

# **The Contested Restructuring qua Remapping of British Columbia's Forest Economy: Reflections on the 'Crossroads' and 'War in the Woods' Metaphors**

Roger Hayter\*  
Department of Geography  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6

## **Introduction**

For two decades, British Columbia's (BC's) forest economy has been widely characterized by 'crossroads' and 'war in the woods' metaphors. The crossroads metaphor reflects on a restructuring from a mass production, cost-minimizing commodity system based on high quality first growth timber to a more flexible, value maximizing and product-differentiated system based on poorer quality, increasingly second growth timber. The war in the woods metaphor refers to three distinct disputes involving trade, the environment and Aboriginal Peoples. In general terms, these disputes feature conflicts among newly emergent neo-liberal, environmental and aboriginal values and between these values and those in place for a remapping of forest rights and use. The remapping implies that the non-industrial values of forests, in contrast to the past, be given greater priority, even pre-eminence, in the future.

This paper offers some generalized reflections on the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors as they relate to BC's forest economy. As Barnes (1991, 1996) notes metaphors are used extensively across the social sciences to stimulate new thoughts, question orthodoxy and to succinctly communicate complex social processes and structures. In the present context, the crossroads and war in the

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woods metaphors have been cited by economists, political scientists, sociologists and geographers to help interpret BC's forest economy. Both metaphors are insightful, provocative and have become part of a wide discourse, routinely cited in newspaper articles. Indeed, such continued use of both metaphors may be considered ironic. After all, the sense of a 'crossroads' is to imply a transient state between two more stable existing and future states. Similarly, most people fight wars to end them and to create a more desirable and peaceful situation as soon as possible. Yet, the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors have represented BC's forest economy since the early 1980s. This period is virtually the half-life of a Kondratiev or 50 year 'long wave' that some observers argue have driven the evolution of capitalism since the late 18th century (Freeman 1987). Alternatively put, the period defined by the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors is as long as the post-war ('Fordist') boom (from about 1945 to 1970) that ingrained the physical and institutional structures within BC's forest economy that are the targets of restructuring and remapping. Moreover, there is no immediate end (as of early 2005) in sight to the disputes underlying the war in the woods metaphor nor to pleas for restructuring that underlie the crossroads metaphor.

The idea that the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors describe an enduring, paradigmatic reality of BC's forest economy, rather than some transitional state, is the starting point for this paper. A key task is to explain the durability of the metaphors, or why crossing the crossroads to a more desirable forest economy that is based on peace in the woods has proven so difficult. In this regard, I emphasize the historical basis of the crossroads metaphor and the geographic basis of the war in the woods metaphor and that the forces underlying the two metaphors are causally interconnected. This argument departs from much prevailing wisdom, recently illustrated by Cashore et al 2001, that emphasizes the power of history conceptualized in the form of the negative path dependencies generated by the previous (Fordist) regime that began with the Forest Policy Act of 1947 that privileged corporate-industrial policy. In this 'history is to blame' perspective, large integrated corporations that have dominated long-term forestry tenures since the Fordist period in support of an export commodity culture have successfully resisted attempts for forestry reform and the remapping of forestry rights towards non-industrial uses and small firms. In this view, the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors define a cause and effect relationship. In particular, this view argues that continued corporate domination has prevented the crossing of the crossroads and has led to the disputes underlying the war in the woods. In contrast, my argument interprets the war in the woods as the local expression of globalization that is created by complex new clashes among the forces of neo-liberalism, environmentalism and aboriginalism that in one way or another are transforming resource economies around the world. In this view, the war in the woods has become a cause as well as effect of the crossroads status of BC's forest economy. Indeed, the central claim or hypothesis of this paper is that the interdependent causality of the crossroads and war in the wood metaphors, or strictly speaking of the social processes symbolized by these two metaphors, is the key to understanding the apparently intractable problems facing the restructuring qua remapping of

BC's forest economy.

My comments are discursive, judgmental and reflective rather than empirical. They seek to help interpret a voluminous, evolving literature that is documenting the extraordinarily complex forces confronting BC's forest economy (Barnes and Hayter 1997; Cashore et al 2001; Hayter 2000 and 2003; Marchak et al 1999; Wilson 1998). I argue that the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors not only provide tantalizing points of departure - titles and headlines - to engage debate but can also be interpreted to imply distinctive ways of thinking about BC's forest economy. These metaphors have not been comparatively scrutinized, however, and their (potential) distinctiveness is scarcely appreciated in the literature, if at all. Yet, it is not coincidental that both metaphors have been developed to assess BC's forest economy at more or less the same time; that is they are interdependent. By proposing and clarifying their differences, this paper simultaneously seeks to explain their interdependence in a way that sheds insights on the restructuring of BC's forest economy.

