In his postscript, "A Perspective from 1988," Asch reflects on how, in 1969, the community of Pe Tēh Kj used the Drum Dance as a temporary means "to fend off the negative impacts of imposed change" (p. 97). In the early 1970s the Dene nation successfully re-opened treaty negotiations and voiced formal objections to development on their land prior to the settlement of their outstanding claims. In this way "the Dene communities were at last confronting the primary external agents of change: the Canadian state and the corporate developers" (p. 97).

This book is a useful introduction to the Dene's cultural heritage and fulfills its objectives of discussing the social organization of the community and its drum-dance music. The quality of reproduction, editing and printing is good and the photos, maps and tables are helpful. It is not too difficult to be read by a layperson but it is mainly of interest "to students and scholars in the fields of Anthropology, Sociology, Political Science and Native Studies," as the back cover suggests.

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For those who seek to describe the culture of one group of people to another, religion and myth have always presented a major challenge. Yet these were the topics seized upon by veteran fur-trader George Nelson, when in 1823 he summarized his own knowledge of Cree and northern Ojibwa mental culture in a lengthy letter-journal addressed to his father. Nelson's remarkable account, published in this book for the first time, should earn him a high place among pioneer ethnographers of Canada's native peoples.

The book is divided into four parts. In Part I, Jennifer Brown and Robert Brightman provide important background by describing Nelson's early life and career in the fur trade. Born in 1786 at Sorel, Lower Canada (now Quebec), George Nelson was the eldest of at least nine children born to a Loyalist schoolteacher and his wife, both of whom had come north from New York to escape the American Revolution. After receiving a good basic education, the fifteen-year-old George entered the fur trade as an apprentice clerk with the XY Company in 1802. During the next two decades he served at various trading posts in what is now Wisconsin, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, where he had extensive contact with both Ojibwa and Cree groups. At the time he prepared the letter-journal to his father he was in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Lac la Ronge, an outpost of Ile à la Crosse in northeastern Saskatchewan.

Nelson's sixty-page manuscript, which is presented in Part II of the book, comprises a mixture of excellent first-hand observations, stories and events related by Cree and Metis informants and, of lesser ethnographic value, information filtered through unspecified secondary and tertiary sources (e.g., "a Canadian" [p. 63] or "other Indians" [p. 97]). In editing the manuscript for publication, Brown and Brightman have retained the spelling and capitalization of the original text. However, they have assisted the modern reader and achieved greater clarity by adding appropriate punctuation and paragraph indentations, as well as by devising titles, set off by square brackets, for Nelson's various stories and themes. In addition, they
have attempted to phonemicize native terms and have added a useful glossary of "dramatis personæ," which identifies and briefly discusses most of the spirit beings to which Nelson refers throughout his account.

Recognizing that some of the material in Nelson's manuscript was "rather inaccessible and obscure to non-specialists and non-Algonquians," Brown and Brightman supply the reader with a comparative summary of northern Algonquian myth and religion in Part III. This excellent and useful contribution emphasizes religious and mythic themes and personages that are mentioned in Nelson's account, thereby placing the latter in a much broader comparative context. It includes discussion of the cosmogonic myths that explain how the world acquired its present shape; the importance of dream guardians and the vision fast, communication with the spirit world by means of the shaking lodge, the cannibalistic windigo monster and religious aspects of native medicine.

In Part IV, two native scholars express their own views on the text of George Nelson. Stan Cuthand is able to compare Nelson's "voice out of the past" with knowledge acquired during his own Plains Cree childhood and his later experience as an Anglican priest at the very place where Nelson wrote, Lac la Ronge. While suggesting that Nelson may not have fully comprehended the spirit world he sought to describe, Cuthand acknowledges that, by committing these stories to paper, Nelson has saved them "for another generation."

Another native perspective is provided by Emma LaRocque, who discusses the ethics of publishing historical documents. This essay draws attention to some of the limitations of early sources on Indians, including such issues as inaccurate ethnography and entrenched ethnocentrism. While pointing to a few such problems in the Nelson manuscript, LaRocque nevertheless concedes that it "may be praised for its attempts at fairness and its ethnographic detail" and that, given his era, George Nelson "is remarkably open-minded and seems to have been genuinely interested in presenting correct information."

For anyone who has wondered about the title "Orders of the Dreamed," it may be of interest to know that this quotation appears in Nelson's discussion (p. 34) of the Algonquian vision fast. Here and elsewhere throughout his letter-journal Nelson used the word "dreamed" to translate pawśkan, the spirit guardian that was sought by Cree and Ojibwa youths during their vision fast. As pointed out by Brown and Brightman, "The concept of the pawśkan and the associated ideas about dream communication and interpretation are the most central yet most abstruse aspects of Northern Algonquian religious thought" (p. 138). Seen in this light, Nelson's expression "Orders of the Dreamed" makes an appropriate title for his account of Cree and Ojibwa religion.

