

she is and help explain the role she played in traditional shamanism and contemporary art. In this way, we come to know Sedna. Inuit traditions are too frequently relegated to the narrow confines of Western belief systems. Sedna and other spiritual beings, as the authors assert, are not, however, comparable to concepts of deities, God, or Mother Nature. The Inuit world is inhabited by different beings—animals, humans, and spiritual beings, all of which are interconnected. It is these interconnections—and their ephemeral qualities—which require our investigation. Fortunately, it is to this that the authors turn their attention. This is an approach both academic and respectful of Inuit traditions.

This respectful approach extends to include acknowledgment of the very real effects of the interplay between Inuit and Qallunaat on the representation of Sedna in contemporary art—art often no longer created by the elders with whom the authors conducted interviews, but by their children (now adults) who have strong beliefs of their own and who attempt to balance these beliefs with knowing the art market. In the introductory section we find the book's second notable strength: an honest discussion of the impact of colonization on the art work of contemporary Inuit.

The Sea Woman is well-organized and presented with beautiful and interesting slides. This is an excellent book for historians and anthropologists as well as for the non-specialists interested in Inuit studies. It is written in a scholarly fashion, yet remains accessible to all and includes engaging stories and explorations of the mysterious and multifaceted Sedna.

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***Navigating Neoliberalism: Self-Determination and the Mikisew Cree First Nation.* By Gabrielle Slowey. Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2008. 98 pages.**

In *Navigating Neoliberalism*, Gabrielle Slowey analyzes political and economic decisions facing the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) around Fort Chipewyan, Alberta in the context of global neo-liberalism. Largely focused on developments since the settlement of a specific land claim in 1986, her book includes sections on the social characteristics of the MCFN community, theories of neoliberal globalization, historical trajectories of Aboriginal self-determination, politics and economy in northern Alberta,

and MCFN governance. Unfortunately, the brevity of the book does not allow Slowey to do justice to all these topics. She could have improved the work by including more interview and policy data, more critical evaluation and triangulation of existing primary and secondary sources, more historical context, and more in-depth discussion of theory. While the book contains some provocative arguments and interesting information (particularly on MCFN governance and corporate relations), it sometimes reads like a narrow case study. Nevertheless, its concise discussion of the successes of this geographically isolated First Nation will be of interest to non-academic readers with backgrounds in government and business, as well as to scholars working on Aboriginal economic development.

The author bases her study on experiences gained during a summer work term at Fort Chipewyan in 1997, and on her subsequent policy analysis and follow-up visits. A minority of the 2,400 MCFN members reside around Fort Chipewyan, a fly-in community on the north shore of Lake Athabasca, which is also home to non-Aboriginals, Métis, and members of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. In spite of this blending of ethnostatus groups, arguably facing similar challenges within a single community, the MCFN remains the focus of Slowey's analysis. Similarly, the author largely eschews comparative consideration of other First Nations outside of Fort Chipewyan, even those in Alberta facing similar issues such as specific claims implementation and oil sands development.

Neoliberal globalization is characterized by a scaling back of state economic activism and state support for marginalized groups in favour of market solutions and competitiveness. Slowey contends that neoliberal globalization may have positive consequences for some First Nations communities because it can help get government out of their hair and foster greater prosperity through participation in the market. Although neoliberal globalization is a central concept in the book, Slowey's arguments about it remain rather preliminary. As such, the more theoretical parts of the book seem out of step with her largely empirical analysis. Somewhat contingent localized phenomena (such as land claim negotiations or oil sands development) are deployed as evidence for a grand march towards neoliberal globalization. Diverse actions of Liberal and Conservative governments at the federal and provincial levels and over a period of decades are arbitrarily cited as examples of neoliberal policies. Neoliberal globalization itself sometimes seems to have been personified by the author. In this book, it becomes a causative agent, apparently driving individual, corporate, and state actors in their interventions.