The paper begins with brief introductory comments on metaphors in regional analysis. The substance of the paper then first explores the theme of the crossroads metaphor and, second, the theme of the war in the woods metaphor. The discussion takes for granted a political economy literature that conceptualizes industrial evolution as restructuring processes around Kondratiev of 50 year long waves (Freeman 1987). In this view, over the last two-three decades the global economy has experienced a transformation from Fordism to post-Fordism or the information and communication techno-economic paradigm (ICT). The crossroads and war in the woods metaphors share the view that in BC's forest economy this transformation has been convoluted, conflict oriented and cannot be taken for granted.

## Metaphors and Regional Analysis

As Barnes (1991: 112) notes, metaphors "consist of giving a thing a name that belongs to something else". Whether metaphors are 'small' and designed to contribute to writing style, 'big' and created to shape research agendas, or somewhere between big and small, they are used widely across the sciences (and economic geography). Typically, the 'metaphoric thing' is a well-understood process, concept or feature that is, in Barnes' (1991: cc) terms, "absurdly" different, from the substantive thing being analogized. In turn, such absurdity helps underline the metaphor's message and provoke new lines of thought that are in some sense radical or controversial. In particular, metaphors are justified as 'lightening rods' for debate and the questioning of prevailing wisdom and/or as 'sign posts' to new approaches. While skepticism has been expressed regarding their analytical value, metaphors are nevertheless "something that we are stuck with, and stuck to" (Barnes 1991: 118). Indeed, the role of metaphors in redirecting disciplinary thinking, was likely boosted by economic geography's nomothetic turn(s) (and the rise of regional science) in the 1960s and by more recent hermeneutic and eclectic

approaches to research (Barnes 2001). Greater scrutiny of metaphors in regional analysis seems justified.

In general, metaphors represent a creative, intuitive use of language whose meaning and interpretation is anchored in contextualized experience (Pugh et al 1992; Leeman 1995: 166). The purpose of metaphors has to be understood in terms of their creation at particular times and places, by whom and why. Two debates over regional analysis are instructive in this regard. First, on the leading edge of geography's quantitative revolution in the 1960s, Curry's (1966: 40) depiction of landscape as "governed by the mechanics of the roulette wheel and its development as a permanent floating crap game", effectively illustrates the two metaphorical functions of lightening rod and signpost. At the time, the roulette wheel/crap game metaphors shocked and threatened the then orthodoxy of areal differentiation with its tendency to emphasize historically-based descriptive accounts of unique regions. This metaphor simultaneously directed research towards quantitative, especially stochastic analysis of spatial processes. Similarly, the representation of spatial processes as gravity models provided perhaps the most celebrated (and criticized) metaphor that cajoled economic geography and regional science towards economically rationale and quantitative approaches (Barnes 1996: 155-9). In turn, ideas about landscape in the form of probability surfaces, distance decay functions and uniform plains, that so threatened traditional views of landscape, were themselves strongly challenged, not least by an emerging marxist-inspired community of economic geographers. To a significant degree this opposition coalesced around Massey's (1984, 1989) so-called 'geological metaphor' of the spatial division of labour, as interpreted as historically-generated, combinations of 'layers of spatial structures' (Warde 1985) and as the 'geology of social relations' (Huxley 1989: 659). As a lightening rod, this metaphor rejected the new wisdom rooted in economic rationality and quantification in order to privilege historically based social forces that were exploitative and contradictory.

Interestingly, in contrast to the gravity and roulette wheel metaphors that reflected their desired ideological views, there is nothing inherent to the geological metaphor that signaled the marxist bias of the debate it provoked. Indeed, the geological metaphor is puzzling from this perspective. After all, the metaphor is rooted in historical, indeed geological time to help understand a geographical phenomenon that according to original radical formulations of the international (spatial) division of labour were to be explained in terms of geographically mobile capital (Hymer 1960; Frank 1967). The geological metaphor with its connotations of slow, sequential in-situ layerings of social structures does not seem to provide an analogous representation of rapid, scale-jumping boundary-spanning movements of capital. Moreover, especially at the time of its creation, the discussants of the geological metaphor had no intrinsic interests in physical processes (and physical geography). Indeed, they would have doubtless roundly rejected any thought that physical and social processes were analogous in any serious way or that physical sciences such as geology provided any kind of model for social science. Nevertheless, despite its opaqueness, the geological metaphor became the summary signature for a debate that engaged a specific community of scholars, and

that has had longer-term implications for research directions within economic geography.

I would argue for greater scrutiny of metaphors that are part of important regional discourses, as well as those used to make 'universal' appeals about research directions. Indeed, if economic geography seeks to explain "how place makes a difference to the economic process" (Barnes 1987: 307) then understanding regionally defined metaphors is part of this task. In recent years, regional variations in economic structures have been metaphorically represented as regional mosaics (Scott and Storper 1986) and as kaleidoscopes through which regional variations are created by different ways through which principles of competition, cooperation and control are mediated (Patchell 1996). Within such broader perspectives, metaphorical representations of specific regional economies at particular times offer analytical and comparative potential. Moreover, metaphors are used in all kinds of debates and feature prominently in popular as well as academic literatures. As an explanatory tool or aid, metaphors have applied value and their interrogation should not be limited to abstract, philosophical debate. Admittedly, metaphorical assessments are judgmental. But the very act of clarifying the nature of these judgments should help clarify the meaning of metaphors and the processes, even models they symbolize.

