ing activism. If suburbanization and protest were merely two faces of African American striving for equality, as Wiese contends, should such activism be understood as located within the working class, the middle class, or both?

Probably no historical work can answer all the questions it raises, and the fact that these important issues are unresolved should not detract from the calibre of Wiese's achievement. *Places of Their Own* makes a powerful case for giving renewed attention to the concept of space as we explore the fundamental problem of race in history. Whether we are thinking of suburban homes or suburbanites, Wiese has demonstrated that they did not all look the same.

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Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890–1970* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

Tourists are not supposed to stay. At least not any more, they are not. For the most part we do not expect that the bus loads of American tourists who bundle onto Vancouver cruise ships to settle down when they get off the boat, open up all-you-can-eat restaurants, speculate on the local real estate market, and end up on the Board of Trade in a few years' time. Even the long-term tourists, the Asian language students who fill the Vancouver public library to capacity each day, are only meant to stay for a while, boosting sales of video-games while they are here certainly, but not becoming the mainstay of the local economy. One of the fascinating things about Michael Dawson's new book, *Selling British Columbia*, is the reminder that this was not always so. Up to the 1920s in this western province (and probably later in some regions), tourist promotion was immigration promotion. Come, called the local boosters, look around. And stay.

The early part of this book is, in other words, a world apart, both from our present era and from what came only a few decades later. *Selling British Columbia* is also different in the kinds of questions it asks about the history of tourism and the places where it goes looking for answers. Dawson's book is about the sellers, the promoters and the boosters. In a way, it is like Paul André Linteau's, *The Promoters' City* (a book Dawson cites) in that it tells us about how a place was packaged and made ready for economic development by a coterie of busy-bee entrepreneurs and civic-minded patriots. And the comparison, especially in the early years from the 1890s to the 1920s, is more apt than it might first appear. For the early tourists, despite all their desires to escape the enervating effects of modern life in the bracing western mountain air, nonetheless saw in this province great possibilities for industrial and commercial devel-

opment. It was these people who, in the early years, the promoters wanted to convince to stay. We never get a sense here of how many of them stayed (indeed, the book purposefully steers clear of the experiences of tourists themselves) but Dawson shows us the extent to which the economic side of tourism focused not on the money they spent but rather on the visitors' potential as settlers and investors.

Dawson takes us through eighty years of tourist promotion in British Columbia. His main point is to show how, when, and why ideas about tourism changed throughout the twentieth century. It is an ambitious task and time frame and the decision to focus on one province means that he can do a thorough job. He is writing as a counterpoint to a great deal of recent writing on tourism (and consumption more generally) that dwells almost exclusively on the tourist or consumer experience. This is not a book that will convince those who think reception-theory is the be-all-and-end-all of academic genres. Dawson admits that tourists could indeed interpret their experience in many ways, but he argues that the important story to be told — and the one that has been overlooked — is that of how tourist experiences were shaped and created. And for this, he turns to the promoters.

In British Columbia, these promoters tended to live in the two main cities, Victoria and Vancouver. Early on they were individuals with a mixture of economic and personal interests in selling their respective cities. Dawson traces the history of cooperation between these promoters as well as the tensions between the province's two main cities, prosperous Vancouver on the mainland and Victoria, once the province's main city and increasingly being left behind, on the island. Indeed Victoria takes up a greater share of the book than one would expect. As Vancouver became the main economic centre of the province, Victoria's boosters increasingly turned to tourism as a solution to economic marginalization.

For Dawson, Victoria's trajectory was soon to be British Columbia's. By the later 1920s and 1930s, the ideal of the tourist as settler began to be taken over by an ideal that we are more familiar with: the tourist as consumer. The transformation carried with it a great many implications. The way that promoters sold the province changed, becoming more psychologically sophisticated and, one might argue, hypocritical. In order to convince tourists to come to the province the boosters had to come up with a line that made the province seem unique; they had to find a way of differentiating British Columbia from anywhere else. This was especially the case when they directed their attention, as they increasingly did, to Americans. Why come to Victoria when you could go to Seattle? What did Vancouver offer that Portland did not?

