

rotation owing to the cramped quarters on the ship” (p. 137). This proved to be entertainment on a rather grand scale for a whaling ship, with Margaret herself at times serving 20 to 30 cups of tea. When visiting the ship, the Inuit women generally wore “their best skin dresses” (p. 138).

These excerpts provided the author with another opportunity to explain previous interactions between the Inuit and the whalers, and subsequent changes in trading practices. Apparently when Tackritow brought a number of English dresses home, she established a new fashion fad among the women of Cumberland Sound and inspired demands for new trade items, such as brooches, rings, brightly coloured cloth, and ribbons. Later, American whalers brought fancy bonnets and ball gowns, which the Inuit women wore at the dances held on the whaling ships. When these garments wore out, they were replaced with replicas made of fine caribou skins: a curious blend of old and new. A writer in the *Hull Advertiser* described Tackritow as wearing “a faded silk dress...a skin tunic, wellington boots of seal skin, and a Glengarry cap” (p. 138).

The above examples represent the depth of detail Ross has included in his commentary on Margaret’s diary. Other topics range from the various activities associated with whaling, to the problems of starvation and epidemics, to the mixed reception afforded the missionary (the apparent enthusiasm for Brother Warmow’s preaching, on the one hand, and the conflict he faced when attempting to intervene with spiritual traditions associated with death, on the other).

In addition to the insight provided by Margaret Penny, Ross’s extensive use of primary research and exemplary literary skills have produced an exceptional book. Essentially, this is a biography, a whaling narrative, and a social-contact history all rolled into one. As such, *This Distant and Unsurveyed Country* is of major importance for all scholars of Arctic history, who up until now have had to rely on a male perspective to explain the relationships between the whalers and the Inuit. Well written with ample visual aids, this book will also provide pleasurable reading for the less informed. It is a “must read” for anyone interested in nineteenth-century Arctic history.

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TO THE NORTH POLE: THE DIARY AND NOTEBOOK OF RICHARD E. BYRD 1925–1927. Edited by RAIMUND E. GOERLER. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1998. ISBN 0-8142-0800-2. 161 p., 3 maps, 56 b&w illus., bib. Hardbound. US\$19.95.

Polar controversies seem to be all the rage at the moment. Witness Robert M. Bryce’s 1997 book, *Cook and Peary*:

The Polar Controversy Resolved. This massive tome scrupulously explores the animated debate over whether it was Peary or Cook who first reached the North Pole and yet still manages to pour salt into the wounds of all concerned. Unfortunately, this scholarly but inflammatory book seems to have exerted an unwarranted influence on the marketing strategies of other publishers. When one reads the synopsis on the dust jacket of Raimund E. Goerler’s *To the Pole*, this book appears to be no exception to the “Cook and Peary genre” and the current craze for making the polar regions the focal point for acts of willful charlatany.

Ironically, the dust jacket brief proves to be as misleading as the most celebrated of polar frauds. It focuses disproportionate attention on the contested claim made by polar explorer and pioneer aviator Richard Evelyn Byrd (1888–1957) to have been the first person to fly over the North Pole. In fact, the author does not give this subject extravagant attention: the issue is confined to one chapter. In a book that presents selections from Byrd’s diary and notebook of 1925–27 and encompasses three of Byrd’s five expeditions, the 1926 North Pole flight is far from being the book’s only point of interest.

Indeed, one of the more intriguing aspects of Byrd’s diary is that it records his transition from little-known polar explorer to international celebrity. It begins with Byrd’s involvement in the Greenland Expedition of 1925, records the 1926 flight to the North Pole that brought him fame, and terminates with the transatlantic flight of 1927 that established him as a popular hero. Through all of these transitions, Byrd seems to have remained relatively untroubled by what he called “the hero business” (p. 52).

In bringing forth an edited version of Byrd’s diary, Raimund E. Goerler has striven for a representation that possesses “clarity” (p. 4), that is an “accurate representation of the original” (p. 3), and that is underpinned by relevant historical context. The resulting book offers a brief biography of Byrd, three chapters devoted to the above-mentioned expeditions, an epilogue detailing the remainder of Byrd’s life (1928–57), and two appendices: a chronology of Byrd’s life and the navigational report of his North Pole flight.

The author sets himself a task at which it would normally be difficult to excel in a book of only 161 pages. The informative but unremarkable biography of Byrd is followed by the three “expedition chapters” that contain the mainstay of the diary material. In each of these, the author has employed a similar structure. Rather than synthesize Byrd’s diary material into a history of the expeditions, Goerler begins each chapter with a short but competent history of an expedition, which forms the introduction to Byrd’s relevant diary entries.

In general, the technique works well, offering the reader the opportunity to compare Goerler’s omniscient narrative with Byrd’s first-person account of events. However, without recourse to the diary itself, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the diary entries may have been chosen to coincide with the author’s account of the expedition and

the need for them to constitute a reasonably coherent narrative.