This carefully edited book will be of great value for anyone who would try to understand the rich spiritual life of subarctic Algonquians. There exists yet another contradiction. While the photographs are magnificently reproduced and the book is sumptuously printed and published, the editing of the total book — i.e., the integration of text with illustrations — is deplorably inadequate. The above statements obviously need clarification and substantiation.

First, about the author, who probably is the most widely respected and accepted authority in his field: This esteem is shared by me who considers "Tiger" (as Burch is widely known) a good friend. I nevertheless have to say what I shall, yet I have only very few arguments with his text as such, which I consider convincing in its own context.

In fact, if the book had a less authoritative title (perhaps just "Eskimo" or "Eskimos of the 19th Century" or even "Eskimos of Yesterday") and the illustrations (with the exception of perhaps a dozen or so) were detached from the text, the publication would be more than passable. The text itself is beautifully written, especially the chapter called "Worldview," which, without sacrificing excellent information, is presented clearly yet poetically. Here Burch combines his knowledge, his insights, and his feelings. Where I cannot quite agree — and here William R. Morrison in a recent Arctic review should be quoted: "... reviewers are often accused of criticizing an author for not writing the book that the reviewer would wish to see..." — well, the title does not quite agree with the content. What in fact Burch describes are Eskimo life-styles of the past, i.e., of the Eskimos of the early and middle 19th century (mentioned in one paragraph only and not always adhered to). He, as much as I, likes and admires them and wishes therefore to strip them of sentimentalities. He succeeds to do that and glorifies but does not romanticize them.

There are, however, a few other points that more exacting reviewers would observe: (1) the frequent generalizations. (2) The overemphasis on Aleuts and Alaskan Eskimos and their being typical of all Eskimos. This applies specifically to points such as the otherwise excellent descriptions of the movements of the Lower Nootka People, something that certainly could not apply to, say, the Caribou or the Central Eskimos. (3) Statements such as "... artefacts used by Eskimos almost always exhibited an elegance and style far in excess of that demanded by the uses to which they were put..." are certainly wrong for most of the Canadian Arctic for almost a thousand years.

I may be accused for looking too closely at individual trees instead of the forest. But isn't the forest made up of individual trees? And it is precisely here where the great error of the illustrations comes into play. While most often good as photographs and beautifully presented as such, they (generally speaking) are often unrelated in size of reproduction. Some objects are actually enlarged (such as on pages 18, 26, 35, 101, 108, 120), others are much too small (p. 123) or are badly juxtaposed in relation to their actual sizes (such as, at least, on pages 32/33, 44/45, 60/61, 66/67, 82/83 and 86). Much worse, however, is that not a single caption contains the kind of information essential to identify artifacts, that is to say, dimensions, dates, provenances and current repositories, although the latter can be found, rather gingerly listed, in the "Acknowledgements." And speaking of the acknowledgements there are at least three errors: Meldgaard is not director of the Danish National Museum, Van Stone is not chairman of the Field Museum, and the curator of the Eskimo Museum in Churchill is called Brandon, not Brondson.

With regard to the above, the bibliography must also be mentioned. While, in general, I am always in favour of short bibliographies, this particular one is a bit too short and some of the omissions are embarrassingly noticeable. To name just a few: Bogoras, Bruemmer, Burch himself, Collins, Dall, Harrington, Hawkes, Hofmann, Hrdlička, Jessup, de Laguna, Lantis, John Murdock, at least two more works by Rasmussen, and Taylor. And what about one of the superb AI LN "Translations from Russian Sources" edited by Henry Michael? I realize that some of these publications
Features important information about Dene community life in the 1960s during the crucial period immediately following the move from bush to town. Deals extensively with the traditional economy, the structure of Dene Kinship, its role in social organization, and the role of the drum dance in the social life of the community under rapidly-changing circumstances. Edition Details. Format: Hardcover. Michael Asch. 14.91. University of Victoria.

When kin principles of this sort occur in small scale societies, such as we see in Subarctic Dene, Subarctic Algonquian, and Great Basin Numic cases, they have profound demographic impacts (Asch 1980Asch, 1988Ives 1990Ives, 1998Ridington 1968aRidington, 1969. These societies have principles of group for- mation in which microbands or co-resident local groups are conceived of as a group of brothers who have married a group of sisters, or, as a group of brothers and sisters who have married another group of brothers and sisters. Visit Amazon.com's Michael Asch Page and shop for all Michael Asch books. Check out pictures, bibliography, and biography of Michael Asch. Kinship and the Drum Dance in a Northern Dene Community (Circumpolar Research Series). Jan 1, 1988. by Michael I. Asch. Paperback. $22.03 $ 22 03. Only 3 left in stock - order soon. More Buying Choices. $14.00(10 used & new offers).