

analysis of Inuit kinship and social structure, especially with regard to matrilineal tendencies in some groups and his use of formal terms like “clan,” “lineage,” and “bilateral descent” less than compelling or enlightening.

I also applaud his astute statements regarding the uniqueness of the Copper Eskimo relative to either Iglulingmiut and Netsilingmiut societies. His emphasis on the anomalous position of this group is important given the broad prominence the former often receive. Regarding Copper Eskimo sharing, however, I was more than a little surprised to find such heavy emphasis placed on gift exchange while little mention is made of *pigatigiit* ‘partnerships’ (see Jenness, 1922; Rasmussen, 1932; Damas, 1972a, b); although he emphasizes this sharing form for the Netsilik. Although this may seem to be a small criticism, it is important when Stevenson’s overall construct of Copper Eskimo distinctiveness relative to other Central Inuit is considered.

In fact, there is much in this book to which individual readers, depending on their disciplinary training and experience, may take greater or lesser exception. For instance, what larger data set supports the author’s suggestion that “bride price” was generally common among Inuit? And why, in the discussion of infanticide, is there no mention of Smith and Smith’s (1994) recent analysis of the practice? On the other hand, that such questions will arise does not detract from the fact that *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence* should provoke considerable thought among Inuit specialists.

The book’s one major flaw is the circularity of the main, and many minor, lines of argument. Stevenson puts forth untested assumptions upon which he constructs a detailed scenario, and then concludes that his initial premise is proven. This is most evident, again, in his second chapter, but the same method threads its way through much of the overall argument.

Every serious student of Inuit culture and society, whether archaeologist, ethnologist, or historian, should read this book. In a decade that has seen many particularistic studies published on Inuit from Greenland to Bering Strait, it clearly strives for the widest intellectual and geographic sweep. Unfortunately, as a Grand Unifying Theory for understanding (and, regarding the last chapter, informing) Canadian Inuit, I must conclude that it is more notable for its guts than its GUT.

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A IS FOR ARCTIC: NATURAL WONDERS OF A POLAR WORLD. By WAYNE LYNCH. Willowdale, Ontario: Firefly Books, 1996. 143 p., colour illus. Softbound. Cdn\$24.95.

Lured from a career in medicine by the wonders of Nature nearly 20 years ago, Dr. Wayne Lynch, one of Canada’s premier wildlife photographers, naturalists, and science writers, returns to the Arctic yearly to indulge his passion for photography. In this book, subtitled “Natural Wonders of a Polar World,” the author explores the intimate and entertaining life that flourishes in this wild polar landscape. Through his work, we experience the sights and sounds of seabird cliffs that teem with screaming kittiwakes and colorful auks and marvel at the majesty of northern mammals. Wonderfully illustrated with photographs that capture the essence of what is arctic, this book is a treat.

Dr. Lynch shares many unusual and interesting stories, situations, and anecdotes, all indicative of a curious mind and a well-read person who has taken the time to find out about the natural wonders of the Arctic. Let me illustrate with some examples. In the story about the tern, the author tries to discover why terns still fly from polar region to polar region, relating their migration to the geological history of the Northern and Southern Hemispheres and to how the polar areas were affected by glaciation. Dr. Lynch gives a personal story: he was attempting to photograph swans when they attacked him, “pecking and grabbing the crotch of my pants” (p. 111). He relates that web-spinning spiders don’t survive well in the Arctic because of high winds and the lack of tall grasses. He also illustrates why hunter spiders are quite common: they rely on keen eyesight rather than webs to obtain food. He gives us plenty of colourful detail, for example: gram for gram, mukluk (the skin and underlying blubber of bowhead whales, belugas, or narwhals) contains more Vitamin C than a lemon. It is one of the favourite foods, according to a survey taken among people of the North. Then there is the suggestion that if you pinch your skin where a mosquito is drinking, it will be unable to withdraw its mouthparts and will keep

drinking until it bursts. Dr. Lynch gives some fascinating background to the pycnogonids or sea spiders, animals that live at great depths in the oceans of the world. He illustrates and explains the legend behind the use of the spiral-shaped narwhal tusk as a detector of poison in the European courts. He tells the story of a research project that was carried out to find out how important the black tail tip was to the survival of the ermine. Under the section entitled, "Flower Tricks," the author illustrates how flowers have developed interesting ways to bloom in the cold.

The book explains animal adaptations to their environment: how they survive and flourish. In-depth descriptions allow the reader to understand the variety of life in the Arctic and share the author's experience. The superb photographs make it obvious that the author loves his subject. Well written, well documented, and well produced, this book is excellent as a school library resource, as a gift, or simply to pick up and read from time to time. Highly recommended!

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