

charged with the murder of a white man. The official trial transcripts and other written reports and the oral accounts Smith and Sidney gave Cruikshank represent radically different pictures of what actually took place and why. Each is framed by a set of assumptions about what is culturally appropriate; as Cruikshank shows, the result is a confrontation between customary and western law in which the latter dominates so effectively that the former is relegated to silence.

This is a book about misunderstanding and lack of communication as much as it is one about knowledge and explanation. Colonial and post-colonial law and policy rest on certain assumptions of intellectual or cultural entitlement as surely as they do on those of economic entitlement. On one level, *The social life of stories* is about narrative and social and cultural knowledge in the Yukon, and about contesting and legitimating knowledge claims; on that basis alone it is a fine ethnography, and a stimulating and perceptive theoretical study. On another level it is an exploration of the power of language and the language of power; a documentation of the ways in which different types of customary knowledge and social meaning are eclipsed or silenced when they meet official texts and accounts based on western logic and values. Ultimately, it is a work that challenges hegemonic practices, be they political, cultural, or indeed academic. As Cruikshank writes in her epilogue: 'What is too often missing from scholarly studies...are interruptions and risk. Academics too often frame the experience of others with reference to scholarly norms. Yet unless we put ourselves in interactive situations where we are exposed and vulnerable, where these norms are interrupted and challenged, we can never recognize the limitations of our own descriptions. It is these dialogues that are most productive, because they prevent us from becoming overconfident about our own interpretations' (page 165). This is undoubtedly a scholarly study in the best sense of the term; it is also one that succeeds in pushing beyond the boundaries of 'our own descriptions.' (Frances Pine, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge, Free School Lane, Cambridge CB2 3RF.)

References

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 Cruikshank, J. 1990. *Life lived like a story*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

REMEMBERING THE YEARS OF MY LIFE: JOURNEY OF A LABRADOR INUIT HUNTER. Carol Brice-Bennett (Editor); recounted by Paulus Maggo. 1999. St John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland. 188 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-919666-95-7.

This little book, a by-product of Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, offers a wealth of information on the life of the Inuit of Labrador. The reminiscences of the Inuit narrator Paulus Maggo provide his personal insights into the great changes that occurred in

his lifetime, while the excellent introduction by editor Carol Brice-Bennett supplies a quick course of study for those, like this reviewer, who have hitherto been more aware of the lifestyles of Arctic Quebec and Nunavut Inuit culture. The differences arise principally, of course, from the early arrival of Europeans, and in the mid-eighteenth century of the Moravian missionaries. It is eye-opening to realize that in the same period of 1822–23 when the Royal Navy explorer William E. Parry — ice-bound in Igloolik — passed the winter teaching reading and writing so that his sailors could return to England able to read the Bible, 'the majority of congregation members at Nain, Okak, and Hopedale were literate, and adults applied the skill to communicate through letters to relatives and friends in different communities.' Teaching of reading and writing had begun in 1780.

Paulus Maggo began talking about his life in order to put together this book at the age of 83, and Brice-Bennett can rightly claim that his descriptions of Inuit life 'comprise the most detailed reflections by an Aboriginal inhabitant of northern Labrador' yet published. Life stories, oral biographies, and oral histories have appeared fairly frequently in Arctic Quebec and Nunavut, but not in Labrador. His descriptions of the traditional Inuit life he lived and the end of that lifestyle are valuable indeed. However, one could wish that it had been possible to extend the scope of the interviews. Paulus Maggo may very well have heard passed-down accounts of the establishment of the Moravian missions. Did he ever learn anything about the attitude of his forefathers towards the introduction of the new religion? Did the shamans die hard? Could he have told anything about the migrations of Labrador Inuit who made their way to Arctic Quebec and to Baffin Island? This is an opportunity missed, because when will an elder and an editor as knowledgeable as Paulus Maggo and Carol Brice-Bennett work together again?

The other quibble, perhaps, is that *Remembering the years of my life*, compiled from 14 taped interviews, does not fully capture the presumed vitality of the vernacular. Whether an interviewee is a company CEO or a native elder, the liveliness of everyday speech has to be counted as the particular strength of the oral history genre.

