

*Switchbacks: Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk National Identity*¹

By Jennifer Kramer²

Reviewed by Darby C. Stapp³

In 2004, my family and I traveled to the Lummi Indian Reservation in the northwestern part of the state of Washington to participate in a conference honoring the late Cherokee anthropologist Robert K. Thomas. One evening, the conference participants were invited to the beach to watch a ceremony welcoming the arrival of canoes from neighboring villages on their way to a larger cultural renewal celebration at Port Angeles. While waiting with 50 or so other people, we noticed an elderly man with his family sitting in his well-traveled van alongside an old card table covered with traditional and contemporary cedar hats, baskets, and mats. Since we make it a practice to purchase contemporary cultural items during our travels through Indian Country, we went over to get a closer look. His family explained that the gentleman was one of the few who still made traditional hats, that they had gathered all the plant materials, and that the items were for sale. We purchased a hat, which now sits on shelves surrounded by other indigenous items collected during our 25 years of living in the Pacific Northwest.

Did this gentleman have the "right" to make traditional Lummi hats? Was he hurting Lummi culture by offering these items to outsiders? Was he unduly profiting from his efforts? Were we wrong to purchase the items, thereby creating a market for contemporary Lummi artifacts with a traditional bent? Were we inadvertently perpetuating the exploitation of Lummi culture? Or were we helping a family make a living, and in the process helping the Lummi keep their cultural traditions alive and growing?

These are the types of questions addressed by Jennifer Kramer in her book *Switchbacks: Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk National Identity*. Kramer's focus is on the Nuxalk, a coastal people who live in a remote region of British Columbia, about a 14 hour-drive north and west of Vancouver. Kramer uses the concept of *art* to explore many of the contemporary issues facing the Nuxalk as they strive to survive in a world dominated by

Western values and economics.

Indigenous art is a timely topic. According to a June 7, 2006, article about the Australian aboriginal art market in the *Christian Science Monitor*, the industry has grown from a market of \$750,000 in 1971 to that of \$149,000,000 today (referred to in *Art-Talk* 2006:13). Despite this growth, many of the artists are living in third-world conditions. While the gallery owners may reap high prices for the so-called art pieces they sell, the artists themselves are often forced to sell their wares for a pittance because they need money. Imagine a carver coming in from the hills to the local trader with three weeks worth of carving; what choice does he have but to take what is offered? Sometimes that means having to take goods related to life's necessities rather than cash. This phenomenon, of course, is not restricted to indigenous artists. Mention the term *gallery owner* to most any artist, and you can sit back and listen to a 20-minute lecture on the inequities of the art world.

What is unique to the indigenous art world is the internal cultural controversy that the selling of cultural items can create within certain North American Indian or other indigenous communities. Whether the issue is the sharing of sacred symbols with outsiders, the appropriation of images that culturally really do belong to a particular family or kin group, or the use of particular cultural objects in inappropriate ways, there are generally some in the community who do not approve. Works like Kramer's that critically examine this process are thus welcome and important.

Like many anthropologists, Kramer uses both storytelling and theory to present her own research and to draw out more general statements about cultural processes that can be used for cross-cultural comparison. I feel that she is strongest when storytelling, and weaker when theorizing. But I should qualify that opinion by saying that at this point in my career I do not put much stock in jargon-laden theory. There are two

reasons. First, it is a language that academics use primarily to talk with each other, and can be incomprehensible to the people I work with daily, such as those from tribes, government agencies, companies or corporations in private industry, and members of the general public. Second, I find that jargon rises and falls like a fashion trend and is too often used instead of more detailed, methodical, and specific explanations. So let me focus on Kramer's storytelling, which is really quite engaging.

Simply stated, Kramer's book is about cultural property and the transformations that are taking place in response to contact with those outside a particular culture and society. What were once objects made for a variety of specific uses, whether practical or spiritual, are now regarded as *art* and given new economic value. This process produces profound cultural effects on many levels of Native American and Native Canadian communities. On one hand, people are making items that tradition holds they should not be making. People are using symbols in contexts that they should not be using them in. People are sharing information they should not be sharing. People are owning objects that they should not be owning. And people are viewing objects that they should not be viewing.

