

use to Indigenous people within the Yukon, and I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in place names and cultural knowledge preservation.

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***The Frontier Romance: Environment, Culture, and Alaska Identity.* By Judith Kleinfeld. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2012. 100 p, index and endnotes, 14 black and white photos.**

This book examines how some people in the Alaskan wilderness have made meaning of their lives through the American mythos of the frontier: the celebration of courage and self reliance; the love of freedom and individualism.

The author brings to this work a rich and wide-ranging personal experience as an Alaskan citizen of forty years. Judith Kleinfeld has spent those years serving with distinction as a professor at the University of Fairbanks, in public service, and as a writer about and for Alaska's peoples. For this study she conducted, over the course of ten years, an impressive total of seventy-five life histories and two additional case studies of frontier communities.

Kleinfeld was interested in the reasons why people move to Alaska, and she sought to interview those folks who had migrated and chosen to live in remote areas: building their homes from logs; living without electricity and plumbing; and hunting, fishing, and trapping in order to be self-sufficient. She interviewed, as well, people who, though living conventional city lives, had also moved to Alaska to find "the frontier." Almost all of these people stated that they had been greatly influenced by the heroic tales in popular culture about people like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, and the stories from Jack London's *Call of the Wild*, Farley Mowat's *Lost in the Barrens*, and Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie*. It was clearly evident to Kleinfeld that these stories had profoundly affected them. All of the people in the study were, in some way or another, living out their lives with the images, symbols, and tales of the frontier epic: the guns and knives, the animal trophies, survival tales of battling extreme weather, and the wearing of clothing for rugged conditions—camouflage fatigues and boots, parkas, and furs. In this book, therefore, the author sets out to show how cultural stories and master narratives are integrally woven into, and essentially shape and direct, the identity construction of people's lives.

The introduction sets the stage for the history of the frontier romance, the analytical framework of narrative psychology, and the characters the author has selected to enact parts in her play/narrative study. The next four chapters present five groupings of these characters and their relation to the master narrative. The “mountain men” use the frontier narrative as a means by which to “prove up” their manhood. The “pioneer women” use it to celebrate traditional American values of community and self-reliance. Privately, though, they share the stories of tensions and conflicts in living out the frontier semblance of modern, self-sufficient women. Then there are the “odd” eccentric men who use the frontier story as a healing therapy, and the psychologically disturbed men who appropriate the frontier persona, and its isolated living conditions, to commit violent acts. This latter group, under the guise of the frontier ethos, are dangerous and evil, wreaking tragedy on their families and committing serial murders in their community. The last group are the modern day pilgrims who felt compelled by the frontier epic to move north. They wanted to recreate, through a collective narrative, a new spiritual community where they could practice their beliefs. In the concluding chapter, one amusing incident of an ordinary citizen is presented to show how the frontier narrative is alive and well in the everyday life of urban Alaska.

How is Kleinfeld’s book positioned with other academic works in her field? Well, quite simply, it is difficult to know from her own study, as the author avers that master narratives have received little scholarly attention in narrative psychology, except for Dan McAdams’s book (2005). She draws on his study but only gives reference to a list of four general studies from narrative psychology in her endnotes. There are only five short sentences in the introduction to explain this academic field of inquiry, and as few in the concluding chapter. However, in respect of her qualitative research, I want to champion Kleinfeld’s work in this field, because I think that other works exploring similar topics would find her ethnographies illuminating. For example, the cultural studies work of Hogan and Pearsall (2008) have currency with Kleinfeld’s findings. They explore how narratives of frontier wilderness are connected intrinsically with the Alaskan masculine identity. Their thesis is that the idea of rural masculinity dominates in rural and urban spaces, since all Alaskan men are somehow felt to “be rural.” This masculinity is embedded in a “landscape nostalgia” through discourse, images, and classic and contemporary literature. They also reference Susan Kollin’s (2001) book in which she examines how Alaska has been discursively constructed through popular texts, documentaries, television shows, and film. It seems these studies have resonance with Kleinfeld’s findings, and

her multi-valanced ethnographies prove their theses. I was surprised that she did not reference these earlier works.

This leads me to observe that, while the book is presented to be an academic work, it is sparse on the side of theoretical perspective and any methodology, yet delivers abundantly in the development of ideas and major concepts. The writing style is easily readable, flows beautifully, and would appeal to a wide readership. It is indeed a small book, and I felt that there is so much more that I wanted to know and that could be learned from Kleinfeld's volume of ethnographic work. I thought, as well, that there must be so much data gathered from ten years of research and study that I wondered, "Where is it all?" And I found, when reaching the end of the book, that I had questions unanswered: who funded her research, and in what years did she do it? How many women and men did she interview individually, and in which communities of people? Did she give transcripts to the individuals she interviewed, other than those she sent to be read and corrected by the two community groups? Are there articles she has written that incorporate the results of her research? I also wondered whether there is a part of this study to be found elsewhere, or if we can look forward to a larger academic book forthcoming. I hope so!

In spite of these observations, I enjoyed and recommend this book. It is full of riveting stories and thoughtful reflections and observations. It will be interesting to lay readers, students, and scholars of northern studies, and in any field of narrative studies in the social sciences and humanities.

References:

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- Kollin, S. 2001. *Nature's State: Imaging Alaska as the Last Frontier*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- McAdams, Dan P. 2005. *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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***From Meteorite Impact to Constellation City: A Historical Geography of Greater Sudbury.* By Oiva W. Saarinen. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013. Xiv + 390 p, maps, illustrations.**

Sudbury, Ontario may not seem "northern" to some readers of this journal, but Oiva Saarinen's work provides a case study for perceptive northernists. Saarinen, a retired geography professor from Laurentian University, provides