

sizes that the responsible storyteller will be both educated and sensitive to the origins of each myth.

The introduction also includes highlights of myth studies from Plato to Campbell, while much of the second half of the book is devoted to modern American myths, including those born out of popular culture, and draws parallels between the hero archetype and James T. Kirk, ritual Navajo sand paintings and the art of Salvador Dalí, and pagan Russian spring rituals and the operas of Rimsky-Korsakov. Bringing the readers' own secular and sacred myths to their attention, Sherman both highlights the relevance of mythic texts and heightens readers' sensitivity to the delicate intersection of belief and myth.

The secular performance of myth outside its ritual contexts will continue to invite reproach from postcolonial critics. Advocates of diversity and multiculturalism will continue to argue for the value of learning such stories as a means to cross-cultural understanding. Sherman attempts here to educate the latter so as not to offend the former. If storytellers heed her advice and seek a deep understanding of what they perform, we as a society may move closer to this highly desirable middle ground.

Who Owns Native Culture? By Michael F. Brown. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003. Pp. xvi + 315, introduction, 12 illustrations, notes, sources, acknowledgements, index.)

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A number of folklorists are making valuable contributions at the cutting edge of global debates about heritage policy and the relevance of intellectual property law to the survival of local cultures. Yet I suspect that, for many of us, the current moment is one in which we are often made to pause in the pursuit of everyday professional duties, look up with surprise, and discover that the intellectual landscape has shifted around us in complex ways. One day, we open the pages of our flagship journal and there, amid the thoughtful considerations of

expressive culture, are equally nuanced essays reflecting on policies being debated by international bureaucracies in Geneva and other cosmopolitan locales. Such work conjures up images of distant conference halls filled with lawyers and politicians debating the nature and relevance of folklore. Welcome to the strange and contentious new world evoked by unfamiliar, ominous acronyms: WIPO, ICG-GRTKE, IP, TEK, GATT, EoF ("expressions of folklore", of course), CPR, ICH, USPTO, WPPT, WTO, and RAFI. Behind the capital letters and the structures of power and the expert knowledge that they encode are issues, sometimes life and death ones, that matter tremendously to the global communities in which we live and work. Those of us not yet in the vanguard nonetheless have contributions to make to these debates. But where do we begin?

For the uninitiated, Michael Brown's thoughtful book, *Who Owns Native Culture?*, can serve as a welcome point of entry into current debates on cultural property. Written for a general audience in an engaging style, the book offers a virtual fieldtrip in which readers are introduced to the issues through consideration of recent court cases, public debates, and policy developments. Although global in scope, the book's core examples are drawn from the Americas and Australia, where indigenous communities continue to renegotiate their statuses and rights within the nations that encompass them. Despite Brown's use of indigenous examples, the book's relevance is general. Around the globe, cultural forms, practices, knowledge, and even identities are being recast as forms of property and subjected to regimes of legal control in a market context. The struggles of indigenous peoples represent a rich sector within which to consider this process, but such shifts are unfolding everywhere. They bind everyone—from Amazonian healers and French farmers to corporate lawyers and hip-hop musicians—together in a new and often paradoxical web of interrelationship. Globalization, new biotechnologies, indigenous rights movements, and the corporate enclosure of the public domain are among the factors at play in such transformations.

In considering how and why cultural expressions are being transformed into commodities,

Brown is especially effective at distilling the paradoxes attendant upon such shifts. Many of his case studies describe legal contests in which general, yet often contradictory, principles emerge. These paradoxes suggest the contours of the overarching debate. What forms can collective rights take in plural democracies? What effects will property-based notions of heritage culture have on communities and on the global society? How can rights to individual privacy be extended to accord protection to groups wishing to shield themselves and their heritage from outside appropriation? What unintended consequences might new protections for culture have on life in a world characterized by cultural flow, digital technologies, international migration, and multinational corporations?

While acknowledging a place for law in resolving contests over culture, Brown emphasizes practical, local, and dialogical strategies for negotiating relationships of respect and accommodation. He sees hope, for instance, in the ways that U.S. repatriation law has created a space and a context for wider, more productive dialogues between museums and native communities. He argues for accepting compromise and for the difficult work of negotiation as an inelegant but preferable response to the choice of “total heritage protection”—utopian/dystopian policies of social balkanization predicated on an essentialist theory of culture and enacted through laws and bureaucracies whose unintended human costs would quickly become unbearable. Most folklorists will likely share Brown’s general orientation, and some will be dismayed to acknowledge how far toward essentialism the real-world debate has sometimes shifted.

Specialists on cultural property issues will find the book useful for teaching and for explaining the subject to colleagues, even when they may quibble with aspects of Brown’s own stance. Already an academic bestseller, the book now figures regularly in diverse professional conversations. In discussing it with colleagues, I have witnessed its power to provoke debate. For instance, its treatment of sovereignty articulates with ongoing debates in American Indian studies. The meaning that sovereignty holds for indigenous groups encompassed by settler societies is a background concern of the

book, though it is often foregrounded in the arguments these peoples make for cultural rights. A consequence of Brown’s not tackling directly the issue of the nature of sovereignty is to give the impression that it is largely a rhetorical stance, and that indigenous concerns equate readily with those of other cultural groups living within “multicultural” societies. Questions of power and of the ongoing legacies of colonialism continually complicate such discussions and, to an extent at least, place special conditions on native relations with nonnatives. I mention such reactions only to suggest that Brown’s book is becoming the catalyst for refined discussions, meditations, and researches exploring the issues it ably surveys. It is already a common frame of reference for new scholarship. It also brings a global, ethnographic dimension to narrower, but better publicized, copyright debates dominated by discussions of Mickey Mouse, musical sampling, and Internet file sharing.

Scholars and activists, whose fieldwork has prompted commitments to the cultural concerns of local communities, will benefit from Brown’s valuable study. An extensive companion website is maintained by the author. Found currently at www.williams.edu/go/native/, it is an outstanding resource that both stands alone and richly augments the book. The website offers many of the basic sources used in compiling the book and also assembles an expanding variety of more recent materials relating to cultural property debates. *Who Owns Native Culture?* is a rich introduction to discussions that will occupy us for the foreseeable future and that will surely lead in unexpected directions.

How to Read an Oral Poem. By John Miles Foley. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. Pp. xviii + 225, bibliography, illustrations, index.)

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The title of John Miles Foley’s *How to Read an Oral Poem* contains an apparent contradiction, for how is it possible—and why is it necessary—to “read” oral poetry? The title may also