Bernard Saladin d'Anglure. *Inuit Stories of Being and Rebirth: Gender, Shamanism and the Third Sex*. Trans. by Peter Frost. University of Manitoba Press, 2018. 387pp.
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Inuit Stories of Being and Rebirth is an English translation of Bernard Saladin d'Anglure's 2006 *Être et renaître Inuit: homme, femme, ou chamane.* The fifteen-plus Inuit stories the author recounts are drawn primarily from a series of myths, as well as few legends and oral histories that the author recorded in Igloolik beginning in 1971. Saladin d'Anglure was fluent in Inuktitut when he first arrived in Igloolik, and although he worked with several bilingual Inuit assistants, he was able to interview the storytellers and translate their narratives into French largely without assistance. Most of the stories are beautifully illustrated with drawings by Inuit artists including several by the Nunavik artist Davidialuk Amittuk (1910-1976), who was well known for his soapstone carvings, drawings, and prints depicting Inuit traditional stories.

This collection of stories is, in equal measure, both fascinating and frustrating. Early ethnographers of Inuit including Hinrich Rink (1997 [1875]), Franz Boas (1964 [1888]; 1901), and Knud Rasmussen (1929) published versions of most of the stories included. The stories in the present volume are well-told, and the author's Inuktitut cultural and linguistic fluency allow him to explain many of the subtle metaphors and other symbolic references that give meaning to the stories. Unlike many earlier publications, these versions are earthy, revealing sexual and scatological allusions that can still be observed in contemporary Inuit communities.

Saladin d'Anglure studied with Claude Lévi-Strauss, who wrote the forward to the original French text. It is translated and included here, and Saladin d'Anglure includes a tribute to his mentor as an afterword. Lévi-Strauss theorized culture as a structured system of symbols that could be universally understood. Saladin d'Anglure was heavily influenced by this form of structuralism oriented around discovering binaries—male/female, light/dark, land/sea, etc. The concluding chapter includes a Lévi-Straussian diagram of *the* Inuit worldview as three perfectly symmetrical and binary intersecting levels of existence: fetal life, human life, afterlife (285). One feature of structuralist anthropology more generally is the understanding of cultures as systems of thought rather than as sets of practices. In other words, structuralists make no distinction between a cultural schema and the ways that people who share those schemas conduct their actual lives. If something is said to be a rule, then it must be what everybody does: on the injunction to turn a somersault upon entering an unfamiliar territory, Saladin d'Anglure states, "This custom *was observed whenever* you entered a territory for the first time. The somersault corresponds here to a rebirth" (50, my emphasis).

Like Boas and Rink, Saladin d'Anglure's renditions of Inuit myths are composites of multiple versions, some of which he recorded from different narrators, and some of which were told at different times by the same narrators. Most of the myths he recounts include excerpts from versions collected 50 years earlier by Rasmussen. While combining accounts allows Saladin d'Anglure to render the stories into a narrative form familiar and accessible to readers of English or French, the stories are stripped of the contexts and purposes for which they were told. While logically consistent with a structuralist anthropology for which culture is mental process, it is out of step with contemporary ways of presenting Indigenous stories as practice. It is worth noting

that the stories presented in *Life Lived Like a Story* (Cruikshank 1990) and *Wisdom Sits in Places* (Basso 1996) were collected contemporaneously with those Saladin d'Anglure recorded for *Inuit Stories of Being and Rebirth*.

Context and audience matter in oral storytelling. No two tellings are identical, in part, because they are co-creations of the storyteller and the audience. Narrators emphasize some details and omit others depending on their situated purposes and the audience's situated responses. Yet only once does Saladin d'Anglure mention the presence of an audience—the narrator's (adult?) children who asked questions. We learn that the "interactive setting" contributed to the richness of the telling but are told nothing of what the audience asked (152). Instead, we have Saladin d'Anglure's narration of Inuit myths written in a way that emphasizes—possibly overemphasizes—simple binary and symmetrical symbols. Here is one example from a story about the origin of daylight: "Paradoxically, the black raven preferred the lightness of day and the white fox the darkness of night" (52).

At other times, the symbolic connections Saladin d'Anglure identifies strike me, to use another idea from Lévi-Strauss, as good to think with. This is the case with the book's opening and closing oral narratives from two individuals who recount their memories of their own fetal life and birth. These are among the few places in the collection where Saladin d'Anglure presents Inuit concepts of gender fluidity. The analogies he draws between the womb and the snowhouse seem apt and say something about the ways that Inuit use stories to create connections between contemporaneously living people as well as between past, present, and future generations. Despite my misgivings about his theoretical approach, what Saladin d'Anglure has documented is important and useful.

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