

Hunter with Harpoon

Markoosie Patsauq

Valerie Henitiuk, Translator

Marc-antoine Mahieu, Translator

McGill-Queens University Press (Nov 18, 2020)

Softcover \$19.95 (104pp)

978-0-228-00402-8

Regarded as the first Indigenous novel published in Canada, *Hunter with Harpoon* contains Markoosie Patsauq's story of an Inuit boy's treacherous coming-of-age in its original Inuktitut, as well as new English and French translations that seek to rectify the errors of other versions. The book closes with a brief examination of the injustices inflicted on Inuit people in Canada, including ripple effects that limit the ability of Inuit people to be the authors of their own stories.

Markoosie's personal history—told with a grandfatherly frankness that belies its horrors—intersects with significant events in Canadian Inuit history. He recalls his family being ripped from their home during the High Arctic Relocations and dropped on isolated Cornwallis Island with no support, limited resources, and a promise they could return to Quebec in two years. Twenty years later, Markoosie wrote *Hunter with Harpoon* from Resolute, a community that the relocated Inuit people had built within their exile.

Though Markoosie himself created the first English adaptation of his novel, he was advised to “arrange” the text into English—a distinction that editors Valerie Henitiuk and Marc-antoine Mahieu believe suggests that Markoosie was encouraged to make his story of an Inuit boy facing starvation, hypothermia, and a murderous polar bear more palatable to non-Inuit audiences. This led to misconceptions about a story that Markoosie intended to be “a little thing in Inuktitut that only Inuit would understand.” Indeed, his first English translation was “full of flourishes and embellishments,” with an ending that has been “strikingly revised;” Henitiuk and Mahieu take the unprecedented step of enumerating such changes.

Both a pivotal work of Indigenous fiction and an effort to acknowledge and correct injustices, *Hunter with Harpoon* is a testament to the resilience of the Inuit people.

DANIELLE BALLANTYNE (November / December 2020)

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