The remainder of this paper turns to a discussion of the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors as used in the context of the contemporary restructuring of BC's forest economy. Both metaphors are important points of departure for interpreting trends in this economy, itself justification for their scrutiny. For the most part, the metaphors have been used in a casual way in newspapers and academic literatures and not critically related and compared as they are in this paper. Such a comparison is not straightforward and is judgmental and, *a priori*, it is not possible to simply link them to specific ideological positions. However, the two metaphors invite and imply different interpretations of BC's forest economy. In this regard, two basic (and related) assertions of this paper's interpretation of these interpretations need to be reinforced.

The first, least controversial claim is that both the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors were stimulated (invented) to jolt conventional thinking and long established metaphors that had virtually become literal. Clearly, BC's forest economy is not a transportation network but the (absurd) metaphor of the crossroads directly opposed the prevailing idea (and metaphor) of the BC's forest economy as a 'cyclical process' with recessions simply providing temporary interruptions to otherwise stable growth of established structures. In the (conventional) cyclical metaphor, the economy bounces back to some equilibrium state or to an established trend. The crossroads metaphor, by contrast, implies secular change and movement from one different qualitative structure to another, that is, it rejects notions of equilibrium processes or cycles around a given trend. The BC's forest economy is also clearly (and thankfully) not a real war zone, although this is the case in some other resource peripheries around the world. In BC, the (absurd) metaphor of the war in the woods has threatened the prevailing notions of a stable forest economy tightly (and often secretly) controlled by the wood

"exploitation axis" formed by government, business and labour (Wilson 1998). In replacing the latter, the war in the woods metaphor suggests that BC's forest economy has become a more hostile, unstable and transparently unruly place.

The second, perhaps more controversial claim emphasizes the historical perspective of the crossroads metaphor and the geographical basis of the war in the woods metaphor. Thus, Binkley (1997), a neoclassical economist, has emphasized a time-based (quantitative) model of timber exploitation in which the crossroads is defined when forest exploitation shifts from the cutting of old growth to second growth timber which for him demands a transformation in the way in which forests are managed and industry is organized. In a related, albeit more qualitative way, other social scientists have portrayed the restructuring of BC's forest economy as part of an historic transformation from a Fordist to a post-Fordist paradigm, method of regulation or form of accumulation (Hayter 2000; Cashore et al 2001). This transformation implies significantly different production structures, organizational relations and attitudes to industrial forestry. In the use of the crossroads metaphor, the sense of changing imperatives over (historical) time is paramount. In contrast, the geographical basis of the war in the woods metaphor is evident in two main ways. First, the war in the woods metaphor interprets BC as a 'contested space' driven by conflicts among different institutional values represented generally by the forces of industrialism, environmentalism and aboriginalism (Hayter 2003). Second, the conflicts involve the institutional combatants in various complex forms of local-global dynamics that have extended the conflicts to arenas beyond BC. The war is about control over territory and the combatants seek alliances wherever they can find them (Wilson 1998; Stansbury 2000).

Admittedly, geography and history are not so easily split and if the crossroads metaphor is primarily historical it also implies a fundamental change in the mapping of BC's forest resources. Similarly, if the war in the woods metaphor is primarily geographical it also implies the clash of vested interests in BC's forest economy, especially business, government and labour, with interests, especially those of Aboriginal Peoples and environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS), that had previously been marginalized. But these are caveats that do not upset the respective association between the crossroads and war in the woods metaphors with historical and geographical biases.

### The Crossroads as Paradigm

Within the context of the debate on BC's forest economy, the modern use of the crossroads metaphor has its roots in the uncertain 1970s when energy crises, recessions and stagflation all conspired to give a threatening sense of change in BC as elsewhere. A well publicized forest inventory in 1974 set off alarm bells about declines in timber supply potentials as in virtually all regions of the province the annual allowable cut (AAC) was at or near its limit (Reed 1974). Moreover, BC's first-ever NDP government was strongly opposed to corporate domination of the

forest industry and the subsequent Pearse Royal Commission of 1976 also supported the idea of tenure reform, specifically by assigning more timber rights to small firms. At the time, the winds of change metaphor, popularized in the 1960s by the British Prime-minister Harold MacMillan when referring to the end of colonial empires, began to be used to represent the onset of economic restructuring within advanced economies, including with respect to the BC's forest economy. The NDP, however, failed to articulate a strategy to direct these winds of change and if the Pearse Commission revealed mastery of a complex system of timber rights and policies, it too lacked a clear new vision.