These are criticisms with which Brice-Bennett may very well agree. Partially because of funding, the conditions under which she worked were not ideal. She was able to be present only at the first and last of the interviews. She hired Martin Jararuse, who, working from her outline of questions on key topics, conducted the interviews in Inuktitut, and along with Wilson Jararuse and Sam Metcalfe — all three fluently bilingual — prepared transcripts in English. Brice-Bennett then cut, pasted, and edited and supplied bridging sections to form a chronicle of Paulus Maggo's life experience. From time to time it may strike the reader that the narrative slips into too academic a mode, but nonetheless Paulus Maggo's words are often moving, and the reader feels for him when he says that, presumably because of the different world in which they live, his

children do not talk to him. He conveys effectively, too, the very real difficulties Labrador Inuit face nowadays in achieving economic security. Brice-Bennett points out in her preface that missionary accounts gave emphasis to the poverty and deprivation of Inuit families in the 1930s and 1940s, and notes that although Paulus Maggo confirmed the difficulty of earning an income in those decades, 'his stories do not convey an impression of the hardship.' On the contrary, 'Paulus accentuates how Inuit improvised and managed with their own resources.' While they still made a living from the land, Labrador Inuit were able to help themselves. Today that is not so easy. 'There is very little or no fish to catch, no animals to hunt, seals are not in demand, boats and engines are in need of repair or broken down altogether because of neglect or lack of use... How will someone purchase food when there is not enough fish, and no equipment, so that a person can try to make money if they don't have a place of employment?'

At the end of his long life, Paulus Maggo admits to 'a feeling of hopelessness for the future.' Brice-Bennett is more optimistic. In her long introductory essay, she writes that Nain, where Paulus Maggo lives, is now a 'dynamic centre for both customary harvesting activities and new economic enterprises focusing on the fishery, tourism, and mineral development.' We must hope she is right. (Dorothy Harley Eber, 1115 Sherbrooke Street West, Apt. 1205, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1H3, Canada.)

THE RESCUE OF CAPTAIN SCOTT. Don Aldridge. 1999. East Linton: Tuckwell Press. xxii + 215 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-86232-070-5. £20.00.

I hate to say this, but Don Aldridge has produced a simply dreadful book. Sadly, this outcome could have been avoided. Much research went into its preparation. But the work demonstrates that, although the occasional gifted amateur can write good history (Michael Rosove's *Let heroes speak* stands out as a recent excellent example), not every amateur can produce a worthy volume.

Aldridge makes the kinds of mistakes no one who has had a decent undergraduate seminar in history would make. Starting with the basic presumption that Robert Falcon Scott could do no right, Aldridge interprets every incident, every nuance, as proof of his thesis, even when the facts simply do not support his contentions. Aldridge passes up no opportunity to interpret facts or impressions in a way that shows Scott in the most unfavorable light possible.

Frankly, the book is so replete with questionable or inaccurate interpretations that a lengthy review would be inappropriate in this journal. A listing and discussion of the problems with the book would be longer than anyone would likely wish to peruse. The book will be a painful read for anyone who has an understanding either of Scott or of 'Heroic age' exploration, so flawed are the author's interpretations.

Poor Scott — he has been the victim of two unfortunate historiographical trends: for 60-plus years hagiography,

for the past 21 years character assassination. Neither hits the mark.

I wish I could say something positive about Aldridge's book other than to note that the maps are nice and some, new material has come to light, which, with careful filtering of Aldridge's interpretation, might be useful. Pity Scott, a genuine tragic hero; too bad the tragedy of Antarctic historiography continues in the guise of works such as this one. (T.H. Baughman, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK 73034, USA.)

POLITICS AND BUSINESS IN THE BARENTS REGION. Bo Svensson. 1998. Östersund: Swedish Institute for Regional Research. 291 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 91-38-31461-4. SEK 344.

The Barents region has been described variously as a geographic region encompassing the northern reaches of Fennoscandia and northwest Russia, a historical region dating back more than a millennium, and a political region linking the northern provinces of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia in new patterns of political interaction. It also aspires to be an economic region, harking back to centuries of economic ties that linked Russian merchants along the White Sea with Norwegian fishing communities and Finnish and Saami settlements into a trading area far from national capitals and state authority. This so-called Pomor or coastal trade thrived until the Bolshevik Revolution brought it to an abrupt end in 1917. At the inauguration of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (or BEAR) in 1993, the Norwegian foreign minister, Thorvald Stoltenberg, evoked images of the Pomor trade to suggest that the Barents Cooperation was a return to political and economic normalcy in the European Arctic, characterising the east-west division of the Soviet era as but a 'seventy-year historical parenthesis.'

In *Politics and business in the Barents region*, Bo Svensson examines the case of the BEAR to determine how this political region-building project contributes to rebuilding transnational economic relations in the European Arctic. The potential for economic development is clear enough: access to capital on the Nordic side; and a rich natural resource base, an inexpensive yet well-educated labour force, an emerging consumer market, and a need for industrial modernisation and infrastructure improvement on the Russian side. The question is to what extent trans-border political relations can facilitate the local businesses in coming together to realise this potential. Svensson further asks whether this type of regionalisation offers Europe's Arctic periphery a way out of political and economic subordination.

Based on Svensson's extensive interviews with business operators, it is apparent that although Nordic firms had no problems in identifying business opportunities in northwest Russia, these opportunities were circumscribed by severe difficulties. In addition to the expected challenges of operating in post-Soviet Russia (an unclear legal and regulatory framework, unpredictable officials, and