

Sejersen's primary argument rests on the assertion that Inuit knowledge is reduced to a cultural ecology, stressing merely the Inuit's dependence on the environment rather than fully contextualising it within larger contexts of society, sustainability and agency. Sejersen in essence follows Procter's criticism who sees the utilisation of decontextualised indigenous knowledge as part of political power structures (Procter 2005) and points out that 'Inuit never simply react to climate change as an isolated issue, but engage, instead, in complex social, political and moral practices of re-orientation and envisioning' (page 225). And by underlining that indigenous peoples, within the complex web of (de-)colonisation, development, knowledge, problems and solutions, are indeed 'future-makers' the book ends... and leaves this reviewer deeply impressed. Because not only provides *Rethinking Greenland* significant ethnographic data on contemporary Greenlandic society, but it also challenges contemporary ways of thinking about climate change, indigenous peoples, legal frameworks and methodologies. The cover of the book, a photo of a man dressed in black snowmobile clothing overlooking the, presumably, Greenlandic coast, underlines the fresh approach to these issues.

It can be concluded that apart from the ethnographic data provided in this book, the sophisticated discussions presented here challenge common understandings of Arctic and climate research. Irrespective of the discipline one conducts Arctic research in Sejersen's book should become an elementary part

of the literature as it touches upon a multitude of facets of political, legal and naturally social research. Frank Sejersen once again underlines that he is a leading expert in critical thinking on prevailing (Arctic) discourses, yet always for the benefit of Arctic communities. (Nikolas Sellheim, Faculty of Law, University of Lapland, PO Box 122, 96101 Rovaniemi, Finland ([nikolas.sellheim@ulapland.fi](mailto:nikolas.sellheim@ulapland.fi)))

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**Some ethnolinguistic notes on Polar Eskimo.** Stephen Pax Leonard. 2015. Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien: Peter Lang. xii & 175 p, softcover. ISBN 978-3-0343-1947-8. £40.00.  
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As explained by the author in the introduction to the glossary section of his book, the word 'notes' in the title is significant: 'This is not a definitive grammar, lexicon or introduction to Polar Eskimo. It is instead a compilation of notes made in the field...' (page 91). This is the case indeed, and I would add that as we shall see below, the terms 'some' and 'ethnolinguistic' are equally important when evaluating the contents of Leonard's work.

The book consists of a series of twelve short, 4–12 page chapters on various aspects of the Polar Eskimo dialect (hence PE) of the Inuit language, followed by a bilingual sample of two contemporary and two traditional texts, and by a PE-English glossary of some 3,500 entries. In several ways – e.g. the contents of several chapters as well as the choice of entries in the glossary – the author seems to have written *au fil de la plume*, i.e. to have jotted down his ideas as they were coming to his mind. This leaves us with an often disorganised and sometimes disappointing book, unless we keep its title in mind: 'Some notes...', as well as the author's *caveat* cited above.

In 2010–2011, Stephen Pax Leonard spent a year among the Inuguit ('Polar Eskimos') of northwest Greenland, a community of some 770 individuals whose way of life is still characterised by hunting activities and the use of the dog-sledge and who speak their own Inuit dialect. Leonard researched PE – whose phonology and, in a lesser way, lexicon differ from other Greenlandic dialects – and learned to speak it, also immersing himself in the local culture. The book should be considered as

a preliminary outcome of the author's year of research, rather than as a more definitive scholarly work. Its value rests on the ethnolinguistic observations on contemporary language usage found throughout the text rather than in a properly linguistic description of PE. The author is aware of this when he states that his work is not a grammar or a dictionary, though it 'can aid the language learner and be of interest to the speaker of Polar Eskimo' (page 91).

The twelve chapters of Leonard's book deal, respectively, with the background of Polar Eskimo language and society; the phonology of PE; PE as a written language; questions of orthography; inflectional morphology; derivational morphology; the PE lexicon; stems and affixes; ways of speaking; ways of belonging; oral traditions; and drum-dancing. In my opinion, chapters 9, 10 and 11, on the ways of speaking and their links to local identity and oral traditions are much more interesting than the rest. They provide readers with a good surface ethnography of language use (including the role of silence and the speakers' belief that PE cannot – and even should not – be written), and of some social and ecological information conveyed by the language (e.g. the names for the 18 different types of wind). Equally interesting is the author's distinction (page 7) between the two varieties of contemporary PE: A, the speech of those under the age of 50 or so, and B, the speech of people over the age of 50 who are originally from northwest Greenland. The former variety is influenced by Standard West Greenlandic – the written language and the only one taught in school – while the latter, now in decline, has more in common with the Inuinaqtun and North Baffin Canadian Inuit dialects.

