

BOOK REVIEWS

On the Art of Being Canadian
Sherrill Grace

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009. 224 pp.
Illus. \$85.00 cloth, \$32.95 paper.

SARAH STANNERS
University of British Columbia

SHERILL GRACE'S *On the Art of Being Canadian* describes how Canadian painters, sculptors, actors, filmmakers, and writers, among others, have manifested their thoughts on Canadian identity in response to three distinct themes, which correspond to the book's three chapters on the North, the world wars, and iconic national figures, respectively. Her study is decidedly concise, even though it spans the nineteenth century through to the twenty-first century. Media-specific specialists may be frustrated by Grace's necessary exclusions and editorial choices, which is why this book is best suited for general enthusiasts of Canadian culture and for cross-disciplinary curricula such as Canadian studies. Grace's position as the Brenda and David McLean Chair in Canadian Studies for 2003–2005 made her an ideal author to publish a book for the Brenda and David McLean Canadian Studies

Series, which supports publications by McLean Fellows at the University of British Columbia.

In Chapter 1, "Creating a Northern Nation," Grace explores a selection of works by artists who contribute to our collective sense of the North – artists such as Charles Pachter, Don Proch, Pierre Berton, Zacharias Kunuk, and, that venerable authority on northernness, Farley Mowat. The dissemination of awe-inspiring northern narratives in Canada is largely discussed through artistic references to important Arctic explorations, which have been lodged in the minds of Canadians across the generations. This chapter is partly distilled from Grace's larger body of work on the topic, *Canada and the Idea of North* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

Chapter 2, "Theatres of War: Battle Fronts and Home Fronts," is closer to Grace's recent research than are the other two chapters. It was handy to find that Grace had reviewed her own book in the Spring 2010 issue of UBC's *Trek* magazine in an article aptly entitled "On Writing 'On the Art of Being Canadian.'" Grace describes a seminal moment for the book, which took place in the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2004 during the exhibition "Canvas of War"

from the Canadian War Museum. The surprise and interest that she found her students displaying while she toured the exhibition with them was inspiring. In-the-field experience with students is the best kind of fodder for starting a scholarly text, but the majority of Grace's chosen subjects do not strike me as being near, and certainly not dear, to younger generations. I want to know more about how "the art of being Canadian" connects to the present and beyond. With only a brief reference to contemporary artists such as Althea Thauberger, Grace just hints at the most current war art, but her depth of knowledge warrants an expedition into future areas of the arts in Canada.

Grace's book also deals with the invention of four iconic Canadian figures: Louis Riel, Emily Carr, Tom Thomson, and Mina Benson Hubbard. These are well-worn subjects in the Canadian arts and, apparently, in the mind of Sherrill Grace: in 2004, she published *Inventing Tom Thomson* with McGill-Queen's University Press and, in the same year, also with McGill-Queen's University Press, she edited and contributed to Mina Benson Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*. Grace confidently presents her own voice in assessing these popular figures, but her delivery remains too close to that of a patriotic reporter. She does a wonderful job of reviewing artists that work to invent what we understand as "being Canadian," but I craved a more critical point of view regarding what that actually implies and how accurate it really is.

Most satisfyingly, Grace acknowledges the relatively unrecognized importance of biography to the scholarly work in her field of Canadian studies. She elaborates on the significance of biography in a note to Chapter 3, but I hope that she writes a

future book on biography as a "narrative creation" and clarifies what that means to Canadian identity (170n1).

*All That We Say Is Ours:
Guujaaw and the Reawakening
of the Haida Nation*

Ian Gill

Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre,
2009. 256 pp. \$34.95 cloth.

UMEEK (DR. E.R. ATLEO)
*University of Manitoba/
University of Victoria*

Guujaaw and the Reawakening of the Haida Nation: All That We Say Is Ours is a human interest story around issues of Aboriginal title and rights. Ian Gill is an award-winning journalist, author, and the president of Ecotrust Canada. Guujaaw is the central character. The cover design shows Haida paddlers wearing cedar hats and ceremonial capes. The book is full of Haida names for places, people, plants, and animals as well as mythic creation stories placed in the context of contemporary issues concerning local employment versus corporate interests and environmental degradation versus sustainability, all of which play out in conflicting views about local priorities such as health and education versus Haida rights and title. Nevertheless, in spite of these apparent contradictions, the Haida manage to make title and rights a priority. Questions of Aboriginal title and rights have no easy answers, or, rather, they have several conflicting answers, depending upon who is speaking. In the Haida voice, one answer to title and rights is language. This means

that some foreign names have been replaced by Haida names – for example, *Guujaaw*, meaning drum, replaces “Gary Edenshaw.” Further: “Haida Gwaii, Islands of the People, has an older name, *Xaaydlaga Gwayaay*, or Islands at the Boundary of the World. It has a younger name, too: the Queen Charlotte Islands” (21).

