



of the waterways. (See also Shkilnyk's 1985 *A Poison Stronger Than Love*.) It ends by noting the accelerating pace of clear-cutting on traditional lands which precipitated the blockade.

Chapter 4 covers environmental activities that preceded the blockade. In the 1990s, local activists timed their spring outdoor cleanup to correspond to Earth Day. They formed the Grassy Narrows Environmental Group (GNEG), initially in response to proposed nuclear-waste storage in the region. GNEG later protested an Abitibi Consolidated plan to clearcut thousands of square miles of the Grassy Narrows First Nation's traditional territory that included some residents' traplines. The group served as a school for leaders who—like pre-colonial ones, served informally—organized the blockade, beginning in December, 2002.

The next two chapters document blockade activities. Though the main logging road was the group's prime target, they also periodically held tactical ("roving") obstructions of secondary routes. Given broader socio-political goals, leaders organized cultural and historical education for schoolchildren. Activists attracted (moral and material) support and networked strategically with outsiders, Native and non-Native alike, to publicize their cause. Notably, they invited members of a faith-based peace group into the community to document and help ensure a program of nonviolence.

Most ethnographers devote an early chapter to theory, which though useful and meaningful to advanced readers, can confuse and alienate novices to the field. Having offered a few pages on the symbolic value of land-based subsistence, in her introduction (35-38), Willow does her theorizing primarily in chapter six. Here she draws meanings from the quotidian: structures on the site are reminiscent of pre-relocation habitations, where residents lived in relative autonomy. The bucolic drug- and alcohol-free site speaks therapeutically of an earlier, safer time. Willow explains the symbolic significance of the sacred fire, which is carefully tended. She uses spiritual tobacco offerings to introduce the issue of authenticity and neo-traditional practices, and then provides a typically straightforward explanation of culture-as-process. She outlines Wallace's revitalization framework, though with only a scant critique and no effort to modify it for a

dynamic cultural perspective.

Social movements typically ally collectivities that share overlapping, not isomorphic, interests (a reality often exploited by critics). The Grassy Narrows blockade demonstrates this complexity and its implications. In chapter 7 Willow acknowledges the significant support that non-Native environmental groups provided (as well as the benefits accruing to allies). But, she warns, outsiders do not necessarily appreciate how, for Native activists, environmentalism is intricately tied to issues of cultural identity and self-determination. Moreover, unity and consensus *within* the community is not to be assumed. Some residents were passively supportive; others were critical of the blockade. The possibility of compensation funds and jobs from Abitibi was tempting. The activists—who were relatively educated and materially well off—seemed to be playing for power and prestige. However, Abitibi invited elected officials, not blockade leaders, to negotiate an end to the impasse. The Chief and Council, though, as "an extension of the Canadian government . . . [that] chooses to work within the Indian Act" (184), was vulnerable to criticism, and was hard pressed to represent the community in the absence of a consensus.

The penultimate chapter undertakes a general assessment. Two years after the blockade began, negotiations were on-going between the Chief and Council, Abitibi, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The movement had had limited success, temporarily saving some Native land from logging. The blockaders had also become a model and inspiration, reaching out through the media and speaking engagements, and by hosting visitors from other Native communities. A short concluding chapter briefly re-iterates the book's contents, and goes on to list the three most important lessons of the Grassy Narrows blockade: environmental issues are socio-political ones, our species is *part of* the natural world, and we are *all* suffering the consequences of a destructive economic world system.

This readable book will be useful in various undergraduate courses on Aboriginal Society, Social Movements, World Problems, etc., including service courses as well as core offerings for Majors. □

Film and Video

Lene Pederson, editor

In the Wilderness of a Troubled Genre: Conversations with Ethnographic Filmmakers 2000-2012 John Melville Bishop, 52 minutes Distributed by <http://www.media-generation.net>

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Shot between 2000 and 2012 at AAA meetings and international festivals, *In the Wilderness of a Troubled Genre* is a folk history of ethnographic film told through serendipitous conversations with pioneering filmmakers, preeminent theorists, and workaday practitioners in the field. To those familiar with ethnographic film, the star-studded cast—John Marshall, Ricky Leacock, Robert Gardner, David MacDougall, Paul Henley, Sarah Elder, Alison Jablonko, Asen Balikci, Joan and Carol Williams, Jay Ruby, Colin Young, Gary Kildea, Peter Loizos—will be reason enough to see this video. Yet filmmaker John Bishop also includes scenes and interviews with younger scholars and clips from contemporary media, quilting a conversation across generations of this sub-disciplinary tribe once dubbed "the camera people" (Weinberger 1992). The resulting video is at once an invaluable account of defining values, practices, challenges, and debates in ethnographic film over the last half-century and a folk artifact, an oral history of the camera people.

