

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Like the Sound of a Drum: Aboriginal Cultural Politics in Denendeh and Nunavut. By Peter Kulchyski.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4nf9d02s>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 30(4)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

2006-09-01

DOI

10.17953

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with an assortment of perspectives and methods to choose from in our quest to see farther back into the relationships between Native peoples in the Southeast and the colonial forces they encountered. Ultimately, this work achieves its goal: to honor Charles Hudson and demonstrate the range of his contributions to southeastern Native studies. Beyond that, however, it does what its title suggests and sheds light on the path for future study.

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Like the Sound of a Drum: Aboriginal Cultural Politics in Denendeh and Nunavut. By Peter Kulchyski. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006. 305 pages. \$55.00 cloth; 26.95 paper.

Like the Sound of a Drum calls for a participatory reader. Partway through the book, the author describes the “people’s history” of one northern Aboriginal community that “presents itself as this or that story, not linked to each other, with no concern for finding a way of putting them all together, as if that would somehow tell the ‘whole story’” (122–23). This description also applies to Kulchyski’s work. Although formally structured into three parts, six chapters, and both an introduction and epilogue, the book is constructed (or perhaps deconstructed) through a series of stories and commentaries varying in length from one paragraph to several pages that are likewise not linked to each other and without an attempt on his part to “somehow tell the whole story.” However, it works.

The “people’s history” and understanding of the world is contrasted throughout the book with the “totalizing” project of capitalism, commodification, and, for northern peoples especially, the state. Through an interweaving of personal vignettes, history lessons, and assorted philosophical *pensées*, Kulchyski looks at the micropolitics of Aboriginal resistance to the “continuing conquest” by the dominant Canadian society (4). His work is located in two of Canada’s three northern territories. In the central Arctic, Denendeh—still Northwest Territories (NWT) on the map—is home to the small scattered communities of Dene, Métis, and some non-Natives. The NWT capital of Yellowknife, seat of the territorial bureaucracy and with a large non-Native population, has a different ethos. In the eastern Arctic, primarily Inuit populate the new territory of Nunavut. Although Kulchyski covers Canada-wide Aboriginal politics, three northern communities have been the main sites for his research: Liidli Koe (Fort Simpson), NWT, Fort Good Hope, NWT, and Panniqtuuq, Nunavut.

The personal vignettes in *Like the Sound of a Drum* are drawn from the author’s years of participatory research in the Canadian north during the 1980s and 1990s. In writing the book, he says, “I can be said to have hunted stories: as hunters travel on the land in search of prey, I searched the texts of my journals and memories for narratives” (8). Over the years of his research Kulchyski went to community meetings, took notes, read minutes, and drafted

documents; he also hunted, fished, talked, listened, ate, and slept in northern communities. The vignettes are located in all these settings.

On the one hand, Kulchyski's history lessons cover mainstream topics such as constitutional law, the permutations of federalism, and the politics of Aboriginal rights. Key events in this history of the Canadian State include the relocation of the NWT government north from Ottawa to Yellowknife in 1967, the enactment of constitutional Aboriginal rights in 1982, the land claims settlements that were to follow, and the territorial division of 1999. Kulchyski situates his own thinking about these events in relationship to standard texts such as Frank Cassidy and Robert L. Bish's *Indian Government* (1989), Menno Boldt's *Surviving as Indians* (1993), and Alan Cairns's *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (2000). "Aboriginal self-government" is the common rubric under which these political ventures are classified. However, according to Kulchyski, what Aboriginal self-government largely boils down to is for Aboriginal people to master and apply on a local level the administrative apparatus of the state, and "administrative capacity should never be confused with community" (147).

