

and self-willed; most admirable perhaps, Heloise, who is given full credit for being as Aberlard called her “supreme in the abundance of her literary knowledge” (p. 111).

Dronke’s method is to give generous stretches of translations of the works in question (most works were in Latin, some in Provençal), and to supplement the translations with reference to the original language from time to time. The translated works are illuminated by his surrounding analyses. The book is actually a combination of edition (appendices at the back contain critical editions based on multiple manuscripts of several of the works referred to, and Dronke has a long excursus demonstrating Heloise’s third letter to have been of her own composition, not Abelard’s), translation, and literary analysis. It is an odd combination, but clearly an intelligent approach to make to these neglected works, works that have been ignored by all but a few because they have been inaccessible, available only in poor editions or available only to those who read medieval Latin. Dronke’s great triumph is to present us with these works at the same time as showing us why we should be glad to have them.

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**Dzelarhons: Myths of the Northwest Coast.** Anne Cameron. *Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 1986, Pp. 160.*

Women all over the world are waiting for any new book from Anne Cameron so there can be general rejoicing in the news that she has published several in the last year. Harbour Publishing published *The Annie Poems* in 1986. A San Francisco feminist press, spinsters/aunt lute, has reprinted her earlier novel *The Journey* and is planning to publish a sequel to it in the near future. Finally, five years after the publication of the best-selling *Daughters of Copper Woman*, Anne Cameron continues her woman-centered revisioning of Vancouver Island native myths and legends in a new collection entitled *Dzelarhons*.

As in *Cooper Woman*, the name of a primordial mother, Dzelarhons the Frog Woman, serves as title for the volume. *Dzelarhons* does not have the narrative unity of the earlier work; instead Cameron has gathered together a group of eight unrelated tales chosen, it appears, to show the diverse ways in which the “world is full of magic.” This includes three animals legends, two quasi-historical narratives, one myth of transformation, and two legends about humans interacting, usually disastrously, with animals and nature.

The most engaging of all the tales—worth the purchase price in itself—is the lyrical “Orca’s Child” which tells of the origin and meaning of Orca’s black and white colouring. No one could call this the killer whale again after reading the story. Here the love between two females, Orca and Eagles Flies High, issues in the birth of a child that combines features of both parents. While the mating of two creatures of different species is a common motif in North Pacific native legend, the emphasis on the superiority of the love between women is a characteristic Cameron theme. So is her insistence that “because these wonderful creatures are the result of love between creatures of different worlds, they are capable of love for all things.” Such love can create harmony throughout the world: when Orca dances above the waves to the music of human women, Osprey adds her song to the chorus and,

three realities would be joined in speech. And when this happened, the very rocks of the earth would begin to vibrate, and hum, until all of creation, for a brief moment, was united.

The tale of Orca’s child and the two Raven stories in *Dzelarhons* would make excellent children’s reading. “Raven and Snipe” and “Raven Goes Berry-picking” are full of details of mischief, deceit and justice that children relish. Raven appears ubiquitously in North Pacific Coast lore; Cameron’s version of Snipe’s revenge, for example, is nearly identical to one recorded from the Nootka by Edward Sapir except that her animals are female and her narrative has an exuberance not found in the ethnographic material:

[Raven] munched and she crunched and she chewed and she swallowed and she gorged and she stuffed herself until even she thought she was going to split right down the middle.

Contrast this to the sober description in Sapir: “Every time he ate it all up in a hurry. Raven had much to eat. He had nothing left over.” Anthropologists have complained about Cameron’s habit of revising native stories, yet the flatness in texture of many ethnographic records leaves Cameron’s reader feeling that her versions must come much closer in spirit to the power and fascination of the prehistoric stories.

