

like what it is—a heterogeneous collection of conference proceedings. This said, for those interested in pursuing the study of historical photography in the Arctic, *Imaging the Arctic* lays some of the groundwork and invites further research.

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**ECHOING SILENCE: ESSAYS ON ARCTIC NARRATIVE.** Edited by JOHN MOSS. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997. ISBN 0-7766-0441-4. vii + 232 p. Softbound. Cdn\$27.00.

One of the great delights of northern scholarship is its diversity. Northern specialists actually speak to each other across disciplinary and cultural boundaries, in ways that are unique to the region. *Arctic* is an excellent example of this pattern, in that it draws together work by natural scientists and contributions from the humanities and social sciences. This fascinating collection of essays assembled by John Moss similarly illustrates the complexity and richness of northern research, for it draws together work by literary critics and writers, Inuit storytellers, and historians. The book includes carefully footnoted scholarly contributions, theory-laden analyses, reminiscences, and culturally eloquent stories.

In 1995, a group of northern commentators ranging from Nellie Cournoyea to Rudy Wiebe, David Woodman, and Aritha van Herk assembled at the University of Ottawa for a Symposium on Arctic Narrative. John Moss has collected a large number of the diverse presentations given at the conference and, in so doing, has provided us with rich insights. As he notes in the preface: “There is much going on in this text: different generations of writers representing diverse aesthetics, different visions, sharing the rhetorical stage; a mixing of academic and non-academic voices; scholarly discourse in a context of enthusiasm and actual experience; intellectual rigour reinforcing and sometimes contradicting expressions of personal conviction; matters of difference addressed, matters of race, of cultural perspective, and especially of gender” (p. 3). The symposium, by all accounts a remarkable intellectual, social, and cultural event, is now available, in part, in textual form.

The various contributions—22 papers in all, plus an engaging preface by the editor—offer unique “explorations” of the North. While several of the essays examine aspects of the physical exploration of the region by outsiders, others play with the philosophical and literary meanings of the Arctic. A number of the contributions examine specific texts about the North (including writings by John Steffler, Harold Horwood, Rudy Wiebe, Aritha van Herk,

and John Moss) while several others consider such themes as the role of gender in representations of the North. It is an eclectic mix. Alookook Ipellie remembers John Moss’s comment that it is hard to make love on the tundra and observes: “Without pretending macho, I have had similar experiences over the years. I am not saying that I am an expert in such predicaments, but perhaps we can at least compare some notes and learn from one another” (p. 96). Contrast Ipellie’s good humour with Sherrill Grace’s scholarly and complex analysis: “In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler analyses the ways in which gender identity works/is used to instate an hegemony of normative, hierarchical, asymmetric binaries that validate and enforce a phallogocentric heterosexuality” (p. 166). Also included is an edited transcript of a forum session in which Farley Mowat presented himself as his alter-ego, “Hardly-Knowit” (p. 108). The shifting styles and insights make the collection uneven and quirky, but add to both the book’s charm and its accessibility.

This book will elicit a variety of reactions. Those looking for contemporary literary analysis will find some very good papers, interspersed among traditional narratives and indigenous stories. Those preferring Inuit narratives will find those, but will also encounter some heavy, jargon-laden essays. Some will be annoyed by the complexity and diversity of literary styles, while others will find it captivating. The Preface provides a very good overview of the collection, hinting at its eclecticism and, appropriately, arguing that this is a strength, not a weakness, of the book. This volume would be very useful in senior undergraduate and graduate classes on northern images and literature and is particularly valuable for those readers interested in the multifaceted and multicultural ways of understanding Arctic experiences. It is standard, when reviewing collections of essays, to observe that there are inevitably stronger and weaker papers. Offering such a judgement in this instance is made more difficult by the diverse approaches that have been taken. While it is true that some papers are more original and insightful than others, the gap between the various contributions is not very large. Moreover, the real value of the book lies in the fact that each of the papers is a very good illustration of a particular approach to understanding Arctic narratives. I do not wish to avoid the reviewer’s responsibility entirely. I was quite taken by the contributions by Carpenter, Parkinson, Senkpiel, and van Herk. There were no essays that I did not find engaging and useful, but I was perplexed by Wayne Grady’s comment under “Works Cited”: “Wayne Grady would prefer not to supply notes. All references within his text may readily be discovered by the reader, should the reader wish to discover them” (p. 78).

