first tells us that the anthropological study of material culture was pronounced dead as early as 1954 (p. 39). Today, he says, it is even more dead. This is because museum collections are full of objects that, for any number of reasons, are not worth

studying; because museums offer meagre support for researchers from both inside and outside their institutions; and because material culture studies do not engage important theoretical issues. Material culture is "not where the action is" in anthropology today.

Yet Ames provides at least three instances of positive testimony to the value of material culture studies. First, his discussions of the changing status of Northwest Indian art provides a fascinating window on the processes that determine how goods are named and assigned meaning and value. Second, his suggestion that we might profitably study the careers of objects, their social histories, the processes by which they are recontextualized, holds great potential for enhancing our understanding of the social uses of goods and for generating theory. Finally, two of the best chapters in the book constitute compressed material culture studies that demonstrate impressively that the field is far from dead.

These chapters examine Expo '86 and the meaning of the success of McDonald's fast-food restaurants. Ames argues that these forms of popular culture "engage in important ideological work" (p. 112), and he goes on to show exactly how. In both the world's fair and the restaurants, material culture plays prominent roles. These two essays refute the assertion that material culture study is dead but they also indicate that it would be productive to rethink the nature of anthropological material culture study in a couple of ways.

First, studying our own culture may be the most valuable contribution anthropologists can make today. Second, they might acknowledge that the best place to study many phenomena is within living ecological systems – not as they lie entombed in museums.

Ames' text leads me to believe that both anthropology and material culture study still have long lives before them. It is museums that are in deep trouble. Ames' discussions of museums, world's fairs, and restaurants show that museums are the least interesting – and the least important – of the three. Ames warns us that the outlook for museums is "bleak and getting bleaker" (p. 8). Maybe that is not a bad thing.

But read this book and decide for yourself. Soundly reasoned, it provides an engaging and authoritative view of a professional culture in transition. The meaning of the title, by the way, may be only partially obvious. The first part comes from an observation of Jane Tompkins, "museums are a form of cannibalism made safe for polite society" (p. 3).