

“Yes, I think I do. I can wake up in the morning here and know that I have no troubles beyond keeping alive” (p. 53).

Little did he know, at that point, how close to death he would come. The ordeals of the following winter, which they spent holed up in a cave dug into a sandy esker, often cold and hungry, are recounted in gripping detail through Critchell-Bullock’s eyes. Waldron’s original text still reads well today. The warmth of Critchell-Bullock’s feelings toward Hornby waned somewhat in mid-winter, as starvation knocked and the conditions in which they were surviving deteriorated. Words like “puzzling” and “disgusting” and “irresponsible” offer some clues to the resentment that Critchell-Bullock must surely have felt, but left largely unexpressed. In the end, however, they survived. Wisely, Critchell-Bullock declined Hornby’s proposal that they return again. Hornby was not so prudent. And the next time, with his two young charges, would be his last.

As Waldron says, some readers “will see nothing but madness in his [Hornby’s] carelessness of attire and attitude, in his improvidence, in his haphazard and futile wandering. Perhaps. Perhaps. And yet there will be some, I think, who will sense the unconquerable and boundless spirit of the man, that spark that lived behind his eyes, and drove him on to feats that have become legends. *That* was his glory” (p. 288). That, and his recommendation to federal officials in Ottawa in the report of his “scientific” expedition with Critchell-Bullock: “If it is desired to protect the game in this part of the country, it is essential to take measures to prevent traders from encouraging natives to hunt in this district.... The area adjoining the Hanbury and Thelon Rivers would make an ideal sanctuary.”

On 15 June 1927, an Order in Council established the Thelon Game Sanctuary. It has been altered in various ways since, but at its heart lies the oldest and largest fully protected, pure wilderness anywhere in North America. It survives today, despite occasional threats from mineral-development interests. Recently divided by the boundary line drawn through its centre to create the new territory of Nunavut, the Sanctuary now spans two jurisdictions. Whether the two can agree on a joint management plan remains to be seen. At the end of 1999, the various agencies in Nunavut seem to have reached agreement on the management regime for Nunavut’s portion (approximately 60%) of the total sanctuary, but have yet to formally ratify the final document. Inuit hunters (particularly in Baker Lake) and conservation-minded observers alike hope to see the Sanctuary retained, if not enlarged, to ensure the future of the central barrenlands’ populations of large mammals such as caribou, wolves, grizzly bears, and muskoxen, for each of which the Sanctuary has served as a refuge. It is a wildlife bank, repeatedly responsible for repopulating the surrounding barrens. There are myriad other ecological reasons to support its retention. In the end, however, it may be its human history, as much as or more than its ecological importance, that saves the Thelon Game Sanctuary. And John Hornby is at the heart of that history.

For the reader who wants a comprehensive introduction to John Hornby, there are better sources, most notably George Whalley’s *The Legend of John Hornby* (London: John Murray, 1962). But for the reader who wants to know everything about John Hornby, *Snow Man* remains indispensable—and a good read.

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THE SOCIAL LIFE OF STORIES: NARRATIVE AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE YUKON TERRITORY. By JULIE CRUIKSHANK. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. ISBN 0-8032-1490-1. xxv + 211 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. US\$45.00. (Available in Canada from UBC Press, Cdn\$75.00.)

Julie Cruikshank’s latest book invites us once again into the fascinating world of Yukon indigenous oral narrative, but with a twist. Looking beyond the text of a story, Cruikshank examines the power and vitality of storytelling, illuminating the ways in which stories and their meanings can shift according to the audience, situation, and historical context. Like her other work, this book builds upon the words and teachings of three Yukon First Nation elders: Mrs. Angela Sidney, Mrs. Kitty Smith, and Mrs. Annie Ned.

Prefaced by a powerful statement from Angela Sidney about stories being her wealth, and Greg Saris’ statement about the importance of scholars’ seeing beyond their own norms when trying to understand others, Cruikshank presents her thesis that stories by Yukon First Nation peoples continue to have great value in today’s changing world. Their value lies in providing connections, order, and continuity, building “connections where rifts might otherwise appear” (p. 3). In addition, informal storytelling has the power “to subvert official orthodoxies and to challenge conventional ways of thinking. Such systems of knowledge can be understood as having the power to inform and enlarge other forms of explanation rather than as data for analysis using conventional scholarly paradigms” (p. xiii). Using the work of Walter Benjamin, Mikhail Bakhtin, Harold Innis, and Pierre Bourdieu, Cruikshank explores this thesis.

