

Book Review

Uumajursiutik unaatuinnamut / Hunter with Harpoon / Chasseur au harpon. By Markoosie Patsauq, edited and translated by Valerie Henitiuk and Marc-Antoine Mahieu. McGill-Queens University Press, 2021. 408 pp.

Reviewed by Deanna Reder

Markoosie Patsauq's *Harpoon of the Hunter*, published more than fifty years ago, is about Inuit hunters who follow a sick bear that threatens their community, told mostly from the perspective of young Kamik who conveys how they struggle on the land during a time of hunger, chased by danger and fear. When it was released in 1970 it was "likened to masterpieces of Western literature" (161) and hailed as "Canada's first Indigenous novel" (212). Few readers were familiar with Markoosie's original version, *Uumajursiutik unaatuinnamut*, inspired by a commonly known story, written in syllabics and published in serial form over the previous two years in a northern newsletter. No one seemed to know that the English version, adapted by the author himself, was designed to appeal to southern audiences, and so therefore had several differences from the original Inuktitut version.

Attracting attention internationally, *Harpoon of the Hunter* was often republished, becoming the master copy for translation into eighteen different languages, including Japanese, Danish, and Estonian. All became what scholars of translation studies would call examples of "relay, indirect, or pivot translation" (165), because there was no consultation with the earliest version. And furthering the distance from the original, recent translations in languages from India (Hindi and Marathi) rely on the French translation, itself translated from the English.

This remarkable scholarly edition, edited and translated by Valerie Henitiuk and Marc-Antoine Mahieu, is renamed as *Hunter with Harpoon*, and reinstates the Inuktitut version by drawing heavily on the original handwritten story. The editors were also able to work in consultation with the elderly author, allowing them to discuss the production of this book in the context of his long career.

The result is that they were able to confirm all corrections with Markoosie, even including the addition of standardized diacritics (e.g., accents on letters) that are absent in the original.

From the resulting authoritative text, the editors-translators were able to produce a volume that includes the Inuktitut version in syllabics as well as in Latin script, alongside rigorous new translations in English and French. The volume is a tremendous resource that has an extended discussion on facets of translation that will be of particular interest to specialists in literature, translation studies, and linguistics, as well as to experts in Inuit culture. Still, there is ample information of interest to many.

These examples of excellent translation are accompanied by nine chapters of thoroughly researched scholarship including a report on the text's reception and a consideration of Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ) otherwise translated as Traditional Knowledge. One particularly helpful essay interweaves the author's biography with the historical context, including Arctic relocation, the tuberculosis epidemic, and the implementation of residential schooling. The editors also provide a close reading of the work alongside evaluations of various translations.

Instead of discussing Markoosie's text only in relation to such Western genres as the novel or novella, the editors think through the story as a contribution to Inuit storytelling, both orature and literature, and in light of Inuit genres such as *unikkaatuaq*. Also, dedicated to highlighting the author's voice as a correction to the colonizing history of academic study, especially of Inuit Peoples, the editors give careful attention to Markoosie as author, with his own innovative creativity.

Following the chapters are several appendices that provide additional content for the interested researcher. While this book begins with a new preface in English by Markoosie, drawn from a 2017 interview, the editors provide the transcription in Inuktitut in Appendix A. The next appendix includes a chart of his family's genealogy, a timeline of Markoosie's life and publications, and an extensive, comprehensive bibliography of and about his corpus of work, including those in translation. The final appendix is fifteen pages long, listing exactly what was changed in the original version, which is mostly the inclusion of punctuation, done in consultation with the author. All of this is followed by a sixteen-page bibliography and index.

But to list the various sections of the manuscript does not adequately convey the editors' commitment to accuracy. For example, in the footnotes we read that the *Hunter with Harpoon* author sometimes published under the name of Markoosie and sometimes with a surname as Markoosie Patsauq (162, note 1), that some anthologists have erroneously attributed a poem to Markoosie that was composed by a different author with the same name (279, note 1), that a photo of someone else was wrongly identified as him in the authoritative 1988 volume

by Penny Petrone titled *Northern Voices* (282, note 4), and that in several oft-cited sources Markoosie's family name is misspelled as Patsang (290–294, notes 12–14, 16, 20). It is clear that the editors have checked for accuracy every major source of secondary work on Markoosie in existence.

While this is an essential resource for all relevant experts, there might be hesitancy to assign this hefty hardcover to undergraduates because of its hefty price. However, Markoosie's *Hunter with Harpoon*, translated by Henitiuk and Mahieu, has also been released in a slim paperback, focusing mostly on the gripping story, for a fraction of the price—ideal for students. Should professors be uncertain on how to teach this book, they can assign the slim version and go to the scholarly edition to find a great deal of teachable material.

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