On the other hand, individuals are learning crafts and learning to be self-sufficient. Cultural groups are gaining recognition, and by extension, the power to help themselves in their struggles to survive. And tribal members are learning and taking an interest in their cultural heritage, staving off the forces of acculturation. This also teaches youth traditional crafts and skills that help perpetuate the culture. Elders have a purpose in teaching the crafts, arts, and skills involved. The youth learn about the need to manage the natural resources that produce the raw materials needed for the objects in question.

I like Kramer's book. Her stories and her depiction of difficult questions and tough contradictions caused me to reflect on parallels with American Indian communities and cultural issues where I live on the Columbia River in southeastern Washington. Upon reflection, however, one thing that continues to bother me is Kramer's concentration on so-called art. Certainly, an increasing number of collectors of

Northwest Coast indigenous art are creating increased demand for new products. But to the indigenous groups themselves, is it in fact art, or is it some other kind of cultural or economic material or expression? It bothers me to define cultural items as art or their creators as artists simply because outsiders view it as art or because it possesses some inherent beauty. From the perspective of the maker, this category we call "Native art" could include anything from everyday shoes and basic cookware to sacred religious items or commodities with little cultural meaning that are created for economic gain. Was the maker of a sacred mask making art in the same way that Frederic Remington (1861-1909) or Charles M. "Charlie" Russell (1864-1926) made their paintings of the American West? I don't think so.

Where I live, we lack the fine art that attracts big galleries and big checks. But we do have people, including myself, buying as art very old corn-husk bags, beaded bags, regalia, and other items of dress or war. These are not art to the indigenous people in the way that they are art to the generally European American buyers; they are cultural items of different and very specific kinds. One big problem arising from this situation is that collectors create a dollar value that did not exist before. You need money? That beaded bag in Auntie's trunk can fetch \$600 on the open market. Of course, the local trader will only give you \$150, but that's \$150 cash tonight. And cultural property begins to migrate from the families who own it to outsiders. These issues are not restricted to material culture. The sharing of songs, dances, and language can create controversy, as can the expropriation of traditional plants and other natural resources, leading to scarcity and other adverse impacts.

The question of whether or not we call, and conceive of, cultural items as "art" ends up having some significant consequences. It is true that many writers and academics use the term *art* as a sign of respect for the skills of the creators and the importance of their traditions. Indeed, in historical context, the term has been employed in an attempt to get beyond the use of the term *folk art* or that of *handicrafts* to distinguish more "primitive" objects from the "high-art" of European and American traditions. This is a lauda-

tory impulse. But again, we need to get beyond our own jargon and be more specific and expansive about the full and changing realities behind our theories and semantics.

Kramer does make it clear that there are no simple answers to these complex dilemmas, and she does not take on the challenge of bringing her work to applied settings. There are no recommendations for the Nuxalk or for gallery owners. She may well enlighten her colleagues in anthropology and her students with her rich description and analysis. But her works are likely to remain insulated within academic conversations. Applying our work is so fraught with difficulties and contradictions that many anthropologists become immobilized. I cannot make grandiose statements about how Jennifer Kramer or anyone else should apply their work. When I feel stuck, I turn to stories, as she does in part in *Switchbacks*. So let me close with a personal remembrance that I think about quite often.

I recall a young tribal member who occasionally sold her modern but culturally sensitive photographs, tee-shirts, and poems to other American Indians and to non-Indians. I witnessed her being criticized by a tribal elder, one with whom I was quite close. This elder and I talked about it from time to time; I explained what I saw as some of the benefits – the same ones Kramer discusses, including economic rewards, cultural understanding, and cultural regeneration. To these arguments he responded: “I know all that, but I just don’t like it. It’s not right.”

I am pretty sure he did not like my collection of Plateau bead and corn-husk work either, nor was he too excited when I started beading. But toward the end of his life he asked me to take his favorite beaded vest, one that he had beaded with a story his step-mother had told him. He said he was afraid of what would happen to it once he was gone, suggesting it would be sold by someone and lost forever. I paid him what he wanted, but told him I did not know what to do with it. He simply replied, “You’ll know.”

Notes

1. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: University of British Columbia Press, 2006. 167 pages, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth \$85.00 Canadian and paperback \$29.95 Canadian. The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences supported publication of this book through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme with funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the K.D. Srivastava Fund.

2. Jennifer Kramer’s Ph.D. in anthropology is from Columbia University. By e-mail, **jkramer@interchange.ubc.ca** is her address. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, and the curator of the Pacific Northwest at the university’s Museum of Anthropology. Regular mail will reach her at the department at 6303 Northwest Marine Drive, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia (BC) V6T 1Z1 Canada. The telephone number there is 604-822-9851.