The book is presented in seven chapters, with an epilogue. Four of the seven chapters are revisions of papers previously published as book chapters or journal articles. At first reading, the book has the flavour of being a collection of articles addressing specific issues, rather than a cohesive “story.” Upon further examination, however, one can see the subtle way in which one chapter builds upon the last, showing the different voices of indigenous people, the state, and academia as represented through

narratives and knowledge. For example, Chapter 1 sets the stage by providing background information about the Yukon and its peoples, cultures, and history, presenting both state and local aboriginal perspectives, using written and oral accounts respectively.

Chapter 2 pivots around a single traditional story told by Mrs. Sidney about the extraordinary journey of a coastal Tlinglit man, who returned home safe after a long absence and much hardship. The chapter shows us the skillful manner in which Mrs. Sidney used this particular story several times during the course of her life to not only explain but also add meaning to special occasions. Her retelling of the story, in different contexts to different audiences, shows how a single story can have many levels of meaning and convey a range of messages. For example, throughout Mrs. Sidney's life the story served as (1) a gift to her son during a feast to celebrate his return from a long absence overseas during WWII; (2) a settlement during an inter-clan dispute, in which her clan acquired the rights to tell the story and sing one of the songs related to the story; and (3) to commemorate the opening of Yukon College, which enabled students to remain in the Yukon rather than "be lost" and go south to college. Mrs. Sidney showed how this and other narratives had clearly become a part of her life story and a reference to choices and advice she had made throughout her life, illustrating that a good story from the past can provide insights into the present. "What appears to be the 'same' story, even in the repertoire of one individual, has multiple meanings depending on location, circumstance, audience, and stage of life of narrator and listener" (p. 44). As Cruikshank points out, this is a reminder that oral narratives are part of a communicative process. You have to learn not only what the story says, but also what it does when used as a strategy for communication (p. 41). To do so, it is important to understand why a particular story was selected and told.

Chapter 3 cautions against the fragmented use of oral traditions and draws on environmental issues that are of concern in circumpolar regions to illustrate some of the problems with this approach. Pointing to the growing literature on indigenous knowledge on an international scale, Cruikshank discusses the use of terms such as *local knowledge*, *traditional ecological knowledge* and *indigenous knowledge*, and the very real danger of separating ideas from the settings in which they are produced. As Cruikshank notes, this separation objectifies this knowledge, making it appear as free-standing, so that it becomes "an object of study for science rather than as a system of knowledge that could inform science" (p. 50). The selective use of traditional ecological knowledge to develop resource management models, with the effect of "draining tradition by codifying it on databases" (p. xv), is used as an example.

Using the theoretical work of Harold Innis and Mikhail Bakhtin concerning the effect of the state on oral traditions, Chapter 4 draws on alternative accounts of two stories from the Klondike gold rush, the discovery of gold in 1896 and the Yukon's first murder trial. The two sets of stories, one from

the view of the state through its official reports and the other through the oral tradition, illustrate what can happen when the voices and power relations (in this case between the state and the local indigenous people on the "frontier") are unequal. As Cruikshank shows, this inequality can lead to very tragic consequences, as one voice (aboriginal) is subsumed by the other (state).

Continuing the discussion of the confrontation of oral traditions and official narratives, Chapter 5 examines the relationship between ethnographic objects and the oral tradition within the context of museums. Cruikshank uses carvings made by Kitty Smith, based on some of her favourite stories, and their journey from being produced to finally being housed in a museum in Whitehorse, as a way to examine this relationship. What becomes clear is that both oral narratives and objects are important in terms of reproducing contemporary culture. There are, however, subtle differences in how each is represented within museums and within Yukon First Nation communities. Museums traditionally emphasize objects and use words to describe, interpret, and give meaning to objects, whereas Subarctic First Nations do the opposite: the oral tradition is of primary importance, and the objects serve to illustrate the story.

The last two chapters of the book explore prophesy narratives (Chapter 6) and the Yukon International Storytelling Festival (Chapter 7). Whereas Cruikshank sees prophesy narratives as a way of explaining the contemporary world, the festival is used by storytellers as a forum for social action and to define identity.

Overall, this book will guide and provide food for thought for academics and senior students in the fields of anthropology, Native studies, and history, and in particular for researchers with an interest in oral traditions, narrative and voice, and ethnohistoric research in the Subarctic. Those interested in the history and culture of Yukon First Nations will also find this book of interest. The purchase price and level of language will likely make this book less accessible to many people in northern communities.

In terms of reproduction, editing, and printing, the book is of high quality, with very few typographical errors. The two maps of the study area, twelve black-and-white photographs of the three women elders that Julie Cruikshank has worked with, and Kitty Smith's carvings help to illustrate the text. The picture of Angela Sidney holding a replica of her Deisheetaan Beaver clan crest is especially charming. Let us hope that Mrs. Sidney's powerful statement, recorded at the beginning of this book, will ring true for many generations to come: "Well, I have no money to leave to my grandchildren. My stories are my wealth." All we need to do is listen.

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