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**DO GLACIERS LISTEN? LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS, AND SOCIAL IMAGINATION.** By JULIE CRUIKSHANK. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005. ISBN 0-7748-1187-0 (paper). xii + 312 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Softbound. Cdn\$29.95.

For a region that is generally less considered than other northern places, the ethnological literature on Dene societies of the Yukon, interior Alaska and Mackenzie Valley is staggering: it includes works by McClellan, Nadasdy, and the present author on the southwest Yukon, and those of Helm, VanStone, McFayden-Clark, Balikci, Asch, Dennison, Jarvenpa and Gillespie on neighboring Dene groups. Within this body, the work of McClellan (1975), Cruikshank (1979, 1990, 1998), and Cruikshank et al. (1990) on Southern Tutchone culture history and knowledge is special. *Do Glaciers Listen?* is an outstanding contribution to this overall literature, but especially to the Southern Tutchone component.

Cruikshank presents the reader with several occasionally overlapping narratives, which come from Dene elders, European and American travelers, and modern mapmakers, about the glaciers and ice fields that define this corner of the Western Subarctic. Through these “intersecting narratives of locality,” we are informed about the intimate relationship between these most dominating physical features and the First Nations of the interior and coast whom the ice and transecting rivers connected. We learn of the dread (and sometimes pleasure) these features inspired in outsiders, and, finally, of their “role” in making First Nations peoples British Columbians, Yukoners, and Alaskans, Canadians or Americans. The Kluane-St. Elias area is revealed, in turn, as a social and cultural space, an obstacle to commerce and colonization, and a political divide. In revealing all the ways the area is “known,” the narratives ultimately illustrate just how different the various perceptions and understandings of that place are.

In presenting the various narratives of place, Cruikshank also develops two important themes. The first is about colonialism and the framing of history. Most engaging is

the evolution of Edward Grave and the “story” of his transformative experience, first as a commercial agent in the Belgian Congo, committed to that place’s “owner” and the good intentions of the colonial enterprise; then as an adventurer-traveler into the Alsek-Tatshenshini drainage, where he displayed considerable disdain for the Tlingit and Dene with whom he came into contact and their knowledge and proscriptions about glaciers; and finally, on his return to the Congo, as a man who had lost his illusions about the practice of colonialism. Whether Grave was a model for Kurtz, or Marlow, or had any influence on Conrad is not an argument that I would take up, but at the very least, Grave well illustrates that globalization, at least as a kind of attitude, predated our era.

Of most interest to me is Cruikshank’s presentation of traditional knowledge (TK), which is a main thread throughout this work. She and the women whose knowledge underpins the First Nations narrative are neither didactic nor polemical, avoiding the comparison-contrast with science that is often a main part of discussions on TK. I am equally appreciative that Cruikshank does not reduce what Annie Ned, Angela Sidney, and Kitty Smith say to glaciological and climatological facts.

What she makes evident is that traditional knowledge is about a worldview that, as it pertains here, involves a participatory inclusiveness that empowers glaciers—and ravens, bears, or salmon—as well as humans. I have no doubt that Little Ice Age Tutchone and Tlingit felt as much trepidation and exhilaration on their crossings of these glaciers as did Schwatka, Grace, or Muir, but I doubt that those earlier travelers felt conquest. Glaciers were as much to be communicated with as they were to be overcome. There is nothing romantic or Rousseauian in this; it is simply fundamental to the sharing of the world by glaciers and people.

My introduction to the North involved the Southwest Yukon and “Proto-Dene” archaeology. I have often thought about how formative that experience was, although I chose a path to other places. As amazing as the archaeology and the country were, I only now realize the real depth of Dene Culture. Dr. Cruikshank has produced a work that should be important not only to students of culture history in the Pacific Northwest, but also to all who grapple with the cultural complexities of traditional knowledge.

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- HISTORICAL CLIMATOLOGY OF THE SOUTHERN YUKON: PALEOCLIMATIC RECONSTRUCTION USING DOCUMENTARY SOURCES FROM 1842–1852. By HEATHER TOMPKINS. Whitehorse: Cultural Services Branch, Government of the Yukon, 2007. Occasional Papers in Yukon History No. 4. ISBN 1-55362-311-8. 127 p. + CD-ROM, bib., appendices. Softbound.
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