3. Darby C. Stapp’s Ph.D. in American Civilization is from the University of Pennsylvania. In cultural resource management, he works for the Battelle Memorial Institute on contract with the U.S. Department of Energy at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Washington. He can be reached by regular mail at 278 Adair Drive, Richland, Washington (WA) 99352-9453 USA, by e-mail at **dstapp@charter.net**, and by telephone at 509-554-0441.

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*Switchbacks: Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk National Identity*¹

By Jennifer Kramer²

Reviewed by James J. Hester,³ Philip M. Hobler,⁴ and Inge Dahm⁵

S*witchbacks* is the result of 16 months of fieldwork conducted between June 1995 and November 2001. Stimulated by the paucity of Nuxalk art in Vancouver galleries and told by gallery owners that the Nuxalk had not experienced

a cultural revival, Kramer went to Bella Coola. To her surprise she found that Bella Coola was filled with artists producing carved masks, paintings, silk screen prints, gold

and silver jewelry, beaded barrettes, and T-shirts. However few of these items were reaching Vancouver and a non-native clientele. The reason she discovered, was local pressure not to sell their art outside the Bella Coola valley. This led her to formulate the following research questions:

- How has value developed in Nuxalk art?
- When and how does Nuxalk art come to be valued?
- How does Nuxalk art influence their awareness of art and its creation?

Further she examines the existence of Nuxalk art after decades of external pressure to eradicate its production. And she examines Nuxalk ownership of art and non-Nuxalk recognition of this ownership.

The research approach she used to pursue these questions was to interview members of the community, elected tribal officials, hereditary chiefs, and others. However, these informants are not specifically identified, other than those she thanks in the acknowledgements. They include William and Merle Tallio, Alvin Mack, Joe Mack, Darlene Tallio, Peter Tallio, Chiefs Lawrence Pootlass, Ed Moody, Derrick Snow, and Archie Pootlass. We are not informed how many informants were interviewed, their age or sex, nor how many of them are artists. The result is that we have no way of knowing how representative the attitudes she identifies are of the total community.

The themes she pursues include:

- The difficulty of determining ownership of cultural objects.
- The Nuxalk use of cultural heritage as proof of nationhood.
- The significance of Nuxalk entanglements with Canadian law and the Western art market.
- The relationship between selling Nuxalk art and the creation of contemporary Nuxalk identity.
- The Nuxalk strategic use of accusations of cultural appropriation by others.

Kramer's conclusions are based on the concept that the attitudes of the Nuxalk oscillate between opposing viewpoints as follows:

- A. The Nuxalk have a self-proclaimed identity which she terms *self-objectification*, in order to remain free from external definitions.
- B. The Nuxalk use a flexible strategy, employing Canadian Federal law when it supports their cause but also rely on Nuxalk law.

The oscillation between positions A and B gives rise to her use of the term *Switchbacks*.

In conducting her fieldwork, Kramer confronted the concept of *theft*, the idea that appropriation of Nuxalk art by outsiders, whether individuals, dealers, or museums, represents exploitation of Nuxalk identity. Kramer also asks whether her own involvement raises the same issue: That her study would enable her to publish a book for money or gain employment at a lucrative salary. The issue is unanswerable since no one in Bella Coola had the authority to give permission for her study.

In pursuit of answers she presents several case studies; the Nuxalk place of learning, Acwsalcta, the Nuxalk Echo Mask, and the Nuxalk Sun Mask. These examples relate to what is culturally significant in establishing and

perpetuating Nuxalk identity. The case studies illustrate different approaches to these issues. The Echo Mask was sold to an art dealer and then repatriated to Bella Coola by the tribe. They invoked the terms of the Canadian Cultural Property Export and Import Act that prevents significant cultural property being exported from Canada. Using \$200,000 most of which was provided by the Canadian Department of Heritage, the mask was repurchased and placed on exhibit in the credit union in Bella Coola.

The Sun Mask was featured prominently as the outstanding object in the Vancouver Art Gallery's exhibit, *Down from the Shimmering Sky: Masks of the Northwest Coast*. The Nuxalk considered this use of the mask as validation of the importance of Nuxalk art. Kramer terms this attitude as representing *figurative repatriation*.