Nevertheless, the growing sense of the need for fundamental, historic change was hammered home by the severe recession beginning in BC in 1980. As Binkley (1997: 15) writes, "British Columbia lies at a crossroads in the transition between forests provided by providence and those created by human husbandry and stewardship. Many of the changes now tormenting British Columbia are predictable consequences of human interaction with primeval forests". Clapp (1998) further articulated the dynamics of the relentless transition implied by exploitation of old growth (primeval) forests as part of his 'resource cycle' thesis. Indeed, the provincial government recognized this transition in 1981 when it admitted a looming 'falldown effect' which occurs when the harvest levels of cutting old growth forests would soon decline in the shift towards reliance on more recent and planted forests (Percy 1986; see also Marchak et al 1999). In turn, rapidly changing resource dynamics demanded new approaches to forest management and contributed towards new flexibility imperatives for industry that define the nature of the transformation from Fordism to the ICT and that are fundamentally rooted in technological, market and political changes. From this perspective, the early 1980s' recession confirmed the demise of the old (Fordist) ways of thinking while awakening needs for more flexible production systems, firms and factories.

Moreover, the forest industry itself properly recognized this recession not as a temporary downturn but as a signal for long term restructuring driven by the cost-price squeeze associated with the late stages of resource cycles and by radical technological and market changes that originated in other sectors. Indeed, pioneering firms and progressive industry thinkers argued that restructuring should favour more diversified, differentiated and higher value outputs rather than simply relying on increases in processing cost efficiencies. That is, industry itself prescribed the basis for the crossroads metaphor. The recession also provoked the disputes underlying the war in the woods. Thus American lumber producers who had also been damaged by the recession decided that Canadian imports were to blame for their problems and in 1981 the Coalition for Fair Canadian Lumber Imports (CFCLI) was created to oppose softwood lumber exports from Canada, especially BC. With respect to environmentalism, ENGO opposition to logging intensified during the recession of the 1980s, stimulated by the claim that forestry was a sunset sector that was failing to create jobs even as it destroyed the environment. ENGO opposition became even more inflamed when they realized that the provincial government had introduced 'sympathetic administration', and were relaxing the rules governing logging, to help companies reduce costs and survive the

recession. Long simmering Aboriginal concerns over the lack of treaties in BC were similarly aroused by fears of industry collapse and an excessively exploited resource. Aboriginal protests were given added impetus by the Charter of Rights introduced in 1982 and which formally recognized aboriginal land title. Over the next 20 years, regardless of actions by right wing or left wing provincial governments, opposition by the CFCLI, ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples to provincial forestry policy has escalated (Hayter 2003).

### The Enduring Crossroads

Since 1980, BC's forest industries have experienced considerable restructuring. Employment downsizing, shifts towards employment flexibility, computerization and automation, loss of some commodity lines, the expansion and diversification of exports to Japan, and the emergence of secondary manufactured wood products are discernible trends (Hayter 2000). Yet, if restructuring has been an insistent theme in the literature on BC's forest economy, the crossroads remains a metaphor of choice. Marchak's (1983) *Green Gold*, while primarily written prior to the recession, nevertheless became the landmark study symbolizing the boom and bust nature of BC's forest economy and the need for long term change. Indeed, the idea that the BC economy was in a (troubled) crossroads was clearly identified in the literature on the 1980s. Moreover, in the last few years several studies that have analyzed the contemporary dynamics of BC's forests have reinforced and elaborated on the crossroads metaphor (Binkley 1997; Hayter 2000; Cashore et al 2001). If anything, the crossroads metaphor is even more strongly established as the starting point for analyzing and prescribing change in BC's forest economy than 20 years ago. These studies argue that during Fordism competitiveness was based on access to high quality low cost trees that were manufactured in large volumes to realize economies of scale. In the future, the claim is that competitiveness must be based on human skills and creativity to produce efficiencies and values from a declining lower quality resource.

The durability of the crossroads metaphor implies that if restructuring has been significant in BC's forest economy it has not been significant enough. The paradigmatic nature of, and challenge posed by, the crossroads is captured by two government sponsored business studies published in 1984 and 1998. Thus, Woodbridge Reed and Associates' (1984: 93, 95):

"overriding conclusion .. is that ... the B.C forest products industry has become 'locked-in' to technologies and products which yield low average rates of return on investment".... and that ...."There is little doubt that, if the B.C. forest product industry's financial performance is to be improved, its existing product profile will have to be upgraded .... Unfortunately, the B.C industry today still appears to be concentrating on cost-minimization product-strategies. The contrary philosophy of cutting or processing for value is emerging only very slowly".

Some 14 years later in 1998, even as they recognized some positive developments, Ernst and Young still found the industry to be "trapped in the commodity box mix" (A10) and if commodities "will remain the backbone of BC's forest economy.... A significant shift towards higher value growth products is also essential" (A81).