A *reawakening* means remembering ancient names like *Xaaydlaga Gwayaay*. From a Haida perspective these ancient names declare their title and rights to all of their ancient territories and surrounding waters. The issue of Aboriginal title and rights is much more than a legal issue, for it conflicts with a deeply entrenched way of life – a way of life that has been taken for granted until the recent interrelated global events of economic meltdown and climate change. In this latter context, the issue of Haida title and rights has global implications. But change does not come easy. In spite of Supreme Court decisions that declare governments have a duty to consult and accommodate, there is continuing resistance to change. *Guujaaw* has said in this regard: “It’s going to be hard to retrain them” (241).

In light of history, this is an important book because its story runs counter to every colonial prediction made about Aboriginals. What underlies the apparent durability, resilience, and strength of indigenous cultures – Haida, in this case? Why did the Haida not disappear from the face of the earth? Why are they, in fact, *reawakening*, as though from a deep political sleep? One important clue may be their statement: “Our physical and spiritual relationship with the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii, our history of co-existence with all living things over thousands of years is what makes up Haida culture” (170). This statement, if true, means that the Haida have never

been alone in their struggles because they have always been part of a larger whole represented by the life within their lands and waters. In addition, the phrase “co-existence with all living things” resonates with environmental philosophy. An important assumption that underlies the theme of this book – the synchrony between Aboriginal and environmental ideas – creates a force for change. *Reawakening of the Haida Nation* may contribute to global rethinking about how humans might integrate themselves with the environment in sustainable ways.

*Treaty Talks in British
Columbia: Building a New
Relationship, 3rd edition*
Christopher McKee

Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press,
2009. 177 pp. \$29.95 paper.

BRIAN EGAN
University of Victoria

THE ONSET OF modern treaty negotiations in British Columbia, in 1993, was greeted with a good measure of optimism. The treaty process, it was hoped, would resolve the long-standing “Indian land question,” meeting both First Nations’ demands for a just allocation of lands and resources in their traditional territories and the Crown’s desire for “certainty” on the land base. For the members of the BC Claims Task Force, the initial architects of the treaty process, the land issue was only one of many that needed to be addressed. Thus, they argued, treaty negotiations should be comprehensive in nature, addressing not only questions about lands and resources but also

concerns about governance, culture and heritage, intergovernmental relations, capital transfers, fiscal relations, and taxation. Once finalized, modern comprehensive treaties would set out in great detail the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of the three negotiating parties: Canada, British Columbia, and First Nations. Finally, the process of negotiating and finalizing treaties, it was hoped, would help produce a “new relationship” between the parties, one based, as the Task Force report put it, on “mutual trust, respect, and understanding.”¹

A considerable amount of this initial optimism has now dissipated as treaty agreements have been few and far between and as negotiations at most of the four dozen treaty tables across the province remain stalled in various stages of disagreement. In addition, many First Nations across British Columbia continue to opt out of the treaty process altogether, unconvinced that it will yield the kind of results they seek. Indeed, in light of recent developments outside the formal sphere of treaty negotiations (e.g., various kinds of agreements that the provincial government and private resource-development firms have negotiated with individual First Nations to provide for the sharing of revenues and decision-making control over lands and resources, the recent proposal for a provincial “Recognition and Reconciliation Act”) the treaty process seems increasingly inflexible and irrelevant.

In *Treaty Talks*, Christopher McKee documents progress, and the lack thereof, towards treaty making in British Columbia over the past seventeen years. The first edition,

published in 1996, provides a concise overview of the treaty process – including some historical context as well as a description of the structure of negotiations and the key issues to be negotiated – and assesses the challenges that had emerged at that point. In the second edition, published in 2000, McKee adds new material, focusing on key developments between 1996 and 2000 (e.g., the *Delgamuukw* decision, the Nisga’a treaty) and highlighting new and continuing challenges to treaty making. The third edition of *Treaty Talks* is augmented with a postscript, co-written with Peter Colenbrander, which summarizes the ups and downs of the treaty process between 2000 and 2009, including the divisive treaty referendum of 2002, important court rulings and policy changes, and the small number of treaty agreements – final agreements with the Tsawwassen and Maa-nulth, and interim agreements with the Tla-o-qui-aht and Klahoose – completed during this period. This latest edition also includes a brief description of achievements outside of the treaty process, particularly those that have emerged out of the province’s New Relationship initiative.

