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Decolonization, as the authors illustrate, is not an easy process, as indigenous peoples' own knowledge and theories have been ignored and undermined by nation-state powers and policies. The right of indigenous people to determine their own destiny as a people, determine their own political and governing systems, and be free of domination, of self-determination, is the result of this decolonization process that many indigenous people are experiencing throughout the world. Within this process they are recovering indigenous identity and consciousness by returning to their own values, experiences, and ways of thinking about the world.

Sovereignty Matters challenges its readers to think about how we understand the world around us and to question the words and terms we use to define our actions and our existence. For indigenous people, sovereignty *does* matter, but, as the authors assert, there needs to be a break from the way it has been defined in Western political and legal thought so that it can than be redefined through and within indigenous people's own historical and cultural experiences. When indigenous communities are firmly grounded in their own languages and traditions, and in their own theories, philosophies, and principles, only then will actual decolonization take place, and only then will self-determination be real.

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Switchbacks: Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk National Identity. By Jennifer Kramer. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006. 192 pages. $85.00 cloth.

Switchbacks: Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk National Identity is an ambitious book that addresses the intersections between heritage politics, identity construction, and cultural commodification, drawing from the practices associated with the production, circulation, and consumption of Nuxalk art. This book focuses on the oscillation between Native and non-Native systems of meaning—systems that generate contemporary values attached to Nuxalk art—using the metaphor of switchbacks on the mountain road in and out of the Nuxalk Nation's traditional homeland. *Switchbacks* is timely considering the growing scholarly attention to commodification in the postcapitalist world in which cultures interact and overlap within complex and fluxuating contexts of exchange.

Switchbacks offers a fresh perspective on a much-studied topic, North American Northwest Coast Native arts. But unlike "classic" scholarly monographs on the subject, Jennifer Kramer does not attempt to reveal the function of arts in "traditional" Nuxalk culture. Instead, she focuses on processes of contemporary Nuxalk identity construction by tracing Native attitudes and practices pertaining to the circulation of Nuxalk art within and outside of the Native community. The arguments in *Switchbacks* stem from the premise that, as a major aspect of cultural production, art represents identity and is not

about objects; rather it is about actions (6). Contests regarding its production, consumption, and circulation are of paramount importance to Nuxalk nation-building efforts. Native people assert their identities by laying claim to and control over the channels in which their arts circulate and are displayed. Thus, *Switchbacks* demonstrates that the construction of Native identity is an ongoing process dependent upon cross-cultural encounters and entanglements.

Kramer paints a vivid picture of the struggles taking place within the Nuxalk community regarding the rights to create, sell, and display art. Local Nuxalk leadership endeavors to protect Nuxalk heritage from further contamination through outside influence because many of the traditional protocols associated with art have been severely disrupted as a result of cultural and physical genocide and theft at the hands of non-Natives. For example, Nuxalk leaders must determine whether to use Western technology to pass on oral history, how to "revive" a song that hasn't been performed in recent generations, or whether to disregard traditional protocols of ownership and display to keep a dance "alive." Therefore, cultural revitalization efforts require making tough decisions—decisions that Nuxalk culture bearers are fully aware will profoundly affect future generations.

Although the author successfully describes complex local discourses surrounding Nuxalk art and its relationship to protecting and promoting heritage within the Native community, this is not the central argument of this book. The main thesis of *Switchbacks* argues that processes that are typically viewed as destructive to Native identity (for example, theft, commodification, and decontextualized display) may actually be conducive to Nuxalk national-identity building. By taking part in decisions regarding the display of Nuxalk art outside of Bella Coola, British Columbia to predominantly non-Native audiences, the Nuxalk reinforce their own cultural identity while sending a powerful message to outsiders to regard them as a sovereign nation.

Commendably, Kramer deconstructs many academic notions, which have generally been employed in a pejorative sense in respect to indigenous arts, such as commodification, authenticity, objectification, and appropriation. Rather than viewing these concepts as obstacles to cultural perpetuation and revitalization, Kramer asserts that Native people are sophisticated culture brokers, employing these ideas to their advantage. This insider-outsider interaction, in which the Nuxalk must strategically operate or "switchback" according to more than one set of cultural/political/legal conventions, is crucial to the construction of contemporary Nuxalk identity. Kramer asserts that outside recognition is a result of contemporary politics, and it is part and parcel of traditional Nuxalk ideologies that link recognition through ownership and display.

I strongly agree with Kramer's general premise that cultural production is a complicated affair that does not happen in a vacuum but is often born of innovative responses to outside influence. For some readers, the main thesis of *Switchbacks* has potential for explosive responses. Although the author explores some of the emotional connections that Native people have in respect to their arts, she tends to privilege a scholarly interpretation in which outside recognition of Nuxalk art (and its positive ramifications in terms

of Nuxalk identity politics) trumps the tense and/or painful contexts that become inalienably attached to Northwest Coast art objects as they circulate in and out of Native hands. Kramer's thesis is unacceptable for those who believe that Western appropriation can only result in the degradation of Native cultures.

