

to break down academic literatures into smaller units (articles vs. extended narratives—i.e., books), but he sees no intellectual problems with this and celebrates its benefits. The humanities, he suggests, should follow, but they probably won't. What the technology drives is, apparently, unalloyed good in intellectual terms. He also elides the issue of publisher's economic enclosure movements that seek to sell those same bite-sized units to libraries many times over.

In sum, if you are intrigued by one of Cronin's ideas, there is little to recommend buying this book over reading one of the original articles. Cronin described an earlier book of his (*Jeremiad Jottings*, 2004) as a "self-indulgent look" at the themes he addressed, and that is a fair characterization of this one as well. The intellectual framework he tries to provide does not hold up as well as he assumes, the work is repetitive and contains little that cannot be gleaned from one of the previously published articles upon which it was based, and the approach can best be described as a set of in-house musings apparently meant to edify those unfamiliar with Cronin or his high-level colleagues.

The book has a thorough index.—*John Buschman, Rider University.*

Edwards, Brendan Frederick R. *Paper Talk: A History of Libraries, Print Culture, and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada before 1900.* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2005. 221 p. alk. paper, \$48 (ISBN 081085113X). LC 2004-18156.

This fascinating book is much more than a history of print culture and libraries among aboriginal peoples in Canada, as its title suggests. It is also a devastating critique of the narrow, ethnocentric notions of literacy that European colonists imposed on these aboriginal peoples and an account of how this imposition worked against the social, political, intellectual, and economic advancement of these peoples, despite the colonists' claims that this was being done for the betterment of these

"primitive" peoples. It also documents how the aboriginal peoples of Canada were not passive pawns in this process but from the beginning recognized the potential of the printed word as a tool for advancing their own interests, although most of their attempts to do so were quashed by the individuals, be they missionaries or government officials, who at the same time claimed to have the natives' best interests at heart.

In Chapter 1, Edwards successfully sets the stage for his work in two important ways. First, he persuasively argues that Western notions of literacy are not simply intellectual concepts, but powerful social and political tools that in the hands of the champions of Western culture became perhaps the primary mechanism for bringing "civilization" to aboriginal peoples. From this perspective, which is still held by many in so-called "civilized" societies, peoples who are unable to read or write in the Western manner are morally, culturally, and economically backward with no chance for progress without assistance. According to this view, the primary way to help them become "productive" members of civilized society is to teach them, often by force, to read and write.

The second important point established in Chapter 1 is that the aboriginal peoples of Canada employed a number of highly effective means of graphic communication prior to first contact, including hieroglyphs, birch bark scrolls, wampum belts, winter counts, pictographs, and petroglyphs. In addition to oral tradition, these sophisticated means of communication had served them very well for thousands of years. But the European colonists, with their narrow and ethnocentric concept of literacy, assumed that these peoples were locked in a preliterate state from which they could only be released by learning to read and write English or French.

Chapter 2 documents how Western colonists, primarily Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries, used the printed

word as a tool to bring Christianity and civilization to the aboriginal peoples of Canada during the 19th century. Interestingly, the Roman Catholic and Protestant approaches were somewhat different. The Roman Catholics tended to baptize first and teach later. They were also instrumental in creating syllabic scripts for several native languages, which allowed them to produce bibles and other religious works for their converts to read. Of great interest is the fact that these syllabic scripts were most rapidly accepted among the Mi'kmaq, who were the primary users of hieroglyphs in precolonial Canada. It could be argued that the Mi'kmaq were preadapted to accept the Western concept of the written word due to their traditional use of hieroglyphs and other systems of graphic communication.

On the other hand, Protestant missionaries tended to teach the natives to read and write first, leaving conversion for a later time. Sometimes with the help of natives who had been taught the principles of alphabetic scripts, these missionaries developed romanized alphabets for various native languages. As a result, publication of works in these alphabets exploded, although almost all the books were still religious in nature. These were often used in schools as well. But by the end of the 19th century, government officials began to realize that teaching native students to read and write in their own language was counterproductive to their goal of assimilation and thus required that schools use English exclusively. It was in this period that aboriginal peoples and their instructors first began to request books in English to create small libraries for their students. Philanthropists also became involved in providing books for these libraries. These books were primarily light but morally appropriate material for young students to read during their spare time so that they would not be tempted to read the many inappropriate magazines and books that the white Canadian press was producing at that time. These small collections represent the first libraries in

Canada specifically intended for use by aboriginal peoples.