Written for a general audience, *Treaty Talks* provides a good introduction to the modern treaty process in British Columbia. It covers much of the essential material – the origins, objectives, structure, challenges, and achievements of the treaty process – in a well organized and concise manner and in language that is highly accessible. For those who have followed the treaty process more closely, the latest edition serves as a useful reference: with the accumulated material from all three editions collected in one volume, the text gives a sense of the ebb and flow of negotiations over the life of the treaty process and the persistence of

¹ *Report of the British Columbia Claims Task Force*, 28 June 1991. <http://www.bctreaty.net>

core challenges. The book's strength, its concise coverage of a highly complex, contested, and geographically differentiated process, is also its chief weakness. Such an approach limits the depth of engagement with some of the most fundamental and challenging issues that continue to limit progress at the treaty table (e.g., the six key issues discussed at the Common Table meetings in 2008) and how they play out at different treaty tables across the province.

It is precisely these issues (e.g., how to balance the recognition of Aboriginal title and rights with the Crown's desire for certainty, how to provide First Nations with real opportunities to be meaningfully involved in the management of their larger territories) that require more attention if treaty negotiations are going to go beyond the current impasse. The appearance of the third edition of *Treaty Talks* highlights the need for a much more in-depth and critical examination of the treaty process and a closer look at the issues that hinder progress towards both treaty making and improved relations between the Crown and First Nations. Given the importance of the issues at stake – the control over critical ecological and economic assets, the establishment of new forms of Aboriginal governance, the coming to terms with colonial histories and geographies – and the theoretical richness of this terrain, the scope for further useful work in this area is large.

Family Origin Histories: The Whaling Indians – West Coast Legends and Stories, Part II of the Sapir-Thomas Nootka Texts

Told by Tyee Bob, Sa:ya:ch'apis, William, Qwishanishim, Lo:tism, Tayi? a, and Chief Louie Nookmiis. Prepared by Edward Sapir, Morris Swadesh, Hamilton George, Alexander Thomas, Frank Williams, Katie Fraser, and John Thomas. Edited by Eugene Arima, Henry Kammler, Terry Klokeid, and Katherine Robinson.

Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2009. 396 pp. Illus., maps. \$34.95 paper.

MARLENE ATLEO
University of Manitoba

WHAT DO THE stories of lineage significance say about the people who tell them? What is culturally salient to the tellers of the stories? What is culturally salient to the hearers of the stories, be they of the same lineage, culture, another culture, or the culture or lineage of another era? These three questions are the basis of this review of these lineage stories. Some of these stories were gathered by Edward Sapir of the Ethnographic Division of the Government of Canada between September and December 1910 and September 1913 and February 1914, and some of these were added to by Alex Thomas and Frank Williams in 1923. And some were recently translated and added to in the Barkley Sound region of Nuuchah-nulth/Nootka ancestral territory. These refreshed publications of eighteen records of oral lineage

histories, *ʔeʔi:chaʔin*, or recollections of the old ones/ancestors, is a treat for a reviewer embedded in Nuu-chah-nulth lineage, history, and territory. This version of Part II of the Sapir-Thomas Nootka Texts (previously published in both English and Nuu-chah-nulth) both acknowledges and documents the complex history of creating the written record of the oral histories that would have been rendered at public ritual feasts and lineage gatherings as well as recounted as personal teaching. The documentation is enhanced pictorially with artefacts mentioned in the stories; with plates of people, places, and animals; and with the informants themselves. The maps of the territory, the endnotes, and the glossary of place names enhance the ability of the reader to appreciate the text itself which the addition of sound bites would further increase. The participation of several generations of Barkley Sound Nuu-chah-nulth in the rendering of these *ʔeʔi:chaʔin* increases the credibility as well as the translation of the materials.