The challenge of the crossroads therefore continues to face BC's forest economy. Indeed, it is plausible to conceive the crossroads as a 'roundabout' which recognizes the possibility of an exit 'back' towards Fordism. For BC's forest economy, such a back to the future strategy has foundation. Several summary points can be made in this regard. First, MacMillan Bloedel (MB), then BC's dominant forestry corporation, closed its research and development (R&D) laboratory in 1997 that had been BC's and Canada's biggest, most highly successful in-house program, developing such products as Parallam (engineered wood), space-kraft packaging, specialty papers and high yielding pulps. Second, from 1997 to 2001 the provincial government massively subsidized an old kraft pulp mill at Prince Rupert that inefficiently produced a basic commodity at significant environmental cost. Third, since the US imposed a punitive tariff of 27 % on lumber exports from Canada in May 2002 BC companies have responded by closing marginal mills and increasing volumes at already big mills, a strategy that surprised US rivals and contributed to declining prices. Fourth, in May 2003 Canfor, BC's biggest forest product corporation, announced plans for a new super sawmill in Houston, northwestern BC. Indeed, by 2005 Canfor had become the world's second biggest volume producer of lumber. Meanwhile, Canfor has invested in secondary manufacturing operations in the US. Sixth, in late 1999 Weyerhaeuser acquired MB that had been BC's most innovative large corporation and control was based in Vancouver. Weyerhaeuser is a huge MNC with sales around 35 billion that is tightly controlled, secretive, bureaucratic and based in Tacoma, Washington State. Seventh, export sales to Japan. BC's highest value export market, grew rapidly after the early 1980s, and constituted a significant diversification away from traditional commodity dependence on the US. However, since 1995 this trend has been arrested and BC has lost market share in Japan, reflecting problems within BC rather than just a demand problem in Japan. Eight, the so-called 'value-added' wood sector in BC, mainly comprising secondary wood processing activities has expanded since 1980 but these activities are concentrated in the lower mainland. There are also signs of problems within this sector, not simply because of wood fibre availability but also because of problems of market access, increasing regulations and environmental costs. Finally, the spectre of log exports threatens. Traditionally, successive provincial governments have supported log export restrictions. Nevertheless, log exports is an issue and cannot be divorced from the general idea of timber markets (and privatization) which is a priority of the provincial government. A leading environmentalist has also argued that if BC's firms can't afford to bid for timber, because the wages of forest workers are too high, log exports should be permitted. Log exports were at the centre of Canada's forest policy in the 18th and early 19th centuries. It is hard to imagine a more regressive shift.

These observations at least intimate the difficulty facing the forest industry in

comprehensively restructuring itself along a higher value, more innovative path. The forest industry is firmly entrenched in a crossroads qua roundabout and escape in one or more directions is uncertain. Moreover, this entrenchment has endured through the volatility created by recessionary crises in the early 1980s, and early and late 1990s. This entrenchment has also endured a battery of provincial forest policy initiatives, notably by the NDP in the 1990s that were motivated to drive the industry up the value-added ladder. Why has the crossroads metaphor proven so enduring?

### Blaming History and Path Dependence

To answer this question, the political economy literature has emphasized the power of vested interests that were stimulated by the forest policy of 1947. This policy basically divided BC into huge timber tenures that were granted as long term, renewable rights to large corporations that provided low cost timber in return for large-scale capital investment, jobs and exports. In effect, the Forest Act of 1947 formed a comprehensive social bargain among (big) business, government and labour that was publicly justified by: its promise of economic development with stability; an apparent commitment to resource sustainability, through the institution of the annual allowable cut (AAC); the acceptance of unionized workforces; and keeping the forests as a public resource permitting multiple, especially recreational uses. Moreover, this social bargain was given powerful legal sanction, notably by collective bargaining between management and labour and by timber contracts and pricing formulas between management and government. Over time, these collective bargains and timber contracts became more intricate and were deeply imprinted in the landscape by massive investments in economic and social infrastructure and factories, creating a core-periphery model of the BC economy fully committed to a staple mentality.

The Forest Act of 1947, with its commitment to large corporate forestry, was controversial at the time. Ironically, a major criticism stemmed from within business itself and concerned the lack of support for the small-scale entrepreneur. On the other hand, the proponents of corporate forestry noted that small-scale firms had been especially vulnerable during the Great Depression of the 1930s and had traditionally not offered environmental friendly forestry. In the aftermath of World War 2 (and Great Depression), the corporate sector promised relatively stable forms of development. Indeed, the forest policy of 1947, from the point of view of its objectives, was successful. Between 1950 and 1970, the growth of BC's forest sector was extremely impressive and dispersed throughout the province, organized by large corporations that invested in large-scale factories that manufactured huge volumes of standardized commodities and employed disciplined, productive workers whose activities and remuneration were strongly structured by collective bargaining agreements. For its part, the provincial government established energy, transportation and social infrastructure throughout BC and supported both a free enterprise attitude and strong labour unions. In this Fordist

boom period, BC's forest towns became high income, stable and culturally diverse places as well as specialized nodes within an international division of labour.