For anyone the least bit familiar with British Columbia, the answers are monotonously familiar: wilderness, Mounties and totem poles. Victoria led the way in selling Britishness, moulding its downtown to fit the quaint image of a

city devoted to perpetual tea drinking and china crockery buying. At one point the Victoria and Island Publicity Bureau even campaigned for gas companies to build their stations in mock Elizabethan architecture and refer to gas by the British term "petrol." The change in attitudes towards aboriginals is illuminating. For early promoters, the province's First Nations were a hindrance, a reminder of the lack of civilization that jarred with the boosters' emphasis on growth and dynamism. By the 1950s and1960s, however, the tide had turned and tourist campaigners were trying to get Vancouver's new athletic stadium renamed "Totem Stadium" and were talking in promotional films about "our Indians." Lest anyone think this represented some growth of appreciation for those displaced by colonialism, Dawson shows that the change in attitude had more to do with changing economic priorities. "Having contributed directly to the colonial process in its first phase," he argues, "tourism promotion then contributed to a process of selective amnesia in its second phase — a process that normalized European control of the land and encouraged both visitors and hosts to reimagine the 'resettlement' of British Columbia as benign, comforting, and consumable fare" (176).

All of this is both interesting and convincing. Where Dawson loses me is with the chronology. The standard interpretation of Canadian history in the twentieth century makes a sharp divide in 1945. In a great many ways, what came after — the postwar economic take-off, the baby boom, more conservative gender relations — is said to be a backlash against what came before — economic depression, delayed family formation, and unstable times for gender. Dawson tries to bridge the divide. He argues that the postwar boom in tourism did not just stem from pent-up demand, stymied by depression and war. Instead, he argues that the activities of tourist promoters in the 1930s and 1940s deserve a lot more attention than they have been given. Through their work in advertising and their success in increasing government involvement and investment, British Columbia's tourism promoters helped in "creating the demand for leisure activities *before the 'boom' occurred*" (151, emphasis in original).

It is a hard argument to prove. Dawson shows that tourism did not disappear altogether in the 1930s and 1940s, and he also shows that it was in these years that governments at the federal and provincial level were won over to tourism. But the numbers of actual tourists dramatically declined. Tourist visits went down throughout the war years, rising slightly in 1945 and then taking off dramatically in 1946. This certainly fits the picture painted by the pent-up demand argument. How much of a role did Dawson's years of consolidation play in this take-off? Without a comparative study, it is impossible to know. Were there other areas that did not go through this consolidation? Were there fewer tourists in areas where local tourism promoters failed to consolidate the industry? It is only these kinds of comparisons that could prove the argument.

Yet if this particular argument is not altogether convincing the book pro-

vides many other compelling points and, even more importantly, refreshing questions. How was tourism shaped? How were tourist experiences created and why? How and why did this change over the twentieth century. This book should set up a great debate about the nature of consumer culture in Canada. How much control have consumers had in controlling the meaning of what they purchase, whether this be household furniture or tourist getaways? And how much attention should historians give to the advertisers' and producers' rhetoric as compared to the consumers' responses? In this book, Dawson sides with the former, giving us a thorough account of the way British Columbia's promoters sold the province to visitors.

He has a point. If you every have the chance to wander down to the totem poles in Vancouver's Stanley Park you are bound to find groups of tourists milling about. The fact that there are rarely any First Nations people around, and that, on most days at least, most Vancouverites walk by the poles without even noticing them does not seem to matter. For many tourists the totem poles are what Vancouver is all about. And if there just happens to be a café and shop nearby ... well, I am sure that is just a coincidence.

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Jordanna Bailkin, *The Culture of Property: The Crisis of Liberalism in Modern Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

At first glance Jordanna Bailkin's *The Culture of Property* might well have been titled *The Strange Death of the Liberal Museum.* It is a book that seems to want to use Edwardian debates about museums to cast new light over George Dangerfield's classic thesis of a sustained crisis brought about by Edwardian feminism, labour activism, Irish home rulers, and a group of Liberal parliamentarians bent on limiting the power of the landed aristocracy. But this book is actually far more interesting and significant, as Bailkin is not merely warming over Dangerfield's dated thesis. The "crisis of liberalism" for her is really shorthand for the complex tensions between property and citizenship within liberalism. Thus, Bailkin sets out to explore the nature of "cultural property" and detail the contested relationship between culture *and* property during the Edwardian era.

Bailkin starts her study with some probing questions — what kind of property is art? Is art property at all? Does the possession of art reinforce existing social inequities, or can it transcend, even "revolutionize" them? — and offers four case studies and a wealth of evidence from court transcripts, gallery archives, exhibition reviews, private correspondence, cartoons, and photo-