According to Umeek (E.R. Atleo 2004), traditional Nuu-chah-nulth stories function in a manner similar to scientific theory. Thus, the critical principles contained therein are culturally encoded for ensuring survival during changing resource structures, environmental change, political alliances, marriage, and food-gathering cycles (M.R. Atleo 2008, 2006). And, while they may seem “indifferent as narrative” (v), to those who are culturally aware they are imbued with indigenous knowledge and meaning-making, coded for division of labour, territory, age, gender, rank, and group-graded understanding. These stories are significant as they serve to aid Nuu-chah-nulth decolonization. They promote the reclamation of indigenous knowledges and identification of

territories, which has become important to the current treaty process in British Columbia and in which the Nuu-chah-nulth have participated since the 1980s, beginning with the Meares Island controversy (Parai and Esakin 2003).

Each story contributes uniquely to the feast of indigenous Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge. The Swan women, with their stained skins, are ritually active as they dig for camas and, in doing so, story the landscape with place names that create a cognitive map of the territory – a map they must read in order to gather foodstuffs (267). The picture of the *ma:ʔak* (whale) slurping clams from the beach is deliciously memorable as a hunting strategy (375). How the potlatch mask mediates the articulation between the body and the spirit in the training for “getting” (achieving a materialization of objects through flow activities) shows the cognitive technology of Nuu-chah-nulth memory work (239). Another tells of unusual delicacies, such as abalone, which can be found by those who are diligent in their search for quarry such as shags or loons, which are not highly favoured foods (237). The riches of the people at *Hisa:wist’a* (Long Beach Peninsula) is prophesied, as is the process of creating cedar textiles from tree bark (209). The learning of songs in particular sacred sites as a way of encoding knowledge about the supernatural is revealed (149). These stories are like stars in the Milky Way: how can one read their meaning or know their significance unless one knows their context? Clearly these renderings were highly salient to the tellers, and possibly to their informants. It is hoped that the current translators can bring this salience to the current generation of Nuu-chah-nulth. From a narrative perspective these stories may not seem logical, but from a territorial and cultural perspective they are a

delight. They are worthy of close inspection both for what they reveal and for what they do not reveal. Most of all, they are crucial to the survival of the Nuu-chah-nulth of Barkley Sound.

REFERENCES

- Atleo, E.R. 2004. *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Atleo, M.R. 2006. "The Ancient Nuu-chah-nulth Strategy of Hahuulthi: Education for Indigenous Cultural Survivance." In *International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability* 2 (1): 153-62.
- . 2008. "Indigenous Learning Models in the Context of Socio-Economic Change: A Storywork Approach." In *Indigenous Education: Asia/Pacific*, ed. Wes Heber, 21-32. Regina: Indigenous Studies Research Centre, First Nations University.
- Parai, Brian, and Thomas C. Esakin. 2003. "Beyond Conflict in Clayoquot Sound: The Future of Sustainable Forestry." In *Natural Resource Conflict Management Case Studies: An Analysis of Power, Participation and Protected Areas*, ed. A.P. Castro and E. Nielsen, 163-82. Rome: UN Food and Agricultural Organization.
- The Collector: David Douglas and the Natural History of the Northwest*
Jack Nisbet
Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 2009.
288 pp. \$23.95 cloth.
- DAVID BROWNSTEIN
University of British Columbia
- THE HORTICULTURAL Society of London demanded that David Douglas (1799-1834), their employee and North American plant hunter, keep a meticulous journal of his travels. Certainly a better field naturalist than author, Douglas refused to let others transform his notes into a published narrative during his lifetime and was himself seemingly incapable of the task. Leaving much room for posthumous attempts, Jack Nisbet's *The Collector* is the latest such effort, one primarily directed at a lay audience of nature and history enthusiasts. This book makes a number of unique contributions to an underdeveloped field, meaning that it is important reading for both the Douglas scholar and for students of the contact period in northwestern North America more generally.
- A great strength of Nisbet's book is that it gives even treatment to each of Douglas's North American excursions, a consistent focus generally not duplicated in the existing literature, which tends to emphasize some trips over others. The book's structure mirrors the seasons of Douglas's travels and the intervening periods back in England. His first trip, in 1823, was to the eastern United States and Upper Canada, where he sought unfamiliar plants, new forest trees to replenish the dwindling homeland timber supply, and fruit trees for the society's experimental

orchard at Chiswick. His success prompted a second trip from 1825 to 1827. Supported by Hudson's Bay Company transportation, resources, and hospitality, these three years of travel between the Columbia River Basin and York Factory represent a period that solidified Douglas's reputation as they enabled him to describe and introduce more species to England than any other individual. Two subsequent years in that country, among the social and scientific elite, were very unhappy for a man of humble birth and limited learning. In 1830, Douglas undertook a third trip, which traversed the Columbia River Basin and California, and ended in 1834 in Hawaii, with his mysterious death. At the age of 35, Douglas's gored and trampled body was found in a cattle pit, beneath a trapped bull.