While the author presents some useful information in an accessible format, occasionally her data is a bit thin. This is the case even when she is discussing policy documents and political shifts, including the specific claim that is central to her analysis. Furthermore, although Slowey draws on her field time to offer insights about the MCFN community, there is no discussion of ethnographic methods, reflexive considerations of the researcher's role, or research ethics. Rarely are MCFN members quoted at length, although interviews appear to have been central to Slowey's methodology. Indeed, much of her data comes from anonymous interviews with representatives of government or industry. Slowey seldom critically evaluates these interview excerpts, seemingly accepting at face value informants' claims regarding state and corporate munificence, as well as their simplistic and occasionally distasteful statements about First Nations people and communities. A more hard-hitting analysis of state and corporate discourse—an important part of the echo chamber supporting a seemingly inevitable shift to global neo-liberalism—would have been preferable. Unfortunately, it appears Slowey has conceded this inevitability, to the detriment of her analysis.

The author does not do enough to analyze status differentials, disagreements, or transitional figures within MCFN. The resulting discussion of a seemingly neoliberal First Nation is too neat. It is not clear whether Slowey believes that neoliberal globalization is a largely negative phenomenon, which First Nations must pragmatically accept, or a largely positive one, which First Nations should embrace and even promote. Thus, she sidesteps questions of First Nations' agency and of the possibility of radical solutions. Ultimately, her theoretical argument is quite tentative. A more ideologically driven book that took a clear position for or against neoliberal globalization, and which contained a more critical approach to political economy, theory, and history, would have been stronger.

In her historical argument (which does not include any new data), Slowey reproduces static models by suggesting in passing that Western Cree occupancy is a product of the fur trade and that northern subsistence economies collapsed utterly in the 1970s. Such highly contentious statements are outside the author's expertise, have nothing to do with her argument, and may be prejudicial to First Nations' legal claims. While historical sections draw lightly on Patricia McCormack's work examining Fort Chipewyan, a fuller integration of the work of McCormack and other anthropologists of the World-System, including Immanuel Wallerstein and Eric Wolf, would have improved the book. Such an approach would

have provided a more interdisciplinary critical framework for Slowey's discussion of globalization.

Slowey sometimes neglects to provide adequate contextual information about MCFN politics. She does not extensively discuss historical elements of the specific claim or of its negotiation and implementation. A discussion of specific claims in relation to policy alternatives, such as comprehensive claims, would have been quite useful. This does not appear, even though a comprehensive claim likely would have better supported the author's argument about land claims as a means of self-determination. Slowey contends that MCFN's relatively small specific claim, a treaty land entitlement setting aside lands and monetary compensation, has given MCFN a somewhat unique ability to work with government and corporations in its efforts to become self-determining. Problematically, Slowey thus sees land claims as part of a neo-liberal policy agenda, rather than as a vestige of state activism.

Slowey mentions, but largely ignores, details that are inconvenient to her argument about neo-liberalism aiding MCFN's self-determination. These include MCFN's increasingly militant stance against development of the oil sands, its legal disputes over land claim and treaty implementation, and the fact that MCFN is *not* self-governing but remains subject to federal legislation and financing. Slowey avoids these difficulties by redefining self-determination in a liberal fashion as an aggregated form of soft power with intangible elements.

Overall, this book's line of argument may not convince a skeptical reader that neo-liberalism has much to offer Aboriginal people, whether at Fort Chipewyan or elsewhere. Despite some successes, the author risks becoming a cheerleader, not for Fort Chipewyan (as she suggests), but for neoliberalism. The book is accessible, and therefore suitable, for undergraduates. However, it may not be sufficiently general, and its theoretical arguments may be too imprecise, to allow students at this level to draw connections to broader issues without a substantial amount of comparative reading or classroom discussion. The book would likely work better in a graduate seminar on Aboriginal political issues, a forum where its specificity and brevity would allow it to complement more canonical works.

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