The occasional eclecticism of the diary's subject matter is doubtless the result of Goerler's care in not smoothing out too many inconsistencies and trying to give the reader a feel for the random quality of Byrd's diary. Doubtless a concern for authenticity and a desire to represent Byrd's multifaceted character have sometimes led the author to sandwich field notes between Byrd's philosophical, theological, and personal observations. This quality of the diary is particularly prevalent in the entries pertaining to the 1925 expedition. For example, on 22 August 1925, a philosophical Byrd ponders on "a remorseless cruel universe grinding out its destiny" (p. 38). The next day's entry is written by a wistful husband, who reflects that "to have Marie [his wife] in the midst of chaos, that is enough" (p. 38). Later in the same day, a concerned naval officer reports that the "*Bowdoin* [one of the expedition ships] went aground today" (p. 38).

Despite its evident strengths, the book would benefit from an index and a list of maps and illustrations. It also contains some surprising errors and editorial decisions. For example, although the first chapter tells us that "Richard Evelyn Byrd... was born on October 25, 1888" (p. 7), the second chapter contradicts this earlier information with the surprising calculation that "in 1909... Richard Byrd was ten" (p. 17). In a similar vein, the chapter title "The North Pole Flight of 1926" becomes unnecessarily truncated on subsequent page headings to "The Pole Flight of 1926," losing the distinction between north and south.

Overall, however, this is an absorbing and well-produced book, with 53 clear, black-and-white illustrations and 3 maps. For the general reader, it provides an overview of Byrd's career, and it is an ideal introduction for those who have little or no knowledge of the subject. For the specialist, its publication is crucial in bringing Byrd's diary into the light of day for the first time. Finally, despite what the dust jacket might suggest, its treatment of the contested 1926 flight over the North Pole is also reasonably impartial and steers mercifully clear of the current enthusiasm for polar scandal mongering. In fact, the author adopts a strategy much like that of Robert M. Bryce. He provides a facsimile of Byrd's navigational report and the *National Geographic's* examination of Byrd's records as tools, so that readers can make their own assessment of Byrd's claims.

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CIRCUMPOLAR ANIMISM AND SHAMANISM. Edited by TAKAKO YAMADA and TAKASHI IRIMOTO. Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press, 1997. ISBN 4-8329-0252-0. 336 p. maps, bib., index. Hardbound. Yen 18000.

This nicely produced, hardbound volume is a companion to the first collection by Yamada and Irimoto (1994), entitled *Circumpolar Religion and Ecology*. Like the first volume, it features a rare meeting of ethnographic traditions. Here Japanese scholars working in Siberia, northern Canada, and Hokkaido share their thoughts on the nature of "circumpolar" ritual with Russian and European authors, comparative ethnologists, and North American anthropologists working to develop an emic, phenomenological approach to understanding northern societies. Although the wide divergences in style of these traditions might have been better analyzed for the reader, the book represents an authoritative collection of rare quality, which is likely to become a classic in studies of the region. Within this volume one finds some of the best-known anthropologists of the North from Japan, Canada, Moscow, the United States, and Eastern Europe.

The papers in this collection were prepared for the Second International Conference of the [Japanese] Northern Studies Association, held at Hokkaido University in 1995. The book is arranged along regional lines into five parts. Parts 1 to 3 explore religion and ritual in northern Japan, northern North America, and a broadly defined northern Eurasia. Part 4 consists of three miscellaneous papers treating the neurophysical foundations of shamanism and the animism in sub-Saharan Africa and Papua New Guinea. Part 5 is a concluding chapter by Takako Yamada.

The collection stresses the theme of a revitalized concept of animism rather than a clear analysis of ritual in the circumpolar region. "Animism" was the term chosen by Sir Edward Tylor (1871) to identify the "primitive" belief that objects could have spiritual essences. This concept, although still popular in undergraduate textbooks, is generally considered to be both too broad and disparaging of indigenous spirituality. Taking cues from Ainu ritual tradition, Irimoto, with the support of several Ainu representatives, introduces here the controversial idea that Ainu boldly pose a sense of oneness with nature (monism), which connects them not only to shamanistic traditions worldwide, but also to recent industrial ecological movements. (The received wisdom on Ainu ritual is that Ainu belief was too fragmentary or derivative to even be classed as shamanism). More importantly, Irimoto and others (Obayshi, Hoppal, Yamada) focus upon the actions of ritual specialists in the world, especially as mediators of relationships between people and animals, as capturing the meaning of their beliefs. It is this thought which constructs the most solid bridge between Ainu healers and ritual specialists around the world (and commonly in the circumpolar region). This "field of oneness between nature and supernature" (p. 21) best captures the rejuvenated