The Collector is the latest in a succession of biographies, each an attempt to reconcile gaps in the historical record from different disciplinary perspectives. Douglas's journal of his third expedition was destroyed while navigating the swollen Fraser River south of Fort George in 1833. Therefore, constructing a biography of the man has posed a profound challenge for subsequent generations: his life still awaits a definitive treatment. By the time that the renamed Royal Horticultural Society attempted to publish the extant journals, seventy years after Douglas's death, the handwriting was hard to read and was made worse by faded ink. A poorly edited version was finally shared with the world in 1914 at a time when attention was focused on more pressing geopolitical matters. Vancouver barrister and city councillor Althelstan George Harvey wrote *Douglas of the Fir* in 1947, the most academic attempt to date, including citations. Since that time, Scottish

forester John Davies compiled *Douglas of the Forests* in 1979, a close transcription of the journals with minor commentary; and Scottish writer Ann Lindsay Mitchell collaborated with forester and fellow countryman Syd House to produce the 1999 book *David Douglas: Explorer and Botanist*. All these texts must be read together if they are to provide insight.

The Collector reflects Nisbet's background as an engaging naturalist and successful author. In this regard he duplicates his previous projects on explorer David Thompson and the several volumes he has written on the Columbia Plateau. Here, the well-crafted prose can leave one mentally out of breath as swaths of the book present an uninterrupted chronological flow from Douglas's published journal. The result is a meticulously researched book, but one in which the reader must intuit any commentary on the role of David Douglas as Douglas's and Nisbet's voices intertwine to the point where they are virtually indistinguishable. While Nisbet is at his best when exploring the details of natural history, he is more muted regarding the meaning of his historical narrative.

Previous biographies present Douglas only as a botanist. *The Collector* wonderfully counters this perception by communicating the full breadth of Douglas's scientific activity as a natural historian, documenting his work on birds, mammals, minerals, mountaineering, surveying, and ethnography. This wider narrative is not only a better reflection of Douglas's North American activities but also a genuine scholarly contribution. Nisbet obliquely hints that, over the course of his career, Douglas transformed his specimen-collecting practices in order to deploy some late-life training in the

use of astronomical and cartographic instruments so that he could illuminate the geographical distribution of plants. This change is described in pieces over the course of the book, but it is never recognized as an important observation.

Nisbet's narrative provides insight into flora and fauna at the time of contact, Native resource management techniques, and fur trade relationships between Natives and newcomers. *The Collector* will be enjoyed most by those already familiar with the territory over which David Douglas travelled, but it will also be of interest to engaged readers who, in light of the current literature, are willing to pick up the pieces that Nisbet has assembled and run with them.

*Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring
Aboriginal Property Rights*

Tom Flanagan, Christopher
Alcantara, and
André Le Dressay

Montreal/Kingston: McGill-
Queen's University Press, 2010.
224 pp. \$34.95 paper.

DANIEL MILLETTE
University of British Columbia

DISCUSSION OF land governance and land administration matters on Indian Act reserves in Canada has persisted for several decades. There is a general consensus that the lands have been poorly managed by a federal department that is bureaucratic and geographically removed from the same lands, not to mention culturally disconnected. It should be of no surprise that a book focusing on the transformation of Aboriginal lands into fee simple private holdings would attract the attention of anyone

interested in public policy connected to Aboriginal peoples as well as academics and professionals involved in related law, history, and land economics. In *Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights*, Tom Flanagan, a former aide to Stephen Harper; Christopher Alcantara, a former student of Flanagan's; and André Le Dressay, a consultant and colleague of Flanagan's, present their idea for federal legislation that would provide underlying title and a legal framework for fee simple property ownership on First Nations reserves. They refer to it as the First Nations Property Ownership Act. Considering that land is inextricably linked to culture and tradition, among most other facets of life on a reserve, the proposal can be disquieting and is well worth pondering.