On the other hand, his lessons present an alternative history—one found not in documented events but observable in northern lives and landscapes. In this history, 1967 does not represent political "progress" for the north but rather the descent of a "totalizing" power to interfere, traumatize, and "unravel an ancient social order" (111). The ancestral social order—Inuit "law," for example—still exists in space and memory, but the "colonizers" have failed to perceive it and are trying to fill that "blank space" with written law of their own (216). Kulchyski's history lessons speak to the ability of northern communities to subvert and resist this totalizing project by drawing on their cultural traditions and strength—a genuine participatory democracy rooted in a genuine ethics of speech: "founded on mutuality, the attempt to achieve consensus, [and] respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons" (255).

Kulchyski's assorted *pensées* draw notably on the work of Karl Marx and Jacques Derrida. From Marx he takes "mode of production" as a hermeneutic. From Derrida (among others) he takes "totalization." The hunter-gatherer mode of production Kulchyski witnesses in the far north involves a different set of values than either farming or industrial capitalism, and the micropolitics that result—from community assemblies to coffee shop confabs—are characterized by a "socially generated trust . . . [that] has material preconditions and survives because of these" (54, 130). He acknowledges areas of social dysfunction in northern communities, but says that he is choosing to write about "something else" (206). The "something else" is citizen participation in northern politics, which Kulchyski understands as a staging ground on which the totalizing project of the state can be resisted (270–71).

There are criticisms that can be made of *Like the Sound of a Drum*. For example, southern Canadian society, in which "multiculturalism" is a current enthusiasm, is arguably nowhere near as socially monolithic as Kulchyski presents it: "profoundly based on conformity in practice and produc[ing] cookie-cutter suburban subjects" (234). Nor is it clear that Western society is uniformly enamored with capitalism, and the Canadian economy exhibits

socialist as well as capitalist tendencies. One can also question both the social utility and the fundamental truth of Kulchyski's First Proposition, that "alterity" not "commonality" among Aboriginal peoples and "newcomers" must be the philosophical grounds for relationship at this historical juncture (244). All of that said, these criticisms are probably irrelevant. Kulchyski is not writing about the dominant social order—whatever that might be—but about a part of the world where "it is possible to see, to visually apprehend, the imposition of one way of life on another," and he asks readers to adopt the stance of humility in an attempt to understand and learn from this "other" (4, 245).

A number of timelines are converging on the Canadian north, which gives *Like the Sound of a Drum* considerable currency. Global climate change could have an enormous impact on Arctic lands and lifestyles. Canadian sovereignty issues make the Arctic a region of strategic importance. But the resource potential of the far north—in particular its oil and gas reserves—is the subject of most current attention. The demand is down south, the resources have to move, and the pipeline routes run through Aboriginal territories. Kulchyski notes that the Aboriginal self-government machinery in Canada has generated both an enormous discourse and library of academic, legal, and bureaucratic texts, among the ranks of which, he adds, "this book may now be included" (238). However, his book is unlike most of the others; it is worth reading for its relevance and uniqueness.

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Living with Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux and the Canadian-American Borderlands. By David G. McCrady. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. 192 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

In 1882, the blunt-spoken American general Philip H. Sheridan expressed the opinion that the Plains Indians "do not regard the [Canadian] boundary line with any more consideration than a herd of buffalo does" (National Archives microfilm publication M689, roll 93, frame 135). Now the Canadian historian David G. McCrady offers impressive evidence that the Sioux Indians were acutely aware of the significance of the forty-ninth parallel and tried to use it to their advantage during a decades-long attempt to preserve their way of life and stave off the advancing power of the Canadian and US governments. *Living with Strangers* is a revision of the author's dissertation, which he wrote at the University of Manitoba under the direction of Jennifer Brown.

The author's research had its origin in his wonderment at the degree to which historians on either side of the international boundary tend to lose sight of people who cross the border. Sometimes a book's title alone is enough to reveal this restriction: Jeffrey Ostler's *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (2004) and Laura Peer's *The Ojibwas of Western Canada* (1994) are two examples. Yet those peoples' recognition of the border and the ways in which they have used it for their own purposes form