In “Orca’s Child” and “Lazy Boy,” a story of how the world is held in place, Cameron is content to leave unexplained the magic of mythic occurrence. In “Muddle-head” and the sixty-page title story, “Dzelarhons,” she tends to supply realistic, even novelistic, details that domesticate the stories and perhaps shows how foreign,

after all, is that ancient mythic imagination to a modern writer. At the same time, this practice is one that probably endears her to many of her women readers, since some of the narrative gaps in the ethnographic accounts would seem to demand some woman-centered commentary. What happens to an unsophisticated and unarmed woman travelling alone in the far north who is discovered by a group of men? She probably gets raped, maybe even gang raped, then possibly gets pregnant. When she manages to escape to an inhabited area she will have to explain the source of her pregnancy, and this will cause difficulties for her and her child. This is the kind of experience Cameron explores with great sensitivity in "Dzelarhons." The mixture of the naturalistic and the supernatural do not blend well, and the lengthy string of events finally dwindle into didacticism.

The two historical tales, "The Bearded Woman" and "Ta-Naz Finds Happiness," escape this criticism but might well draw another kind, since Cameron assumes the existence of matriarchal societies and does not carefully enough distinguish between matriarchal and matrilinear/matrifocal. The stories are of interest because in them Cameron imagines how matriarchal societies might have functioned, and she suggests how patriarchal invasions might have been resisted at both the personal and social levels.

Although "Dzelarhons" is intended as a collection of native myths, the section I like best is the very personal "Forward" where Cameron explains her relationship to Klopinum, a Salish story-teller who lived on a reserve near Cameron's childhood home in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island. This provides Cameron with an important opportunity for self-explanation as she has been criticized by anthropologists and, more importantly, by some natives, for her appropriation of native stories, natives are understandably chary of the possible cultural imperialism of white writers who have too often used native legends without permission of the groups to whom the stories belong. Cameron has been far more careful about this than most white writers; for example, all the royalties of *Daughters of Copper Woman* have been donated to native projects. She avoids the mistake she made in *Copper Woman* where she claims to have received permission to tell the story of a secret matriarchal society from "a few dedicated women" who "prefer not to be publicly named or honoured." In *Dzelharhons*, Cameron demonstrates her connection to a native tradition and names her informant. We are told that Klopinum recognized Cameron's gifts, taught her stories, then encouraged her to devise her own methods for telling them.

It was not expected that I use the very same words she used, but it was expected that whatever words I chose, the rhythm was to be as strong and as regular as the waves or my own breathing, and the heart of the story be unchanged.

Throughout the collection of stories we discover this refrain: "This is not the song she sang, but is one like it." In this way Cameron establishes herself as source of the stories' style and assumes the right to modify the content.

There is no question that the little girl from Nanaimo who was always "making up stories" has become one of the great story-tellers of our time. To anyone concerned about the ways one group appropriates the experience and achievements of a subordinated group, Cameron's use of native materials remains a problem. Even if the royalties for *Dzelarhons* were to be handled as they are at the Press Gang Publishers, it is still Anne Cameron's professional reputation that profits from the publication. Yet, at what point can a gifted and successful writer make a living from her work? Cameron has in many important ways devoted herself to the service of natives and their culture. I do not have the answer to this dilemma; but, I think we should see it as one, even as we appreciate the value of the work.

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**Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920.** Marta Danylewycz. Paul-André Linteau, Alison Prentice and William Westfall, editors. *Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987, Pp. 203.*

As Professors Linteau, Prentice and Westfall point out in their moving preface, this study represents "an important contribution to the history of Quebec and the history of women" (p. 12). Thanks to their commitment and diligence, the scholarship of historian Marta Danylewycz, whose life was tragically cut short just when she was beginning to exert a considerable influence on her profession, is now accessible to a wider audience. Using Marta's doctoral dissertation, which was completed in 1981, her own notes for revising the text, and the several articles she had subsequently published, the editors have succeeded in bringing to completion a cohesive, well-documented and very readable monograph.

*Taking the Veil* is an outstanding example of the potential of feminist scholarship to reshape our understanding