The book is written in three parts, each corresponding to sections written by the individual authors. The first focuses on property rights under the Indian Act as well as on an assessment of the American Dawes Act, 1887. Flanagan argues that private or individual property rights are key in any market economy and that private property is more important than collective property. On the surface, the argument seems logical, yet there is little discussion of what it might mean to give up collective property rights, especially in communities where tradition and culture are paramount. The same author suggests that the primary difference between what he and his co-authors are proposing and the Dawes Act is the voluntary nature of their plan: First Nations would opt in (or out) of individual property ownership.

The second section is a historical synopsis of "Indian property rights" in Canada. Alcantara discusses traditional

land holdings (customary rights), leases, and certificates of possession, presenting them as failed land-holding arrangements. There is no doubt that the three measures have their challenges, especially in terms of attracting outside investors and in terms of the time and associated costs needed for transactions to take place. The argument at times feels contradictory: Alcantara, on the one hand, (rightly) critiques the early European position that individual property would be a way of colonizing the population; yet, on the other hand, it is fee simple ownership (individual property) that he is advocating. The section's material is not up to date: first, there are other forms of "Indian property rights" in Canada, such as those being derived out of the new treaties in British Columbia.¹ While certainly not a panacea, these deserve to be part of the discussion. Second, the importance of the legislation that has given interested First Nations authority to manage and govern over their lands, the First Nations Land Management Act, 1999, is minimized, presented as "a step" towards what is being proposed. The author might have benefitted from a closer reading of the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management, the foundation of the act, in which misunderstandings regarding the same act might have been clarified.

The final section is a collage of conclusions, with no detailed analysis presented to the reader. Le Dressay's underlying assumption is that, with the right administrative, legal, and institutional frameworks, First Nations would be able to derive economic benefit from fee simple lands and therefore would not suffer the levels

of unemployment and social woes that they currently endure. There is simply no literature (or clear evidence) to corroborate this assumption. The cultural and historical realities of Canada's First Nations are far too complex to expect economic measures to singularly resolve these challenges. Further, while there may be advantages to fee simple ownership and economic development in areas close to resources and/or markets, what happens to the hundreds of reserves in which these criteria (and other conditions required for prosperity and its benefits to occur) are non-existent? Le Dressay does not discuss the geographic and resource challenges that persist in northern and remote areas, nor does he discuss the political, social, and quotidian life of Aboriginal reserve communities.

The book gives some important historical narratives on the Indian Act and the Dawes Act. Further, it provides a synopsis of the way some existing property rights on reserves operate. It is therefore useful for anyone looking for another version of those historical and legislative realities. The summaries, however, do little to advance the theory that the final chapter so forcefully presents.

Finally, as with any work that attempts to further a specific agenda, regardless of the passion from which it emanates, the reader is cautioned. A great deal of research is required before any of the concepts presented can be entertained in a concrete way. The proposal is highly theoretical and as with all theory that relies on untested examples (such as the Nisga'a Landholding Transition Act, 2000), simply does not suffice in terms of providing "proof" of any potential success. Further, while the book makes the underlying assumption that wealth can only be derived from

¹ See, for example, the Tsawwassen Final Agreement, within which a "Tsawwassen Fee Simple Interest" is an interest that may be set out in Tsawwassen Law.

land ownership in fee simple, clearly there are other ways of gaining material success. Indeed, some of the examples cited in the book do just that.²

Jacob's Prayer: Loss and Resilience at Alkali Lake

Lorne Dufour

Halfmoon Bay, BC: Caitlin Press,
2009. 160 pp. Maps, illustrations.
\$18.95 paper.

MARY-ELLEN KELM

Simon Fraser University

RECENTLY, HISTORIANS have taken the “affective turn,” that is, they have begun paying particular attention to emotion and sensation. *Jacob's Prayer*, which documents the relationships between hopeful young teachers in 1970s British Columbia and Esket, the Secwepemc community they inhabited for a time, is redolent with feelings. Lorne Dufour's ability to capture the hopes, the feelings of belonging, the grief and sense of loss at Esket takes us into the heart of an encounter between a community just beginning to heal itself and two young men who hoped to help that process along.