*Echoing Silence* endeavours, through a variety of storytelling and story-analyzing techniques, to explain how different cultures understand and explain their northern experiences. It is a book laden with insights, often found in unexpected places. It is virtually impossible for an edited collection to capture the spirit and dialogue of a symposium.

sium; as Moss admits in the preface, it is difficult to put on paper what began as a social event. Some of the stories, no doubt, are experienced very differently in person than on the page. Conversely, navigating the difficult waters of contemporary literary analysis is probably much easier in book form than during a formal symposium presentation. This said, however, *Echoing Silence* does a superb job of sharing the stories, perspectives, and narrative styles of the participants. Even more, it celebrates the complex voices and ideas circulating about the meaning and impact of the Arctic and the willingness and ability of writers, thinkers, and storytellers to continue sharing their insights and search for understanding.

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ARCTIC JOURNAL. By BERN WILL BROWN. Ottawa: Novalis, 1998. 226 p., maps, b&w illus., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$23.95.

ARCTIC JOURNAL II: A TIME FOR CHANGE. By BERN WILL BROWN. Ottawa: Novalis, St. Paul University, 1999. 350 p., map, colour illus., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$32.95.

The two volumes of former Catholic Priest Bern Will Brown's *Arctic Journal* lead the reader through the author's 50 years in the Northwest Territories and northern Alberta. Brown came north as an Oblate Father for the diocese of the Mackenzie in 1948. Volume I chronicles the optimistic life of the young, guitar-playing priest who revelled in the hardships of travel by dog team and the challenges of building new missions. From his first assignment in Fort Norman (Tulita), where he learned to speak Slavey, Bern Will Brown actively embraced life in the North. In his early years, Brown founded churches at Camsell Portage and Uranium City beside Lake Athabasca, and at Deline (Fort Franklin) by Great Bear Lake. The late 1940s and 1950s (chronicled in Volume I) were a time when the Roman Catholic Church was still at the height of its influence in the North. Brown was a member of the last wave of new priests who came north at that time. The young Father Brown chafed at the regimentation of Oblate life in the big missions at Fort Smith and Aklavik. But he prospered in the freedom of the small communities, where he plied his trade by dog team, traveling from bush camp to bush camp to bring the sacraments of the Church to the Dene and Metis trappers of the North. It was during this time that he became an accomplished photographer and applied his skills as a painter to finish the empty panels in the famous mission church at Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories.

Volume II opens with Brown turning his hand to journalism as the editor of the *Aklavik Journal*. The journal chronicled life in the community of Aklavik during the years around the birth of the "planned" town of E-3 or Inuvik, which replaced Aklavik as the administrative centre for the Mackenzie Delta region. After founding the new church at Inuvik, the freewheeling Father Brown found himself "shackled" by the duties of running the mission at Fort McMurray, Alberta. The responsibilities of church, school, and hospital weighed on him. To escape, he found release in travel by dog and canoe. His diligent work at Fort McMurray was eventually rewarded, however, when the Bishop provided him with the opportunity to build the new church at Nahani Butte along the South Nahanni River and then assigned him in 1962 to found a new mission at Colville Lake, northwest of Great Bear Lake.

Until it reaches Brown's arrival in Colville Lake, the narrative resembles a travelogue of the places and personalities of the North. Building the Mission of Our Lady of the Snows was the largest construction project Brown undertook: in fact, his task was to build a new community. While the narrative follows the construction of the mission in detail, Brown only tangentially discusses his underlying assignment, that of creating an outpost community designed to provide the Hareskin people an opportunity to stay on the land and live a traditional lifestyle. Brown's omission of a more detailed discussion of the Colville "experiment" appears to be calculated. While it would have been interesting to hear Bern Will Brown's views stated more articulately, the omission is understandable given the sensitivity of his role. He alludes to the deeper story in his references to the impact of alcohol on the people and to his increasing loneliness, due, at least in part, to his growing feeling of isolation from the community. At Colville, the young, exuberant Father Brown approached the doubts of middle age. He abandoned his dogs for an airplane and a snowmobile. Brown slowly realized he was not happy single, and he sought release from his vows to marry Margaret Steen. Following their marriage in 1971, Brown continued to run the mission as a devoted lay leader. He was visibly relieved, however, to have laid down the "moral" responsibility for the community he had felt as a priest. During the 1970s, Brown, at that time the best religious artist in the North, found a new secular following for his work, which gave him and Margaret the financial freedom to continue their life in Colville Lake. While the second volume provides an important chronological sequence of his artistic career, it lacks much serious retrospection regarding the development of his craft.

Both volumes of *Arctic Journal* will be of interest to northern travelers who want to meet old friends again. The books will be useful to the student of "current" northern history. And finally, while not as ethnographically insightful as the earlier works of Fathers Petitot or de Cocolca, the *Arctic Journals* will be read by those interested in the role of the Church in the communities of the Mackenzie drainage during the second half of the 20th century.