In the next two chapters, Edwards documents how, between 1900 and 1940, the small libraries in schools for aboriginal students established in the late 19th century were systematically neglected despite repeated requests from natives and white instructors for additional materials to support the curriculum. Although lack of funds certainly played a role in this neglect, Edwards persuasively argues that social, political, and economic issues were also of importance. Since the primary role of aboriginal schools was to produce productive native workers to support the economy and not intellectuals to challenge the white middle and upper classes, why spend money to upgrade libraries in native schools? By the 1930s, however, this attitude began to change as both educators and social reformers called for improved aboriginal school libraries and the development of public libraries to serve aboriginal communities. Although there were, and still are, problems due to lack of funding and other issues, by 1960 the notion of libraries specifically designed to serve the needs of aboriginal peoples was firmly rooted in Canadian society.

One very interesting development mentioned in these chapters is the establishment of the Lady Wood Library in the Mi'kmaq village on Lennox Island in 1910, apparently the first library outside a school to be established in a Canadian aboriginal community. Funded by the estate of Lady Augusta Wood, this library was specifically designed for the needs of the community, providing space not only for books but also for social occasions, community meetings, storytelling, and other native forms of entertainment and information sharing. Unfortunately, lack of ongoing funding made it difficult to maintain. Edwards draws attention to the intriguing fact that this first aboriginal community library just happens to have been established among the same people who were perhaps best prepared to accept the Western notion of print culture

because of the hieroglyphic system in use among them prior to contact.

Edwards concludes with an excellent summary chapter that places his study in both historical and contemporary context. Of special value are his suggestions for improving aboriginal community libraries in Canada and other parts of the world. This book should be required reading for any librarian serving the needs of aboriginal peoples.

In summary, this provocative, well-written, well-edited, and thoroughly documented study deserves a place on the "must read" list of any academic librarian interested in the history of libraries, the social implications of Western notions of literacy, and/or the provision of library services to aboriginal peoples. Brendan Edwards and Scarecrow Press are to be commended for making this important study available at a relatively reasonable price.—*Wade Kotter, Weber State University.*

Knuth, Rebecca. *Burning Books and Levelling Libraries: Extremist Violence and Cultural Destruction.* Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006. 233 p. \$39.95 (ISBN 0275990079). LC 2006-2747.

Readers of this lucidly written, excellently organized, and passionately argued book may never be able to view libraries the same way again; libraries, the author demonstrates, are not just information portals or storehouses of ideas, but something more dangerous and often feared: they are battlefields.

Knuth, Chair of the Library and Information Science Program at the University of Hawaii, where she is also an assistant professor, received great praise for her previous volume, *Libricide: The Regime Sponsored Destruction of Books and Libraries in the Twentieth Century* (2003). In this sequel of sorts, she teases out themes introduced there, but goes further afield. Knuth states her prejudices plainly: "I am a liberal humanist with a deep respect for intellectual freedom and individual rights." Despite disclaimers of not being a

historian, political scientist, or sociologist, she nevertheless displays deep familiarity and ease in these disciplines and she quotes liberally and well from her wide reading. In her writing, she synthesizes diverse bodies of knowledge that range from international studies to comparative sociology of genocide. All, however, are tools, serving the broader goal of documenting the flashpoint nature of libraries in totalitarian and/or extremist states, or merely in the gaze of those individuals harboring inflexible, rigid, and/or rabid ideas.

To set up her thesis, Knuth first explains biblioclasm, a word not of her coining, but one linked to iconoclasm—the destruction of images someone finds corrupting. She notes the modern manifestations of biblioclasm and, like an epidemiologist tracking the breakouts of a virus (of vandalism), she traces its flare-ups from the Enlightenment forward, from Robespierre to Milosevic. She then routes her readers into the realms of psychology and sociology to parse the six identified motivations for vandalism. Some stem from play or malice; others erupt from vindictive, acquisitive, tactical, and/or ideological motives. These provide the author with the tools to deconstruct acts of cultural destruction throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

Knuth links the seemingly mindless and mind-numbing cultural and human tragedies together by types of conflict and the perpetrators' uses (and abuses) of power. The episodes in Part One document local struggles in which libraries were destroyed for political reasons or at the behest of ethnic protests. A chapter describes in brisk yet full detail an attack on a library of South African materials by left wingers in Amsterdam, and another presents various Hindu/Buddhist/Muslim (Shiite and Sunni) attacks on various sects, including their libraries. She marshals her facts and numbers well, with precise prose laying out the devastation to books, archives, cultural institutions, and