

***Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness.*** Fyre Jean Graveline. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 1998; illustrations; 304 pages; ISBN 1 895686 30X; \$24.95.

In *Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness*, Fyre Jean Graveline documents her attempts to "revitalize Ancestral Aboriginal Tradition within a contemporary Western School." The focus of the book concerns a pedagogical model she developed for a Cross Cultural Issues course. In the course, she operationalizes a teaching model based on "Aboriginal Traditional worldviews" (17). Although she does not specify the classroom context in which the model was developed, I assumed she is describing a university-based course.

Graveline's project in her class is to unsettle the domination of eurocentric consciousness. She does so through creating the classroom as a community of diverse members. Students engage in "circle work," where their personal stories about culture and race are encouraged, and where members from diverse communities are invited to the class to share experiences and cultural traditions with the students. Graveline's "Model-In-Use" draws on the medicine wheel as an organizing frame for the course. It begins with the development of consciousness through the use of "first voice," moves to exploration of cultures in the form of "talking circles," extends to building community through storytelling by the members of the class, and completes or renews the circle through consideration of change via forms of activism.

As I write this précis of Graveline's book, I am aware of the immense difficulty she faced in attempting to translate her interruption of traditional classroom practice into a text form. In a very real sense, the book illustrates the complexity of "holding" non-dominant cultural forms within the context of domination in order to subvert power. As I appreciated the difficulties of translating her world view into text, I was reminded anew of the huge penalties for students who are excluded by traditional educational forms.

Graveline's "Acknowledgements" indicate

that it is an outgrowth of a thesis, so that she had to satisfy academic conventions while simultaneously attempting to transform them. Graveline struggles to maintain her cultural roots within the form of an academic text. The results are contradictory and challenging. The book both exceeds and fails in text form. For example, readers are treated to many hand-drawn illustrations of medicine wheels followed by descriptive, poetic text. While these efforts work to undermine a traditional academic text, the book teeters on the brink of New Age clichés which undermine the intent of oppositionality. And yet, how does one talk about "holism," "healing," "interconnectedness" without being inserted into New Age discourses?

The book contains lengthy descriptions of the process of the course with respect to Graveline's model. She uses student journals and Talking Circles composed of former students and community participants in the class to explore perceptions of the class. The text is rich with quotes from students about their experiences. In my view, the greatest strength of the book is the insight it affords into students' emotional and intellectual responses with respect to their growing awareness of the dynamics of oppression.

Unfortunately, Graveline provides very little critical analysis of the relationship between students' perceptions and her project of unsettling power. The book suffers from generalizations and prescriptions at the expense of a more satisfying complexity. For example, she claims "Once personal but political stories are told, the authority that is invested in the aura of the teacher is demystified" (218). Is the problem of teacher power truly neutralized by the telling of personal stories? Is there such a thing as the teacher? How is teacher power made complex by race, age, class, and gender in ways that are not easily remedied by storytelling?

The exception to the problem of generalizations in the book comes near the end of the book in the chapter called "Learning from the Trickster." To my mind, this is the most valuable section of the book. Graveline has reserved conflict, complexity and contradictions for this chapter. I found it very interesting and very useful. Here, she writes insightfully about such issues as

appropriation, teacher position, and white students' resistance and backlash. The complexity that is missing in the previous discussions appears for the first time. I have reservations about this choice of organization; I found myself dismissing the descriptive and prescriptive nature of much of the book as an attempt to persuade the reader that the model "works," and I concluded before reaching the end of the book that this effort was an artifact of the demands of thesis research. I would have preferred to see the "trickster" integrated into each chapter so that the difficult and troubling issues of anti-racist pedagogy are always fully at the forefront.

Certainly Graveline has a great deal of important experience to share with respect to anti-racist pedagogy. I was left with a desire to participate with her in a Talking Circle in order to discuss her Model at length. I think she would approve of this effect of the book - a stimulation of desire for further connection, dialogue, and self-discovery leading to social and political action. I commend her book as a document written from the perspective of an "outsider within" and I look forward to reading further work from Graveline.

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***Race Rights and The Law in the Supreme Court of Canada.*** Jim Walker. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1997; x+ 448 pages; ISBN 0-8890-306-7; \$29.95.

Jim Walker's *Race Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada* is a study of instances of the intersection of "race" and the "law" in twentieth century Canada. This work examines the struggles amongst members of various racially disadvantaged groups for legal "rights" in the face of discriminatory practices and policies.

Walker explores these themes through the lenses of four cases brought before the Supreme Court of Canada between the years 1914 and 1955, involving Chinese, African-Canadian, Jewish and

"Indo-Caribbean" litigants. They were contested around the issues of discriminatory legislation preventing Chinese men from employing or "managing" white women, "Jim Crowism" in private business establishments, restrictive covenants upon the sale of private property, and racially-biased practices in immigration policy. These stories, argues Walker, have particular value due to their symbolic importance as community causes, judicial precedents, and/or cases which affected key public policy decisions. The author concludes with a thoughtful and probing epilogue, ruminating on the implications of these cases for contemporary Canada, where issues of race still present our society with numerous challenges.

This book has many strengths. Walker skilfully bridges the gap between legal history and social history in a compelling introduction which "orients" the reader to developments in scholarly work in the areas of race and race relations, social history, and legal history. Moreover, the author demonstrates an impressive grasp of the intricacies of legal procedure, tracing each case from lower courts through to Canada's Supreme Court.

Walker also breathes life into each of these case studies by situating them in their historical context. The reader is presented with more than an in-depth analysis or "thick description" of each case. We are also given a sense of how each was situated against the backdrop of legal and extra-legal discriminatory practices aimed at each group, as well as the international scientific discourses and colonial (and post-colonial) developments which framed and informed "local knowledge" and local articulations of "race" and "racial discrimination." The impressive breadth and depth of the content of this work is also matched by its presentation. It is, quite simply, a wonderfully written and organized book, striking an impressive balance between presenting ideas in all their complexity while using clear language.

There are, however, a few questions one is left with after reading this work. First, how can Canadian scholars begin to draw upon emergent scholarship in the field of "critical whiteness studies" which has burst upon the scene among US cultural critics in the last fifteen years? Can we