The story begins and ends with the night of 31 October 1975, when Alkali Lake rancher Martin von Reidemann and schoolteacher John Rathjen lost their lives in the frigid waters of Alkali Lake. That night, von Reidemann rowed out onto the lake to stage a fireworks display. It was an act of reconciliation, to recognize the

importance of Esket cowboys in running his ranch. Dufour had hoped for more: he wanted to see von Reidemann turn the ranch over to the Esket people. When a sudden wind came up and von Reidemann's boat overturned, Rathjen and Dufour plunged into Alkali Lake to save him. Only Dufour survived the frigid waters, revived by Jacob Roper, whose own daughter, Rosemarie, had died of hypothermia eight years earlier following a violent sexual assault. For Dufour, Roper's actions demonstrated reconciliation and healing. Indeed the whole book, comprised of short narratives, poetry, and photographs, teeters on the knife-edge of hope and grief. Dufour and Rathjen represent a generation of young people who worked for social change through education and the rejection of modernity. Dufour thought he had found a home in Esket, with its vibrant horse culture, its emerging sobriety movement, its reimmersion in Secwepemc language and culture. Dufour's photos from that time, mainly of the schoolchildren on field trips and in the classroom, are captivating, exuding optimism and energy. But the narrative is replete with death, and not just the deaths of Rosemarie and Rathjen, which haunt its pages. Acknowledgments at the end offer a postscript that reveals how many of the children in Dufour's photos died senseless premature deaths. Yet the afterword, by University of Northern British Columbia student Ivy Chelsea remembering Rathjen as a teacher, shows the long reach of a gifted educator. *Jacob's Prayer* captures the feelings of a time when radical change seemed possible: grief and hope remain entwined so long as that dream stays unfulfilled.

² The Westbank First Nation is cited throughout the book as an example of a successful First Nation in terms of economic prosperity – all without fee simple interests.

*Interventions: Native American
Art for Far-Flung Territories*

Judith Ostrowitz

Seattle: University of Washington
Press, 2009. 240 pp. \$45.00 cloth.

LESLIE DAWN

University of Lethbridge

JUDITH OSTROWITZ skilfully investigates the complex and innovative strategies used by First Nations artists since the 1950s to engage with museum, art gallery, restoration, and tourist initiatives. She shows how various individuals and groups have strategically employed these new, non-traditional spaces for the public display of their ongoing cultures, identities, and arts. She also demonstrates various artists' involvement with new media, contexts, and audiences. Her five carefully chosen case studies are broad in scope and involve cross-border and cross-cultural negotiations within a global environment.

The first chapter summarizes the totem pole restoration project at the University of British Columbia and the British Columbia Provincial Museum, the inception of the Route of the Totems program, and the commission of the ceremonial Queen's Baton for the Commonwealth Games held in Victoria in 1994. Ostrowitz distinguishes these "de-territorialized" objects from those that occupy traditional locations and cultural contexts. The latter are site-specific, intended for a limited "insider" audience, and have a circumscribed significance, while the former have been transformed into displaced public images for broader "outsider" non-Native audiences that attach their own meanings to the works. Her

distinctions, although tending towards the dualistic, are both sound and useful.

Her necessarily cursory coverage of the individual projects, however, makes them appear less nuanced than they actually were. At times, the abbreviated histories undercut her aim of showing how culturally and politically savvy artists like Mungo Martin, Ellen Neal, Bill Reid, Simon Charlie, James Henderson, and Art Thomson had to be to succeed in their aims and just how complex their individual motives were. The second, and largest, chapter outlines the complex consultations involved in designing the displays in the new National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. Here, Ostrowitz sorts out the complex ways in which a host of First Nations advisors exercised agency in shaping the building and its displays. She also enumerates the myriad problems that arose in articulating a common message that could communicate distinct cultures and histories in an institution dedicated to including all American First Nations groups under a general, universalized category.

Chapter 3 focuses on the interactions between Northwest Coast groups and non-Native texts. Ostrowitz first looks at ceremonies held primarily among the Tlingit and shows how membership and social structure within groups has been determined both internally by the groups themselves and by consulting ethnographic records. The second part investigates the non-conventional works done at the Gitanmax School of Northwest Coast Native Art at the museum at 'Ksan, which defied the rules of formline design formulated by Bill Holm and others. Again, her innovative approach and broader vision lead to new insights.

The penultimate chapter is the least satisfactory. Ostrowitz's excursion into

Native artists working in digital space is perfunctory and already outdated. Her primary example of positive results, an interactive site established by the Maltwood Museum in Victoria on silkscreen prints, has been taken offline due to problems with its content. In total, however, the diversity of examples and tactics that Ostrowitz uncovers serves as a testament to the dedication of First Nations artists in retaining control of their arts and cultures, which she positions as having survived into the present.