The chapters dealing with the pronunciation and structure of PE are much less instructive, and their real usefulness is open to question. The bibliography of the book shows that the author has read most of what has been published on the Inuguit and their language – although the absence of Jean

Malaurie's classical *The last kings of Thule* (1985), as well as that of Birgitte Jacobsen's thorough analysis of phonetic changes in PE (1991) are surprising – but he does not seem to know much about other Inuit groups. This leads him to make a number of uninformed statements, for instance when he postulates that the use of the ethnonym Inugguit ('big or great people') might be due to an 'exceptional level of pride to be found among this group' (page 1). Perhaps, but most Inuit groups outside Greenland define themselves in a similar way: the Alaskan Inupiat ('super people'), the Mackenzie Inuvialuit ('big super people'), the western Nunavut Inuinait ('genuine people'), etc. Incidentally, over the last two or three decades, the term 'Inuinait' (their language is Inuinnaqtun) has been the official name of those who were formerly called 'Copper Eskimo'. Using the latter appellation, as Leonard does on pages 3 and 8, should be avoided.

In my eyes, the only real quality of the linguistic chapters is to give some examples of the way contemporary Inugguit speak their language. The latest published accounts of PE phonology, grammar and/or lexicon (Fortescue 1991; Jacobsen 1991) date from some 25 years ago, at a time when the language reflected a stronger influence of variety B speakers. Data found in *Some notes* ... thus enable readers to witness the recent evolution of the language and its partial drift towards Standard West Greenlandic, a drift already described by Jacobsen (1991, page 70–71) when it was incipient. Other than that, however, there is not much to learn from these chapters. Chapter 2, for instance, presents a very sketchy description of the phonology of PE, based on a short story written by the author. A basic tenet of linguistics stipulates that research materials must be elicited from native speakers rather than produced by the linguist himself. Resorting to self-generated data is, at the least, strange.

Deficiencies in Leonard's linguistic analysis are numerous. They include an absence of discrimination between phonetic and morphological apocope (pages 17–18); an unclear distinction between the three vocalic phonemes of the spoken language and the five vocalic graphemes of the Greenlandic writing system (page 24); the author's presentation (page 30) of the canonical PE 'sentence' (actually, morphological word)

as formed by a root + derivational affix + enclitic + inflectional affix (although enclitics usually appear in word-final position); his mistaken distinction (page 37) between the PE words that are 'Proto-Inuit', and those that come from Standard West Greenlandic (actually, both PE and West Greenlandic stem from the same ancestral Proto-Inuit language); etc. One can also question the writing conventions devised by the author – which differ from those of Fortescue and Jacobsen – as well as a few apparently idiosyncratic inflectional morphemes (e.g. *-huhut/-tuhut*, 3<sup>rd</sup> plural indicative, instead of *-hut/-tut*, as in Fortescue 1991, page 174). This means that a large part of the linguistic sketch that constitutes the matter of chapters 2 to 7 is untrustworthy.

By contrast, the Glossary (pages 93–270) can be useful to those interested in communicating with the Inugguit. It comprises ca. 3,500 current PE words (or, more rarely, phrases) in alphabetical order, along with their English translation. Some entries include a short ethnographic or contextual description of the meaning of the word. This glossary thus provides interesting examples of what can be found in the conversations of contemporary Inugguit (e.g. *aliqtoqtoq*, 'sees a ghost'; *oonaqtuqtoq*, 'drinks tea or coffee'). Its only shortcomings are the apparently haphazard way that has presided to the choice of entries, and the absence of an English to PE word-finder. Those wanting to learn PE more systematically should, thus, use Leonard's glossary in combination with the better structured lexicon (and lists of derivational and inflectional affixes) found in Fortescue's *Inuktun* (1991), even if the latter reflects an older stage of the language. (Louis-Jacques Dorais, Quebec, Canada ([louis-jacques.dorais@ant.ulaval.ca](mailto:louis-jacques.dorais@ant.ulaval.ca))).

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**Russia and the Arctic. Environment, identity and foreign policy.** Geir Hønneland. 2015. London and New York: I.B. Tauris. xii + 191 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 978-1-78453-223-9. £58.00.

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The year 2015 is now coming to an end and it seems as if every year since 2010 this reviewer has been responsible for the review of a book of the Director of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo, Geir Hønneland. And by the end of this year it is the book *Russia and the Arctic. Environment, identity and foreign policy*, which, as the author states in the *Preface*, builds on material of two of his previous books, namely *Borderland Russians* (Hønneland 2010) and *Arctic politics, the law of the sea and Russian identity* (Hønneland 2014) to which this reviewer would still add *Making fishery agreements work* (Hønneland 2013). And indeed, one can find several parts from these books in the present volume, however significantly expanded through a much more theory-based underpinning. Moreover, while

overlapping in content, Hønneland's goal is not to reproduce the findings, but to locate it within the impressive swing of linking identity, narrative and foreign policy, thus establishing a theoretical framework in which his empirical data is located. And the focus is, as the title implies, Russia, which in this reviewer's opinion is a dramatically underrepresented actor in the foci of English research on Arctic (geo)politics. This fact alone and Hønneland's analysis which 'maps the narrative fabric within which Russian Arctic politics evolve' (page 19) make this book incredibly valuable.

It is thus that after the theory-based *Introduction*, the second chapter delves right into the subject matter and analyses *Russian identity between north and west*. Feeding on previous literature on the issue, the author locates current Russian political actions within contexts of westernism and Eurasianism, thus making also the current events in Crimea from a political perspective explainable. At the same time Hønneland shows how the 'north' became part of Russian identity and how it has thus influenced Russian policy-making. But he goes further and presents different forms of identity-making and -shaping to the reader.