In the Wilderness... is also a native ethnography and Bishop, who has made more than 25 ethnographic films, many in collaboration with folklorists and anthropologists, is quite clearly a member of the tribe he documents. Many of those featured in the film are his colleagues from a career spanning thirty-five years and Bishop's familiarity with his subjects brings a freshness and vitality to the work. In the spirit of full disclosure, it should be noted that this reviewer is one such colleague and her inclusion in the film, alongside people whose works she studied

in school, no doubt colors her appreciation of the piece. Yet, this vantage also brings humbling insight into the chance and contingency of making it into the final cut. As academic history, *In the Wilderness...* is neither canonical nor complete, nor does it aim to be. Those who look will immediately find gaps in starring cast and supporting chorus alike. Instead, the project takes a more adventitious path, guided by a gentle, inclusive ad-hocracy, and made in a process as dialogic as the collective conversation it presents. During production, Bishop screened the work-in-progress at seminars and AAA sessions to solicit input that fed back into the film and the sensibility of this open process is evident throughout the film.

In the Wilderness... contains a number of incomparable treasures, such as a sequence in which Ricky Leacock shares the editing lesson given to him by Robert Flaherty, director of *Nanook of the North* (1922), the international blockbuster that ushered in the documentary as a cinematic genre. Demonstrating the use of the close-up to create visual tension, Leacock talks us through a scene from Flaherty's *Moana* (1926), as shots from the film are illustratively inter-cut with his interview. We see just what Flaherty was showing Leacock as Leacock passes the lesson on to us.

Another lesson from the masters comes from John Marshall, best known for his series on the Ju/'hoansi (formerly the !Kung Bushmen), that began in 1950 and continued until his death in 2005. In one scene, Marshall concisely sums up the elements of film language—"You get angles, distances, and cuts, and that's about it"—and explains his approach: "You're not taking a picture of a Ju/hoan, you're taking a picture of a *person*." In another delicious scene, we see a student film crew conducting an interview with Marshall who ends up getting out of his chair to show them how they ought to be shooting the exchange so they can recreate it in the editing room.

In the Wilderness... is organically structured by topic, beginning with questions of definition—What constitutes an ethnographic film? Is it features of the text? Features of the filmmaker (i.e., whether she/he has a Ph.D.)? Or the process and ethics of research and representation? The documentary then criss crosses through major ques-

tions that have defined this "troubled genre" over the last fifty years. Objectivity, the status of film as data, archives, the breakdown of naïve realism, observational cinema, cinema verite, reflexivity, responsibility to film subjects, difficulties of editing, all are addressed in personal stories and group interviews interwoven to highlight both the theoretical and practical challenges of the genre.

In a topical thread that runs throughout the film, Bishop directs our attention to the importance of sound, a subject unduly neglected in the literature. Colin Young, one of the founders of UCLA's Ethnographic Film Program (launched in 1966), recounts an experiment where images were projected on three screens, with sync-sound randomly attached to only one of the images. As predicted, viewers remembered the images "that had sound attached." Leacock tells a war story about shooting 35mm, double-system sync sound on top of a mountain in Virginia with no electricity and using car batteries to power his equipment. This thread is picked up in a wonderful sequence where cinematographer John Terry talks of the egalitarian ethos that drove the quest for smaller, lighter equipment, and portable synchronous sound, showing it was not simply a technical pursuit, but a quest for "access to a different kind of reality than you have... with large profile equipment." Terry, who was working with Leacock at MIT, used the first Super-8 crystal-sync rig to shoot portions of *An American Family* (1973), a groundbreaking and controversial documentary television series that chronicled the daily life of the Louds, an upper middle class family in Santa Barbara, California. Clips from Terry's extraordinary footage of the Loud family's European vacation are intercut with his interview, providing vivid demonstration of the different kind of reality one can access with a single-person crew.

This technique of intercutting interviews with illustrative clips is also used to showcase contemporary developments in the field, such as sound installations at Ethnographic Terminalia 2012 and the drawings doctoral student Michael Aktins makes to illustrate his research on public sex between men, a subject that precludes photographic recording. *In the Wilderness...* deftly combines dozens of rich vignettes like these into a highly watchable and uniquely teachable documentary. The open, discursive style of

the documentary invites discussion of current trends and speculation on future developments. The dialogic structure yields a work that can just as effectively be shown in part, as in whole. In whole, it serves as a crash course in the history, theory, and practice of ethnographic filmmaking. In parts, it provides a rich trove of supplements to lectures on these subjects and, more broadly, on the ethics and epistemologies of ethnographic representation in any medium.

References

Weinberger, Eliot

1992 The Camera People. *Transition No. 55* (1992), pp. 24-54, Indiana University Press □