During the 1970s, however, the BC forest economy, in tandem with global trends, became increasingly vulnerable to new forms of economic restructuring that are associated with the onset of post-Fordism or the ICT. In general terms, the ICT, heralded by increasingly severe recessions, inflation and energy crises, is driven by secular technological and market imperatives that require flexible forms of production (firms, factories and workers). In BC's forest economy, the structures that were deemed sources of stability during Fordism became sources of rigidity during the ICT or post-Fordism (Hayter and Barnes 1997). The 'history is to blame' thesis emphasizes that Fordist structures were so deeply engrained in BC's forest economy that transformation to a new more flexible forest economy has been impossible, at least in any complete sense. In this view, the BC forest economy is literally 'locked-in' to anachronistic production structures and attitudes. Recently, the view that historical legacy in the form of anachronistic lock-ins has kept the BC forest economy in a crossroads has been authoritatively endorsed by Cashore et al (2001). As the authors collectively conclude:

"the powerful inertia of the policy path established at a much earlier stage of provincial forest policy history promotes continued industry power. In general terms, the entire development coalition - forest companies, their workers, those workers' communities, and the state - all have a strong vested interest in the continuation of the tenure, pricing, and harvest control policies put in place to guide and facilitate the liquidation-conversion project. In specific terms, all these interests depend on a continued flow of reasonably priced old-growth fibre to the province's manufacturing facilities" (Cashore et al 2001: 248-9).

Cashore et al's (2001) mandate is to assess the various forest policy initiatives of the provincial (NDP) government during the 1990s as a way of replacing "the liquidation-conversion project," a term synonymous with corporate industrial forestry during Fordism, with more sustainable forms of forestry. They are modestly critical of the government for not implementing a more radical proposal for change but reserve the most severe criticisms for the corporate sector. In their view, large corporations have vigorously resisted changes to the tenure system, notably their oligopsonic control over timber. Interestingly, unions are barely mentioned, even though union resistance to flexibilization of the collective bargains achieved during Fordism has been fierce (Hayter 1997). Beyond a desire to maintain control of timber rights, Cashore et al (2001) do not interrogate just why corporations should be so resistant to change. Yet several plausible reasons can be put forward to reinforce the corporate lock-in ('history is to blame') argument. First, during Fordism, few corporations invested much if at all in R&D, in part because such investments are scarcely necessary to support commodity production and in part because foreign-owned subsidiaries relied on parent companies for R&D performed in their home country. But if R&D is not necessary for commod-

ity production, it is hard to diversify beyond a commodity culture without R&D. Second, during Fordism the BC forest sector was characterized by a high level of foreign ownership that was motivated primarily by the desire to export resources elsewhere. Indeed, large operations in general could only be justified by export dependency. Third, the large and often foreign controlled corporations that dominated BC's forest sector during Fordism, and that employed a highly structured unionized work force, may well have become excessively bureaucratic and not particularly creative and able to 'think outside the box'. The efforts required to achieve more flexible labour contracts likely further reduced such thinking, while failure to contemplate the development of a more flexibly skilled workforce would have the same effect.

In other words, there are imposing, reasonable grounds to believe that the Fordist legacy in BC's forest economy has imposed powerful constraints on contemporary decisions and helps understand the durability of the crossroads metaphor. The view that forest product corporations are 'locked-in' to an anachronistic commodity culture is central to recent (right wing) business reports (Ernst and Young 1998) and (left wing) political economy literature (Cashore et al 2001). It is also consistent with Pearse's (2001) recent admonition for the coastal forest industry to modernize. Even so, path dependency should not be equated with historical determinism (or mono-causal explanations). After all, the industry has changed considerably since the 1970s and the corporate sector can point to numerous initiatives to develop new markets, new forms of labour relations, new technologies, new products and, by no means least, suggestions for tenure reform. The 'history is to blame' view that the tenure system established in 1947 is the root of all ills in BC's forest sector marginalizes these initiatives. Indeed, given the enormous difficulties facing the industry over the last 20 years, it would be surprising if corporations had not sought to restructure themselves. If these restructuring efforts have not been comprehensive enough, then a closer examination of just why corporations are so apparently resistant to change needs to be made.

For the past 20 years, the business environment of forest product corporations has been fundamentally changed by the unanticipated influences of American protectionism, environmentalism and aboriginalism. These new influences are extraordinarily diverse and complex. Thus, US protectionism has imposed tangible restrictions on access to the major market for forest products. On the other hand, environmentalism seeks to redefine the nature of resources to privilege their ecological, aesthetic and spiritual (non-industrial) values while aboriginalism is a desire for aboriginal identity, self-reliance and self-government based on rights over resources. Protectionism, environmentalism and aboriginalism did not shape the 1947 Forest Act nor were they powerful forces shaping corporate behaviour in BC during the Fordist boom years. The situation is radically different now. Since the early 1980s, protectionism, environmentalism and aboriginalism have become powerful influences over BC's forest sector. Yet the 'history is to blame' thesis of the crossroads metaphor, with its emphasis on the 1947 Forest Act and corporate control of tenures (and the 'development coalition'), still portrays these influences as marginal and ineffective (see Cashore 1997; Wilson 1998; Pearse 2001). Cas-

hore et al (2001), for example, interpret the intractability of the war as an ongoing vested power of industrial forestry.

