

a clear explanation for the desire to emigrate. Like the author, one hopes that others will follow up on this work by uncovering many more of the individual experiences of migration and adaptation to test against the broad patterns identified in *Demography, State and Society*.

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Lyle Dick — *Muskox Land: Ellesmere Island in the Age of Contact*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001. Pp. xxv, 615.

Who would have thought that it was possible to write a book of 640 pages about a part of the world which cannot have had more than a few thousand inhabitants in the millions of years since it cooled from magma? At first glance, to write such a work might seem excessive, almost absurd. Yet there is enough history in this island to fill this very large book.

Writing such a book about Ellesmere Island requires a shift in the usual way of looking at the North, and the High Arctic in particular. If one thinks of it as a peripheral region inhabited over several thousand years by a only a handful of stone-age people at any one time, the idea might seem preposterous. But if one thinks of Ellesmere Island not as peripheral, but as the centre of an entire world, and moreover the centre of a great deal of European activity over the past two centuries, then it makes perfect sense. It should be added that the book ranges outside the island to the north-west part of Greenland, where the local Inuit (the Inughuit) live. This is fair enough, since the Inughuit traditionally used Ellesmere Island as part of their territory; had Lyle Dick confined himself strictly to the island, there would have been no indigenous people there in the past two centuries to talk about.

Muskox Land is, as any book of this kind must be, interdisciplinary, written with the tools of the historian (Dick pays tribute to the influence of Fernand Braudel), but bringing in other disciplines as well. Anthropology is of particular importance, and the book is strongly influenced, as is the region, by geography, climatology, botany, and biology. The book is arranged in the light of Braudel's "structural, multi-dimensional approach to temporality" (p. xxii), which means that it is not linear in structure. European cultures up to 1940 are discussed in chapter 5, exploration from 1818 to 1840 in chapter 6, the interplay of cultures in the same period in chapters 10 to 12, and so on. This is an interesting method of organization, but inevitably rather disjointed and somewhat repetitive: Robert Peary is summarized on pages 119–120, discussed on 221–231, again on 380–384, and again in other places. *Pace* Braudel, there is something to be said for linearity.

There are two main human voices in the book: those of the European explorers and exploiters, and those of the Inuit for whom Ellesmere Island has been a homeland for about 4,000 years. Reconstructing the first voice required the author to use the traditional tools of this historian — archival research, delving into the many accounts published over the centuries, into government documents, and the like. Reconstructing the Inuit voice, on the other hand, while partly possible through pub-

lished materials — though these would always give the voice second-hand — also required taking into account an oral tradition and necessitated carrying out interviews with the people themselves.

The research on which this book is based is very extensive in archival and secondary sources; there are 69 pages of footnotes and 27 pages of bibliography. Such deep digging has enabled Dick to throw light on subjects which rarely appear in the printed historical record, notably, for example, sexual relations between explorers and the Inuit. The papers of E. B. Baldwin, a member of Robert Peary's 1893–1895 expedition, reveal that some of the other members expected to be able to sleep with Inuit women and that their quarters had been “converted to a whore-house” (p. 383). Peary himself wrote in his diary that “Feminine companionship not only causes greater contentment but as a matter of both physical and mental health and the retention of the top notch of manhood it is a necessity” (p. 382). None of this should come as a surprise to anyone, but it was certainly not the picture of his expedition that was published to thrill generations of readers of the *National Geographic*.

The most contentious modern issue concerning Ellesmere Island and its inhabitants is, of course, the matter of the relocation of the Inuit in the 1950s. The debate is over the motives for the relocation: was it done with the welfare of the Inuit in mind, or was it mostly to put a Canadian population on an uninhabited island (as it was then) for purposes of sovereignty? The debate, which is argued in Tester and Kulchyski's *Tammarniit* (1994), is laid out in evenhanded fashion by Dick, who concludes that there was more than one motive, and, on the matter of whether the Inuit went voluntarily or under compulsion, that there were elements of both factors. Officialdom may have been unaware of applying pressure, while the Inuit lacked the political power or knowledge to assert their rights.

Lyle Dick is an historian with Parks Canada, and the book grew out of research done in connection with the establishment of Quttinirpaaq National Park on Ellesmere Island. Parks Canada is to be congratulated for giving its professional historians enough time to carry out such a thorough job of research and writing. It is gratifying to see that a government organization has the foresight to fund a scholar, even if only partly, to undertake a work of this kind.

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Alan Gordon — *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montréal's Public Memories, 1891–1930*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001. Pp. xxxiv, 233.

In a year that marks the tenth anniversary of the defeated Charlottetown Accord and the twentieth anniversary of the patriation of Canada's constitution — not to mention Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee — most observers would agree with historian Alan Gordon that public memory is both political and contested. In *Making Public Pasts*, Gordon examines the construction and deployment of public memories in Montreal between 1891 and 1930. Public memory was, he claims, “a discourse”