The issues at Acwsalcta were resolved by the creation of songbooks. The traditional songs in Nuxalk were translated into English and written down. In addition, Christian hymns were translated into Nuxalk. However, the ambiguity continues since there is fear of relying too much on the written texts. Further, they could be used by outsiders to the detriment of Nuxalk control.

In all of these case studies there is Nuxalk awareness that even though cultural items were collected in the past by museums and anthropologists, and viewed as a form of theft, in fact these items, masks, songs, etc. were thereby preserved for use by future generations.

In spite of these ambiguous attitudes toward the production of art, its use within the community, and its sale outside of the community, Kramer concludes by quoting one Nuxalk man who stated, "The Nuxalk nation was known all over the world because its art resided in foreign places such as Germany, New Zealand, New York, and Hawaii. It is because outsiders own Nuxalk art and recognize Nuxalk culture and nationhood that the Nuxalk are now powerful."

Beyond the question of how Kramer conducted her study, we raise the question of its value, both to the Nuxalk and to others. For example, we believe the title, *Switchbacks*, is inappropriate. It would convey no meaning to anyone researching a bibliographic database. Even the subtitle, *Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk*

National Identity, is ambiguous. A better title would have been *Nuxalk Attitudes toward Their Art*.

Kramer uses a number of terms including *commodification*, *strategic essentialism*, *self-objectification*, *figurative repatriation*, *hybridity*, and *indigenous commuting*. Such terms only confuse the reader, rather than clarifying the issues. Certainly these terms would mean little to the Nuxalk.

Finally we ask: *What benefit does this study provide to the Nuxalk or anyone else?* It is a difficult question to answer. However, we see little benefit to outsiders, especially the art dealers and museum curators. Their interests are focused on the acquisition, display, and / or sale of art objects, and the attitudes of their creators would seem somewhat irrelevant to the dealers. With respect to the benefit of the Nuxalk, they already know what they believe, so at best this study is redundant. However, as one of the Nuxalk predicted, she did get a book published, and did obtain a permanent position.

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3. James J. Hester's Ph.D. in anthropology is from the University of Arizona. He is a professor emeritus, Department of Anthropology, Campus Box

233, University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, Colorado 80309-0233 USA. By telephone, he may be reached at 303-492-7419 or at 303-939-9095. By e-mail, **james.hester@colorado.edu** is his address.

4. The late Philip M. Hobler's M.A. in anthropology came from the University of Arizona. He was a professor emeritus, Department of Archaeology, 8888 University Drive, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia (BC) V5A 1S6 Canada. The telephone number there is 604-291-4727. Philip M. Hobler died on July 19, 2006, having lost a two-year battle with cancer.

5. Inge Rosemarie Dahm holds a M.A. degree from the Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University. She is the widow of Philip M. Hobler. To contact her, please write or telephone the Department of Archaeology, 8888 University Drive, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia (BC) V5A 1S6 Canada, 604-291-4727. Or for help, at **burley@sfu.ca** e-mail David V. Burley, Ph.D., the chair of the department.

*Switchbacks: Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk National Identity*¹

By Jennifer Kramer²

Reviewed by Yoshiko "Miko" Yamamoto³

The *Switchbacks* book is a useful ethnography of a Nuxalk present-day community and its dealing with the repatriation of art objects under Canadian Government law. Jennifer Kramer carefully describes her acceptance by the community and gaining permission to publish the results of her fieldwork, putting herself also in a state of *Switchbacks* as the title of her book suggests. As an anthropologist, she participated in community activities and interviewed Nuxalk artists. She even made a trip from British Columbia, Canada, with Nuxalk school children to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and observed and took notes on their responses to the works on display of their fellow Bella Coola people, which they were seeing for the first time. Kramer expresses keen insights regarding the reactions of those who made the trip. She records the children's responses to the items in the museum exhibit that their ancestors had made and used. Had they been "stolen" from their community so they could be shown in public at the museum? The children reflect the response of the Nuxalk in general about their pieces being found in museum collections. Their overwhelming tendency is to identify with the pieces culturally, socially, and personally. The title of the book, *Switchbacks*, suggests the direction of Kramer's discussion and analysis. She leads us to a developing perspective of the Nuxalk that links works of art and ownership with their social and cultural identity.