"the goal of ending the 'war in the woods' is likely to continue to be elusive because of the deep gulf between the main protagonists. The development coalition has acceded to modest policy changes in some areas. But by the very nature of the conflict, responses to these pressures in the forms of forest practices codes and land use delineations never get to the heart of the critique of large-scale industrial forestry that many environmental groups fundamentally hold" (Cashore et al 2001: 253).

The crossroads metaphor rightly emphasizes that historically the war in the woods originated as a response to industrial forestry. However, I argue that the new protagonists in this war, notably the CFCLI as well as ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples, have since become entangled in the very fabric of BC's forest economy and have developed path dependent trajectories of their own. These institutions have become so entangled in BC's forest economy that the crossroads and the war in the woods represent reciprocal cause and effect relationships. Moreover, the 'war in the woods' metaphor provides a more explicitly geographic model of BC's forest economy compared to the history biased 'crossroads' metaphor.

### The War in the Woods as Paradigm

The 'war in the woods' metaphor is fundamentally geographical because it interprets BC's forest economy as a contested space in which the control of the provincial government over publicly owned forests has been challenged and undermined by the CFCLI, ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples. Each of these agencies is seeking to remap forest resources according to their values. The intensity and duration of this war in the woods reflects the engrained nature of the vested interests and because the remappers, while they condemn the status quo, differ on the contours of a new map (Hayter 2003). That is, a remapping exercise is at the heart of the war in the woods, but visions of the new maps are very different. The CFCL favours timber auctions and privatized forests, if not land; ENGOs would like to redefine public land on the basis of principles of conservation while Aboriginal Peoples wish to assert their own sovereign control over BC's forests. That ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples are themselves internally differentiated in terms of structures, strategies and values only serves to make the contours harder to draw and resolve.

Within the overall war, the sites of specific battles or conflicts, and their scale and duration, vary. Trade disputes have typically been centred in court and quasi-legal hearings in various political capitals in North America and Europe and have involved numerous departments of the Canadian and American federal governments as well as representatives from provincial and state governments and

industrial associations. ENGOs have conducted numerous campaigns against specific logging operations within BC while specific consumers of BC forests products have been lobbied and threatened across North America, Europe, Japan and most recently in China. Site-specific campaigns have been reinforced by substantial public relations efforts, mainly in BC and the main markets of BC's forest products. Aboriginal Peoples have mounted blockades in BC, made use of local and national courts, and appealed to local, national and even international governments. Alliances among the remappers have been formed, most obviously between ENGOs and Aboriginal People and less obviously between ENGOs and the CFCLI. Thus, the battles have raged far and wide, all dedicated to remapping BC's forests.

BC's forest economy is not the only resource periphery experiencing intense conflict in present times. If globalization is interpreted as a contemporary (post-Fordist) debate about global-local dynamics, what is distinctive about the globalization of resource peripheries is how industrial restructuring is being shaped by the politics of trade, environmentalism and aboriginalism (Hayter et al 2003). Thus, resource peripheries, as the sites of resource destruction and the homes of surviving Aboriginal Peoples, are the targets of the emerging forces of environmentalism and aboriginalism. At the same time, the onset of neo-liberalism has often been perverse in resource peripheries, associated with more rather than less trade protection imposed by dominant countries that have appeased domestic resource lobbies.

In the specific case of BC's war in the woods, provincial forest policy and vested corporate interests have been directly challenged and to a degree disempowered by the CFCLI, ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples (Hayter 2003). These actors have also formed tacit alliances opposing the government because they collectively share opposition to provincial forest policy and its orientation to large-scale industrial forestry. Cooperation between ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples is to be expected and, although not without conflicts of its own, has generally been effective. The much less expected, increasingly close connections between ENGOs and CFCLI, has been made evident by the sharing of public platforms in criticizing BC's forest policies, the adoption by the CFCLI of specific ENGO criticisms, and support by the ENGOs for the CFCLI's claim that the BC forest industry is subsidized. Despite the fact that the GATT and now the WTO have refuted such claims, prior to each new round of talks between the Canadian and US trade representatives regarding the softwood lumber dispute, a Vancouver-based ENGO has published a report highly critical of BC's subsidized forestry practices. ENGOs have also attacked the high wages of forestry workers (as a basis for the sector's declining competitiveness), although it is not clear why high wages helps the subsidy argument.

The CFCLI, ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples collectively share profound criticism of BC's forest policy. However, they disagree fundamentally on solutions. The CFCLI, for example, favours privatization of BC's forest exports and log exports, policies that ENGOs implacably opposed, as do Aboriginal Peoples to the extent it compromises their land claims. Moreover, while ENGOs are

invariably supportive of aboriginal demands for self identity and traditional resource uses, aboriginal desires for economic development to the extent industrial forestry may be involved remains a potential area of dispute. While the CFCLI, ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples have powerful interests opposing provincial forest policy, their disagreement over solutions means that no matter what is proposed opposition is likely. The power of this collective opposition to the government plus disagreement over how to remap BC's forest economy helps explain the enduring nature of the war in the woods.

