

**UCLA**

**American Indian Culture and Research Journal**

**Title**

Our Bit of Truth: An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature. Edited by Agnes Grant.

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/05b6g0c3>

**Journal**

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 15(4)

**ISSN**

0161-6463

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**Publication Date**

1991-09-01

**DOI**

10.17953

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contrast to that of most of her reform contemporaries, who pushed for individual allotment and public release of "surplus" Indian holdings to speed acculturation. After her death, reformers honored Jackson as a martyr to the cause, as they attempted to change the situation of the mission Indians she loved. Readers join Mathes in wondering whether, had Jackson lived and remained unafraid of controversy, she might have used her influence to temper the assimilationist evangelism of her colleagues in the movement. This is an important book that raises crucial questions about the consistent level of conflict in Indian policy reform of the period, and the varieties of effective tactics reformers chose to use.

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**Our Bit of Truth: An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature.** Edited by Agnes Grant. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Pemmican Publications, 1990. 347 pages. \$19.95 cloth.

Native studies director Agnes Grant has compiled a valuable collection of myths, legends, poetry, biography, short stories, excerpts from novels, and memoirs representing the major Canadian tribes, exploring their multifaceted themes from pre-European contacts to the present. The reader is treated to a bountiful feast. Much can be learned about humanity from the myths and legends, which can guide one to cope with the complexities and crises of life: The trickster coyote has survived humankind because of his cunning. One has to admire the imaginative skills of the ancient storytellers, who were able to keep audiences in suspense while retaining the flavor of ancient lore.

The experience of living with racial discrimination in an integrated world has led native people into many painful episodes and created in them a desire for both self-expression and self-determination. As Cree poet Sheila Erickson pleads,

don't rhyme the words too closely  
when you tell our story  
leave time and space for us to install  
our bit of truth  
to add another line or word  
each man his own

each nation its paragraph  
leave room for us to chant and mourn  
and mimic the roll of the buffalo herds  
or shake the fish skin rattle  
don't rhyme the words too closely (p. 315).

A recurrent theme—a nostalgia for customs no longer practiced, a mourning for traditions forgotten—reflects the feelings of a minority culture too long dominated by foreign invaders. A proud people finally stripped of values and beliefs that survived hundreds of years of oppression, they are fearful of an uncertain future.

Jeanette Armstrong's novel *Slash* tells about the anger of reservation life and the insensitivity of missionary school teachers: "First it was schooling, then it was the welfare and . . . housing, then it was the beer parlours and land leasing and now it's development. Pretty soon Indians don't have to do nothing but get money and spend it drinking" (p. 283). Pessimists say that none of the young people wanted to work their land anymore to raise cattle and crops because they did not know how, having been away at school all the time. However, the optimistic, educated young ones were now ready "to shape the future. . ." and needed to stop acting like second-class citizens, living in the dark ages.

Editor Grant's interpretations and selections are invaluable, but one can challenge her view that "short stories . . . lack the power of novels by the fact of their brevity; there is not the opportunity for an identification with the characters, and the insights into human nature are not as profound." The works of Poe, Hawthorne, Porter, Welty, and Singer are literary short story gems; likewise, Alex Grisdale's succinct tale about the heroic deeds of Torch Woman during the tribal warfare between the Sioux and the Assiniboine before the coming of the Europeans does not need a clutter of verbiage to replace the reader's imagination.

This could be a useful collection for teachers who want to include aboriginal literature in their programs, but Grant should avoid excerpting novels in a future edition and instead consider exposing students to stories in their challenging entirety and expanding one volume into two.

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