Chapter 2, "The History of Bella Coola," is a good summary of relationships between the Bella Coola and the non-First Nation representatives throughout Canada's history. In this chapter, she describes the emerging concept of the term *theft*. It shows strong resentment toward the non-First Nation people, and abpuy what happened in the past to indigenous cultural objects. Kramer leads this reader to a feeling of guilt but at the same time sympathy for the Nuxalk people about what the non-Nuxalk people did uncon-

sciously or consciously. Often heard from antique collectors are explanations of their acts as valid. That is, they always explain that what they were doing is to save cultural heritage that is disappearing. Anthropologists diligently document and collect specimens thinking to help preserve the cultures of indigenous peoples against cultural loss in the future. However, what the non-Nuxalk people did seems to have caused considerable. The introduction of a cash economy with tourism and other influences of Westernization deeply affected the Nuxalk's cultural identity, their conservation of cultural objects, and their ideas of ownership, as well as their creative activities.

Chapter 3 comprises Kramer's account of the creative activities of Nuxalk artists. She gives us some complex reasoning on authenticity offered by the artists. The topics include the arts that are made for commodity sales and the arts of *genuine ethnic identity*. *Self objectification* is the term Kramer uses for the works that artists create for themselves. Not until recently have many accounts been published on artists of the ethnic arts. Generally speaking, many catalogs featuring Northwest Coast art do not mention the artists' names in describing the pieces. More frequently mentioned are the names of collectors or of museums as sources, even though the craftsmen of those pieces were known to the original owners. It was not the concern of Franz Boas (1858-1942) to discuss and describe what the artists of the Northwest Pacific Coast had in their minds (Boas 1955). A recent article by Zena Pearlstone (2001) titled *Katzina: Commoditized and Appropriated Images of Hopi Supernaturals* correctly initiates what should be the future direction of the treatment of artists of ethnic arts. Likewise, Kramer's approach with her detailed observations is most welcome.

Kramer's observation and analysis of the *Acwsalcta*, "the Native-run band school on the First Nations reserve in Bella Coola" (Kramer 2006:66-86), shows the frustration of the people

with respect to the solution or compromise in the execution of religious performance associated with the traditional *potlatch*. Years of suppression of ritual practice has affected cultural revival among the Nuxalk. Although accurate descriptions found in archives and publications from notes made by anthropologists are available, the adoption of such knowledge by this method was an issue raised by the Nuxalk. There was an objection to adopting the knowledge based on Western technology. Within the Acwsalcta the idea is expressed that oral tradition and verbally expressed memories are considered desirable instead. As Kramer mentions correctly at the very beginning of the book, many have assumed that, when cultural revival occurs, it is a simple reversion to the past. But the people of the First Nations did not attempt to replicate the behavior and traditions of their ancestors as they were in the past. It is not the existence of an organization like Acwsalcta that matters. Rather what matters is the way the revived knowledge is sorted out by the teachers of the knowledge and the consensus among the Nuxalk people to comfortably practice their heritage in the name of cultural identity via recalled oral traditions.

Having described in general terms the historical and political background of the Nuxalk people, Kramer's analysis shifts to one-on-one encountering of the creators, who are the artists of the objects they create and of their ideas. Two masks are described and analyzed that were repatriated to the Nuxalk people. The Nuxalk made two different decisions for the two masks represented by two different concepts – the concept of physical repatriation as opposed to figurative repatriation. These resulted in the two different ideas on the masks and thence two different ways of exhibition.

The book does not include any photographs of the works she discusses. There must be a good reason, and Kramer should tell us. Perhaps, I inadvertently missed it. Nevertheless, to refresh our memories on the subject of indigenous art, readers would do well to review *Primitive Art* by Franz Boas (1955). Also helpful would be references on the *potlatch* because of the complexity of the religious rituals described by Kramer (see McFeat 1967:72-133; Kew and Goddard 1974:72-73). Since the Bella Coola are well known to

anthropology, Kramer's book may be more clearly understood in light of past documentation of Bella Coola artistic creativity (see Boas 1955:279-296; Carson 1982; Holm 1987:119-127). A recent account may interest the readers of Kramer's book. The return of collections is featured by the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Preucel and Williams 2005:9-19).

As I read the last several chapters I began to feel relieved because future doors still seem to be open for us museum professionals and admirers of ethnic arts and crafts. I look forward to seeing innovative indigenous works exhibited with curation acceptable to the Nuxalk people. I also hope to see publications of their art that they are proud to present as their work.

