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Battle Grounds: The Canadian Military and Aboriginal Lands
(review)

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close reading. As a critical work that looks at partition literature from the perspective of memory, gender, and nationalist imaginaries, *Unsettling Partition* is a valuable contribution – thorough, well written, and rigorous in its analysis. (CHELVA KANAGANAYAKAM)

P. Whitney Lackenbauer. *Battle Grounds: The Canadian Military and Aboriginal Lands*
University of British Columbia Press. 368. \$29.95

The title would seem to tell it all. Seeking space for its target practice and war games, Canada's military, with the full complicity of federal Indian Affairs administrators, ignored solemn treaty rights, seized the ancestral lands of Canada's First Nations, and played an active role in creating the miserable destiny of Aboriginal peoples across the country. NATO's low-flying fighters over Innu lands near Goose Bay, the demand of the Tsuu T'ina that soldiers must clean every scrap of alien iron from their Sarcee reserve but must leave their barracks intact, the killing of Dudley George at Camp Ipperwash, and the continuing struggle of Saskatchewan and Alberta First Nations to regain hunting grounds bombed and rocketed by the USAF at the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range near Cold Lake are merely the media headlines for a transcontinental struggle to rescue Native territories from post-Cold War militarism. And why, in an eco-conscious world, shouldn't a shrunken defence budget be spent on restoring Aboriginal land to its pristine condition, even if the occasional imported charlatan swallowed illicit profits?

Or so the story has been told, by journalists, Lackenbauer's fellow historians, and even RCAP, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. And why not? If the European invader's perspective has shaped our understanding of the past and present, isn't it time to privilege the viewpoint of the First Nations? That was certainly the conclusion of some RCAP members. Weary from years with Canada's biggest and most expensive royal commission, they concluded that it might be fair as well as labour-saving to let their Aboriginal colleagues have their way with both facts and ideas. After all, in a postmodern age, what was history but a subjectively selected collection of facts? And, after all, weren't the military known to be authoritarian and arrogant? In the post-Cold War years, what need did the military have for land to play with tanks, guns, and rockets?

This is not Lackenbauer's view. Instead, he bravely invites some prominent fellow historians to take the trouble to get their facts straight and chooses the theme of rival military and Aboriginal land needs to illustrate his point. Yes, Canada's military took Aboriginal land, but

where else would the government provide them with space to learn their jobs in two world wars and a very long cold war? And yes, Indian Affairs, under various governments and departments, sometimes helped the Militia and National Defence departments to get reserves and hunting territory the military needed to do its job. And why not, when the land seemed to be neglected, and prevailing opinion agreed with renowned anthropologist Diamond Jenness that Canada's Indians were on their way to extinction? Much as in our own day, Lackenbauer argues, Canadians tended to act on prevailing beliefs, even when the beliefs reverse themselves.

Even more controversially, Lackenbauer insists that Indian Affairs did not invariably and eagerly sell out its charges. There were exceptions and he usually lets deputy superintendent-general of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott play his increasingly familiar role as villain-in-residence for Aboriginal policy. However, far more often, Scott and his officials forced the military to look elsewhere for land or to negotiate such costly or limiting concessions that the Aboriginal land was not worth having. Military efforts to secure a training area in the British Columbia interior came to naught when a militia colonel, Charles Flick, pulled rank on an Indian agent, John Fremont Smith, who happened to be Black. 'We in the west,' Flick proclaimed, 'have an idea that races subject to the whiteman are better when governed by a whiteman.' Duncan Scott dealt with such nonsense by upholding his agent and ignoring Flick as far as his political superiors allowed.

In most human affairs, much depends on specific circumstances and on obscure or long-forgotten conflicts that historians ignored or never bothered to unearth. Nor did military stubbornness always come without reason. Perhaps the army should have handed Stony Point reserve back to its Chippewa residents in 1945, but where else in western Ontario could its part-time soldiers and even regulars based in London practise their skills beyond their town or city limits? How could Ottawa abandon the convenience of a fully developed military camp and ranges, particularly when the descendants of the previous occupants were engaged in a bitter tribal struggles over who, precisely, would reap the benefits if and when the land was returned? Nor were disputes always unresolved. An airstrip built on Iroquois lands near Deseronto eventually became a source of pride and even profit for most members of the nearby Mohawk community. On the other hand, few military bases fulfilled the frequent promise of providing employment for First Nations people they displaced. Before the days of Alternate Service Delivery, the truth was that low- and unskilled jobs were normally performed by the forces' own personnel, and the few Aboriginal people with marketable skills had better sources of employment elsewhere.

From the search for campgrounds and rifle ranges in the British Columbia interior to describing NATO's low-level training range west of Goose Bay in Labrador, Lackenbauer preaches and generally practises careful history. The result is sometimes heavy-going, and the book is marred by careless editing. However, patient readers will be rewarded by a spirited and provocative introduction and conclusion and plenty of fresh research. Lackenbauer's critics may hide their laziness behind political correctness and postmodern theory, but his students and admirers may help him to rescue our history from descending into data-defying ideology. (DESMOND MORTON)

Sherry Simon. *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City*
McGill-Queen's University Press. xvi, 280. \$27.50

This original and theoretically rich book was the clearly deserving winner of the 2006 Gabrielle Roy Prize and the Quebec Writers' Federation Award for non-fiction. Rather than a historical overview of translation in Montreal, it is, as Simon makes clear in the introduction, a cultural study of 'a limited selection of culturally significant translations' that reveal changes in the city's culture.

The Boulevard St-Laurent bisects Montreal, dividing it along linguistic, national, ethnic, and class lines that remain etched on the city's cultural landscape. The colonial city that was once segregated according to these categories retains traces of its past, as in the stubborn drive to live in English that still pervades a diminishing enclave. While Simon outlines power relations with sharp precision, she moves beyond the positions of the 'francophone separatists' and the 'anglophone opposition,' which she argues no longer reflect the daily life of the city. Thus, she reads Malcolm Reid's *The Shouting Signpainters* in its historical context and places it alongside *Le mur de Berlin P.Q.*, Jean Forest's account of living in a culture infiltrated by another language against its will. The comparison beautifully displays the city's internal colonization and introduces the political and cultural issues facing writers including F.R. Scott, Jacques Ferron, E.D. Blodgett, and Jacques Brault, who literally and symbolically cross linguistic borders.

Montreal differs from other multilingual Canadian cities in which English dominates and from many world cities in which nationalism has erased minority languages and cultures or where partition prevents cultural contact. Looking through the lens of postcolonial critique, Simon crosses national boundaries to reveal how language and literature shape and are shaped by geographical space through effective comparisons to cosmopolitan cities including Kolkata, Istanbul, Johannesburg, and Trieste. In the 'contact zones' where languages