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Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination. Edited by Joanne Barker.

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be at its worst as bad as the intruding eye of the state, as First Peoples amply demonstrate, is the technology that facilitates interaction, creativity, and full participation in the world in which we live.

Victoria Bomberry

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Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination. Edited by Joanne Barker. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. 236 pages. \$29.95 paper.

Sovereignty Matters is a collection of essays written by indigenous scholars that explores notions of sovereignty, cultural self-determination, personal autonomy, and decolonization as they relate to indigenous peoples and their communities in the Americas and the Pacific. To open up the discussion, authors Joanne Barker (Lenape) and Taiaiake Alfred (Mohawk) examine these words and deconstruct their meanings in an attempt to illustrate the problems indigenous people encounter when their actions are conceived of through a Western lens. They argue that problems arise when indigenous people use nonindigenous terms to define their movements, theories, and lives. In particular, Barker and Alfred examine the word *sovereignty*, and how, through its uncritical acceptance, it eventually became the generalized term to define and represent the inherent and inalienable rights of indigenous peoples. However, as the authors assert, in the Western legal sense, sovereignty “implies a set of values and objectives that put it in direct opposition to the values and objectives found in most traditional indigenous philosophies” (43). Alfred points out that the challenge for indigenous peoples in forming suitable postcolonial systems of government is to detach the idea of sovereignty from its Western legal roots and change it. Thus, the task for indigenous people is to deconstruct their ways of thinking through a nonindigenous lens, and move beyond these words rooted in Western traditions by invoking word, concepts, and theories from an indigenous spiritual and cultural experience.

The essays provide excellent examples of how indigenous people are working against colonialism and moving down the path toward self-determination by revitalizing and employing their own indigenous ways of knowing and understanding. The Maori people in Aotearoa/New Zealand share a long history of resistance and struggle against colonization. Maori scholar Leonie Pihama explores how the Maori have continued to resist domination since colonization by developing and adhering to theories derived from Kaupapa Maori, a Maori body of knowledge that provides a theoretical framework in which Maoris conceive of their world. The ever-evolving Kaupapa Maori theory reaffirms the Maori right “to be Maori” on their own terms and draws from their own base of knowledge in understanding, thinking about, and explaining their world away from and outside of the domain of the colonial forces (204). Kaupapa Maori theory also provides a theoretical and analytical

framework to support the Maori people's ongoing struggles to retain and maintain control over their lands, languages, and communities.

The right of self-determination is an integral part of indigenous sovereignty, and today indigenous people throughout the world are making strong efforts to revive and revitalize their cultures by making their traditions integral to their everyday lives. Robert Miller (Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma) examines how the Makah tribe in Washington State reaffirmed its culture and identity through the revival of its whale tradition. In 1999 the Makah caught and harvested their first gray whale in more than seventy years and revitalized a tradition that is integral to their culture and identity as a whaling people. Miller states that the Makah situation is a good example of how difficult it is for indigenous people to exercise cultural self-determination and maintain their traditions. Even though the Makah tribe's right to whale is protected in its 1855 treaty, antiwhaling and environmental groups ignored this tradition's cultural, social, and spiritual significance and attempted to stop the Makah from exercising this right. As Miller points out, the Makah were able to withstand this opposition and handled the storm of the media coverage well, carefully maneuvering through the controversy by utilizing cooperation from the United States to support the reassertion of their treaty and cultural right to harvest whales. As a result, they have stayed committed to continuing their hunts and, as Miller argues, will persist in preserving and restoring their cultural practices and engage these in their own traditional ways.

The path to indigenous self-determination is, in many instances, an unclear one and becomes more obscure when there is a contest regarding how it should be achieved. A critical aspect of the struggle for self-determination is the need for indigenous people to maintain control over this process. Native Hawaiians have continually struggled against US domination and control over their cultures, lands, and communities since their islands were colonized. In the last thirty years the Hawaiian sovereignty movement has grown and Native Hawaiians have asserted their rights to be recognized as indigenous nations, similar to Native American nations in the mainland United States.

The right to self-identification is a critical part of self-determination and as Native Hawaiian scholar J. Kehaulani Kauanui asserts, for Native Hawaiians, "the issues of identity and identification are clearly part of a larger struggle for indigenous autonomy" (93). But what is problematic is that federal policies that have been established and utilized to determine Native American identity are now being utilized to determine who is or is not Native Hawaiian. Kauanui argues this blood quantum identification undermines how Native Hawaiians construct their own identity in which they "assert culturally integral models of reckoning belonging, such as those found in persistent genealogical practices" (103). This criteria for recognition of Hawaiian ancestry through the blood that one carries in her or his body goes against Native Hawaiian concepts of identity and cannot justify the affiliation of genealogical practice and types of identification that connect people to each other, place, and land. These connections, Kauanui stresses, are rooted in self-determination, sovereignty, and citizenship not hereditary racial status.

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 then 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