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3. Yoshiko "Miko" Yamamoto's Ph.D. in anthropology is from Cornell University. She directs the Adan E. Treganza Anthropology Museum, Department of Anthropology, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco, California (CA) 94132-1722. By e-mail, yamamoto@sfsu.edu is her address. Her telephone number is 415-338-1642.

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*Switchbacks: Art, Ownership, and Nuxalk National Identity*¹

By Jennifer Kramer²

Reviews counterpointed by Jennifer Kramer

Darby Stapp, Miko Yamamoto, and James Hester with his co-reviewers Philip Hobler and Inge Dahm collectively raise the following important question: *Who benefits from this work?* Who is the book's intended audience, and does the book convey recommendations? The reviewers state that I do not propose an applied course of action for Nuxalk people, gallery owners, or museum curators. While I concur that I do not offer solutions to the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in who owns Nuxalk culture and who has the right to decide on its representation, repatriation, or commodification, I have attempted to highlight the problems. I do not believe it is my role to tell the Nuxalk what to do in these situations, for that would be a presumption of authority. However, I think it is important that non-Nuxalk people be aware of the complexity of these concerns so we can interact in a way that is respectful of boundaries of identity and ownership. My book is an attempt to understand and chart these limits to Nuxalk culture.

As a curator at the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology, one of my responsibilities is to work with the Nuxalk to reorganize the display of their material culture at the museum. I traveled to Bella Coola in October 2006 to show photographs and documentation of Nuxalk objects at the museum in order to talk with the Nuxalk on how best to display this collection. At one point during my visit, I was discussing with a Nuxalk man in his fifties the catalogue notes that had been added by Nuxalk in the 1970s. Many of these brief comments identified the family or individual who had rights to dance a particular mask. Suddenly the man said that

You have to be careful around ownership. Things are family owned, but also Nuxalk owned.

I think he was intimating that over time ownership rules had changed. Dance preroga-

tives had been coalescing into collective national possessions, but accusations of appropriation between families and individuals still exist. He was warning me that I needed to be sensitive to such contexts of history.

I share this story not because I have the solution of how to resolve the predicament of changing ownership, but because it asserts in a Nuxalk voice the entanglement of Nuxalk cultural property. Non-Nuxalk people and, particularly, museum curators need to be aware of these intercultural histories that engender Nuxalk messages, which might paradoxically advocate public display and cultural privacy.

In *Switchbacks*, I try to show how Nuxalk cultural heritage and cultural property are caught up in non-Nuxalk structures of valuation such as the Canadian and international legal systems, the global indigenous art market, and the institutionalization of museum display. Therefore, they cannot be divorced from non-Nuxalk reception. I chose to write in a language that is considered short-hand by anthropologists, art historians, and students of Native Canadian culture, who are the primary intended audience of this work. I do not deny that this jargon can be opaque. However, I think James Hester, Philip Hobler, and Inge Dahm have not grasped the aim of my book when they suggest it could be better titled *Nuxalk Attitudes toward Their Art*. I agree with Hester, Hobler, and Dahm that the Nuxalk already know what they believe and that this book is not for them. Instead, I intended this book to function as a translation for non-Nuxalk people who are privileged to view Nuxalk art.

I chose to use the title *Switchbacks* because it is a physical marker of the steep hill into the Bella Coola Valley, which must be traversed to reach the Nuxalk, and it is also a metaphor for the dialectic at work in the construction of Nuxalk identity. In *Switchbacks*, I rely on the premise that Nuxalk art is presented to non-Nuxalk audiences in much the same way that a Nuxalk chief might display his ancestral privileges before

witnesses at a potlatch that he hosts. I am suggesting that ownership needs to be validated by external eyes, and that in this way Nuxalk identity is affirmed. Building upon Charlotte Townsend-Gault's fruitful concept of *art as argument* (1997), this cultural display deserves a response. This book is my response to Nuxalk art.

I am sympathetic with Darby Stapp's discomfort with my use of the term *art*. He is correct that I chose this label in part because it conveys respect, and I do not want to become entangled in an outdated debate about the various qualities of art versus craft. But, I also chose it because it seemed more open-ended in what it could accomplish. My research embraces intangible as well as tangible products of Nuxalk culture, and I explain that I define the term *art* as that which the Nuxalk believe to be art. I wanted to acknowledge Nuxalk agency so I treated art as having the capacities of a verb rather than the passivity of an object. I do not think that *cultural item*, the term suggested by Stapp, conveys the same activity or potential.