Indeed, since the 1980s the CFCLI, ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples have all escalated their demands. The CFCLI began by asking for a 10 % tariff on BC's lumber exports, in 2002 they won a 27 % on these exports and they are demanding log export restrictions be removed and BC's forests be privatized. The ENGOs began as local opposition to industrial forestry at specific sites of high environmental value, now they are an internationally orchestrated opposition that is opposed to industrial forestry in general and is demanding vast areas of BC become parks. The Aboriginal Peoples in the 1980s were a protest movement, now their rights are widely championed and their land titles claims cover all of BC and extend to resources under the sea.

Moreover, the CFCLI has a significant incentive to prolong the trade dispute. Thus, the trade dispute serves the CFCLI by relentlessly damaging BC's forest sector which competes with CFCLI members. Politically, the US politicians who criticize the 'unfair' competition provided by BC gain prestige in their home states (and presumably funding from CFCLI members). ENGOs are similarly interested in the long-term disruption of industrial forestry and if their alliance with the CFCLI is opportunistic even hypercritical, it can be understood as shared interest in undermining BC's established forest economy. In addition, ENGOs desire for conservation means that forest-based jobs are of much lesser importance, especially jobs associated with large-scale production. ENGOs found in the 1990s that their demands were best met by opposition rather than by compromise. Moreover, if the trade dispute helps sustain ENGO opposition, and even lends it some legitimacy, in turn the ENGOs help sustain the trade dispute, and lend it legitimacy. Indeed, ENGOs have become permanent, well-funded organizations with formal mandates and opposition to industrial forestry is part of their way of life. As for Aboriginal Peoples, they have already been without treaties in BC for a 100 years, the stakes are high and they have also found only weak resistance to escalating demands.

For the BC forest economy, the war in the woods has created significant complex uncertainties and higher costs that have affected small firms as well as large corporations. An important unintended effect of the war, ironic from an environmental perspective, is that the war has damaged the ability of the forest economy to restructure towards higher values and greater diversity. The durability of the war is ensuring the durability of the crossroads and has helped raise the possibility of the crossroads as roundabout in which 'back to the future' is a realistic outcome. The ironies are especially evident in relation to ENGO opposition which, even if unintended, has contributed to rising log exports and loss of

innovativeness. In particular, its support for the CFCLI, which lobbied for a 27 % tariff on exported lumber products, has encouraged BC firms to export raw logs because such exports face no such duties. ENGO targeting of MacMillan Bloedel (MB), the province's leading corporate innovator helped weaken MB which in turn led to its acquisition by Weyerhaeuser, a much bigger US-based MNC that supports log exports. At the very least, the interdependent cause and effect relationship between the 'crossroads' and 'war in the woods' metaphors needs to be recognized. I would further suggest that the historical emphasis underlying the 'crossroads' metaphor typically portrays aboriginal and environmental institutions as marginal or weak, inherently socially progressive actors seeking to correct the wrongs of all-powerful corporate vested interests. This picture requires modification. The very durability of the war in the woods, not to mention all kinds of policy changes stimulated by the various warring parties, on the other hand, suggests that ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples, as well as the CFCLI, have real power. How this power is exercised is worth scrutiny.

### Conclusion

The 'crossroads' and 'war in the woods' metaphors, which respectively privilege historical and geographical perspectives, are powerful, insightful 'models' of BC's forest economy, that have served to 'jolt' and replace established ways of thinking and established metaphors. Both metaphors are in wide, even popular usage. This discussion, however, has departed from the implication of much contemporary literature on BC's forest economy that portrays the two metaphors as a simple historical sequence in which the crossroads 'causes' the war in the woods. I suggest that this reasoning fails to appreciate just why the war in the woods metaphor has become such a significant, enduring symbol: the war's protagonists are exerting powerful substantive impacts on BC's forest economy, and have been for some time. Thus, this discussion has argued that the processes that underlie the crossroads and the war in the woods have become deeply embedded in one another and to some extent mutually reinforcing. In this situation the future direction of BC's forest economy is hard to predict and all kinds of 'unintended effects' are likely, including the possibility that ENGO and aboriginal tactics might not always be in their own best interests let alone BC's as a whole.

The emergence of BC as a 'have not province' in 2001, surprising to many Canadians, may well be the most important immediate unintended expression of the war in the woods. Such economic distress signals may comfort the CFCLI and even further its opposition to BC forestry but should send off alarm bells throughout the Canadian Federation, as has already happened in BC's hinterland. ENGOs and Aboriginal Peoples should also be less comforted by BC's economic distress. As Halseth et al (2004) note in this special issue, rural depopulation is now of widespread concern in BC. The forest industry's failure to cross the crossroads and achieve peace in the woods is presumably a key factor in this trend.

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