

BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

***Tammarniit* (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic, 1939-63**

Frank James Tester and Peter Kulchyski

Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994. xv + 421 pp. \$45.95 (cloth), \$24.95 (paper)

Reviewer: David Damas

McMaster University

Authors Tester and Kulchyski add to the growing body of literature that is critical of government administration of the Canadian Arctic. Their treatment of problems of Inuit relocation differs from most other critiques in its more detailed coverage of archival material and extensive interviewing of former governmental representatives. While reference to these sources includes both supporting and dissenting views of relocation policies, this reviewer finds that the polemical approach comes down too heavily on involved government officials.

It is difficult to argue against accusations of lack of consultation with Inuit in some of the relocation examples, when one takes into account problems of communication, some of which are addressed. There were errors in planning, as in the choice of sites in some cases, and blunders in execution. It is not clear, however, that in all instances viable solutions alternate to relocation could have been enlisted. In the cases of the tragedies in the interior of the Keewatin of 1957-58 and consequent movement of people, the authors suggest that "the government of Canada had not put enough resources into monitoring and caring for Inuit who were its responsibility" (p. 272). As a matter of record, expensive and strenuous efforts were made to monitor the groups in question and were found to be impractical, especially in view of the small numbers of people involved.

Concerning the relocations to the high Arctic, the authors admit that conditions in one of the regions of origin, the east coast of Hudson Bay, were probably no better than those at the relocation sites of Grise Fjord and Resolute. With regard to Grise Fjord, there are more balanced accounts of conditions and adjustments, especially "The Grise Fjord Project" by Milton M.R. Freeman (*Arctic*, Vol. 5: *Handbook of North American Indians*, edited by D. Damas, Smithsonian Institution, 1984, pp. 676-682). Omission of this source is symptomatic of the paucity of anthropological writings cited. There are, for instance, awkward usages of anthropological concepts. In one place Inuit distribution practices are characterized by the now-well-confirmed "elaborate networks of reciprocity" (p. 8). In another, the highly dubious stereotype of "generalized reciprocity" is revived (p. 249). The term "nomadic" is most often used loosely, though in one place (p. 206) the contextually more accurate "semi-nomadic" is employed.

Reference to anthropological sources, as well as to pertinent government records, would have dispelled the notion put forth that the fur-trade era brought on increased starvation as well as disease. Rather, it was enhanced survival through introduced technology that largely balanced deaths through disease.

Examination of Hudson's Bay Company records, together with anthropological writings, would have forestalled the assertion that following the First World War "the

new economy was devoted solely to trapping Arctic fox" (p. 63). In fact, the traders did not discourage hunting in favour of trapping but, rather, sought to co-ordinate the two activities by season. Also in error is the idea that store-bought food largely replaced game in the diet of the Inuit during the fur-trade era.

Readers might gain the impression that government-directed relocation was the chief change in Inuit settlement during the 1950s and 1960s. Such moves were but a side show to the more general shift from small, dispersed all-Native communities to large, centralized settlements of mixed ethnic composition. The important point here is that this in-gathering was largely voluntary.

In spite of these shortcomings of the book, Tester and Kulchyski have made clear that paternalism and ethnocentrism persisted far too long in the ranks of the administration. In the later pages, excerpts from an Eskimo Affairs Committee meeting, where Inuit were finally invited, presage the more active role which they were to play in influencing their destiny. While, as the title indicated, mistakes were made, lessons were also learned, albeit belatedly.

Museums and the Appropriation of Culture

Susan Pearce, ed.

Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1994. viii + 265 pp., 4 figures, 22 plates. \$85.00 (cloth)

Reviewer: Marjorie M. Halpin

University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology

This outrageously priced book is the fourth annual volume in the international series, *New Research in Museum Studies*, edited by Susan Pearce, Director of the Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester. Each volume is solicited by a thematic call for papers in the preceding volume, although papers on unrelated topics are also included. Eileen Hoover-Greenhill, of the same department, edits a *Reviews* section in each issue, for which items are solicited rather than assigned. This is a "referred" [*sic*] publication, in that offered papers are submitted to members of an Editorial Committee in Britain and/or to other people for comment.

While papers in the series are supposed to be of a "high academic standard," and some of them are, they are also "intended to relate directly to matters of immediate museum concern" (p. 246), and therein lies a problem. Until very recently, the museological literature has been of the self-congratulatory, anecdotal and "from the trenches" variety. What the best papers in this series do is to add a critical, theoretical dimension to museological discourse that is sorely needed, especially insofar as non-museum academics (such as James Clifford, Donna Haraway, Mieke Bal and Carol Duncan) are writing devastating critiques of museum practice from outside the field.

The issue of appropriation itself is taken as a given. As Parker B. Potter, Jr. argues, "Museums, birds, and fish face the same choice; they can appropriate culture, fly and swim, or they can give up being museums, birds and fish" (p. 103). The questions for these authors is not whether to appropriate, which is seen as definitional to museums, but how to do it.

Three themes pervade the essays. The first is the shift from a positivistic presentation of "truths" to a recognition that both the past and museum exhibits are socially