Kramer also runs the risk of inflaming some of her readership through her assertion that "figurative repatriation," a type of control over the use and display Native people may exercise over their art objects held by outside institutions, is preferable to physical repatriation in some cases. If the goal is to be respected as a sovereign nation with inalienable rights to its cultural patrimony, figurative repatriation works in theory but is unlikely to satisfy some Native readers. In Kramer's defense, many Native groups collaborate with non-Native institutions, entrusting them with objects of cultural patrimony to protect and preserve these objects for future generations (including protection from individuals or factions within the tribe). Moreover, I have a good feeling the author knows that she is going to be attacked by some readers for her argument regarding figurative repatriation, and I respect Kramer's choice to discuss this sensitive subject for the sake of a provocative argument.

In deconstructing identity-construction processes, the author presents an honest portrayal of the physical and emotional challenges that Nuxalk people face as they navigate the contexts of cultural revival, appropriation, repatriation, and cross-cultural display. For example, Nuxalk leadership discourages the commodification of their arts to preserve them, but those artists who are responsible for cultural perpetuation often rely upon outside sales for their livelihood. Museums invoke feelings of sadness in Native people who feel generational trauma at the hands of past unscrupulous collectors and impoverished sellers, but objects now held in museums are among the oldest existing examples of Nuxalk art that inspire current generations. Anthropologists that Native people attack for exploiting Nuxalk culture for personal gain wrote the monographs and made the recordings that are used to reconstruct "lost" songs, dances, and other traditions.

By revealing the ambivalent feelings that many Native people feel toward these kinds of issues, some of the data presented in *Switchbacks* may appear to some readers to "cross the line" of secrecy or, conversely, "tell it like it is!" For many Nuxalk Nation members, "privacy" is a cultural strategy developed in response to more than a one-hundred-year history of cultural genocide and theft. Therefore, by documenting the complexities of Nuxalk cultural construction, Kramer runs the risk of providing ammunition to those who believe that Native people, who do not conform to popular ideologies of what it means to be Native, do not have "culture." This is the point of *Switchbacks*; Native art is neither bounded according to a precontact, "traditional" protocol nor is it defined by what the Western market dictates.

It takes real guts to make radical assertions about the world of Northwest Coast art, a milieu that is fraught with contentions and accusations from every angle. Scholars working along the Northwest Coast must identify their positionality because of this, and Kramer's reflexivity does not disappoint. *Switchbacks* is a thought-provoking book that thoroughly probes the question

of why there is so much anxiety surrounding the ownership and commodification of Northwest Coast Native arts. As the author puts it, "identity and its material embodiment, the production and possession of objects, are not created on only one side of a boundary between 'us' and 'them'; rather identity and ownership are constantly being fashioned and valued via the recognition on the part of outsiders that Nuxalk heritage is worth having an owning" (118).

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Tribal Water Rights: Essays in Contemporary Law, Policy, and Economics. Edited by John Thorson, Sarah Britton, and Bonnie G. Colby. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006. 304 pages. $50.00 cloth.

Indian water rights are in play throughout the West, and this collection of essays provides an examination of some of the issues encountered in litigating and negotiating Indian water rights. The introduction to the book describes *Tribal Water Rights* as a more detailed and in-depth sequel to issues dealt with in the soft-cover work, *Negotiating Tribal Water Rights*, also edited by Bonnie G. Colby, John E. Thorson, and Sarah Britton (2005). The fourteen chapters in *Tribal Water Rights* cover a wide range of matters—ranging from general principles of federal Indian law to highly specialized aspects of Indian water rights. As might be expected with multiple authors, the treatment of the various topics is mixed in terms of depth and quality, but in the end the book adds value to the body of literature dealing with Indian water rights. Unlike two other excellent treatments of legal history and the politics of settlement (respectively, John Shurts, *Indian Reserved Water Rights: The Winters Doctrine in its Social and Legal Context, 1880s–1930s* [2000] and Daniel C. McCool, *Native Waters* [2002]), this collection of essays serves as a solid practical guide for those who are actually engaged in litigation and/or negotiation of Indian water rights.

The doctrine is premised in part on aboriginal Indian ownership of what is now the United States, as well as on federal action setting aside lands as Indian reservations. In *Winters v. United States* (1907) the Supreme Court interpreted an agreement between the Indians of the Fort Belknap Reservation and the United States that was ratified by Congress. In the agreement, the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Bands surrendered most of their aboriginal land and retained a much smaller reservation adjacent to the Milk River in Montana. Non-Indians who had settled upstream of the reservation claimed paramount rights to use water from the Milk River based on the prior appropriation doctrine, which is followed by all of the western states. The Indians would need water being used by the non-Indians if they were to grow crops contemplated by the agreement creating the reservation. The Supreme Court ruled that the United States and the Indians intended to reserve the waters of the Milk River to fulfill the purposes of the agreement between the Indians