While I take Stapp's point that art did not originate as an indigenous category, it is myopic to suggest that contemporary Nuxalk, and especially Nuxalk artists, should not make use of the term's abilities to convey aesthetic judgment and to declare the possibility for economic patronage. I am trying to argue that selling art can be an authenticating act, so suggesting that the term *art* is inappropriate implies that the Nuxalk lose something when they choose to participate in the art market. While I know this was hardly Stapp's intention, I would not want to make the Nuxalk vulnerable to this sort of critique, thereby reifying traditional uses as the only acceptable ones for Native Canadian products. Regrettably, Miko Yamamoto misconstrues my discussion of authenticity and use of the term *self objectification*. My argument does not distinguish between art made for sale and art made for internal use, which is what she problematically labels *genuine ethnic arts*. Rather, I try to demonstrate how these are specious divisions not recognized by the Nuxalk.

Both the review of Miko Yamamoto and that of James Hester, Philip Hobler, and Inge Dahm discuss *Acwsalcta*, the band-run school in Bella

Coola. While the *Acwsalcta* school is crucial for inspiring Nuxalk youth with their cultural heritage, the mere fact of its existence does not resolve the dilemma of how to proceed with the creation of a Nuxalk cultural curriculum. I differ from the breezy attitude of Hester, Hobler, and Dahm that "issues at *Acwsalcta* were resolved by the creation of songbooks." While the songbooks offer one solution to the difficulties in teaching oral culture, they bring a host of other problems by recording culture in written form.

Hester, Hobler, and Dahm raise the important question of methodology and the ethical implications of fieldwork and academic publications. As I explained in my book, I do not name the people with whom I spoke, because people were cautious of publicly voicing their opinions in a community rife with political divisions. While I could offer statistics on how many people I interviewed in Bella Coola, my research methodology was intended to be qualitative rather than quantitative. My goal was never to be representative as I would not want to suggest that the Nuxalk are uniform. In fact, I tried to emphasize the multiplicity of opinions expressed by the Nuxalk. But perhaps I could have made clearer the challenges in attempting to capture this diversity within the pages of a book.

To answer Yamamoto's question of why I did not publish photographs of Nuxalk art, I offer this quote from the book's introduction:

I do not want to contribute to the feelings expressed by some Nuxalk that the display of their art, or even photographs of it, has the potential to reveal knowledge that belongs to the owner of the cultural object and that should stay secret. My goal is to respect the limits of representation set by the Nuxalk while also reading them as important messages about Nuxalk identity...Some Nuxalk believe that duplication of Nuxalk art is theft because it dilutes the power of what the Nuxalk possess as a culture and as an identity. **Since I did not wish to wrestle control away from the Nuxalk, I have not included any photographs in this book.** [Bolding added here for emphasis.] In refusing to display, I am acknowledging that I do

not own the inherited right to do so. Even so, I am aware that Switchbacks creates an access point to the Nuxalk, who are vulnerable when exposed. In order to protect individual Nuxalk from unwanted exposure I have not included any personal names in this work (Kramer 2006:22).

As I hope this paragraph conveys, I tried to be as attuned as possible to issues of cultural appropriation and the boundaries of ethical knowledge production.

Hester, Hobler, and Dahm imply that I do not believe anyone in Bella Coola has the authority to give permission for my study. I think they are misinterpreting my point about the difficulties in finding consensus among the Nuxalk. As I write in my conclusions:

Ownership, I began to understand, can never be complete. Ownership in Bella Coola is a complex claim, involving much more than the person or persons who assert it. It is a process of events involving witnesses and, as such, it is often fraught with contention and counterclaims (Kramer 2006:126).

This is also true of book reviews and the various people who read and write them. I thank the reviewers for their critical commentary.

Notes

1. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: University of British Columbia Press, 2006. 167 pages, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth \$85.00 Canadian and paperback \$29.95 Canadian. The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences supported publication of this book through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme with funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the K.D. Srivastava Fund.

2. Jennifer Kramer's Ph.D. in anthropology is from Columbia University. By e-mail, jkramer@interchange.ubc.ca is her address. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia and the curator of the Pacific Northwest at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia. Regular mail will reach her at the department at

6303 Northwest Marine Drive, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia (BC) V6T 1Z1 Canada. The telephone number there is 604-822-9851.

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