timing of secularization in Canada, and will be of equal interest to historians of religion and higher education.

Sara Z. Burke
Laurentian University

Ann Vick-Westgate. *Nunavik: Inuit-Controlled Education in Arctic Quebec*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002. Pp. 337.

That education transforms individual and collective lives has long been an assertion both axiomatic and banal. That innovations in the form, content, philosophy, and management of education can be equally transformative is often a less conventionally defensible assumption. One study that may prove the case is to be found in Ann Vick-Westgate's latest work, *Nunavik: Inuit-Controlled Education in Arctic Quebec*. Here she tackles the complex issues surrounding the decolonization of Aboriginal education among the 10,000 Inuit [Eskimo] living in the fourteen remote communities of the Nunavik region of northern Quebec. As a participant in the process that delivered the landmark Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act, and the former Education Programmes Director of the Alaska Native Foundation, Vick-Westgate brings three decades worth of knowledge and credibility to northern Aboriginal issues. In her present work, she tackles a crucial and complex assortment of monumental issues including questions of contrasting paradigms of educational outcomes, the contested physical and ideological ownership of minority schools, Aboriginal attempts to reform (and redefine) education within a wider cultural context, and the relationship between cultural change and educational change.

In *Nunavik*, Vick-Westgate illustrates the myriad ways Inuit Elders, adults, and children – students all – are actively challenging the existing institutional hegemony of formal education delivered by the *Qallunaat* (in Inuktitut, the Inuit language, *Qallunaat* variously translates as *White man*, *European*, *outsider*, or *non-Inuit*). As such, the book has three stated objectives that will be of interest to those who study the history of education: an overview of the history and goals of Inuit-controlled education; an index of contributions based in traditional Inuit cultural values that might assist other indigenous

minorities in their quest to take back education in the future; and an unqualified statement of support of Quebec Inuit in defining education on their own terms. Other readers may be interested in the book as a catalogue of what could very well be the penultimate chapter in the colonial drama, a post-script to a century of Euro-Canadian contact and hegemony.

Profound social change throughout the Canadian Arctic has wrought a high cost on the original peoples of the region. Simply put, no other indigenous group of record in the Americas has endured cultural change as rapidly and as profoundly as the Inuit. For circumpolar peoples, thrust from a bucolic, nomadic cultural orientation based on the extended-family model of seasonal hunting, fishing, and trapping, and herded in two generations toward urbanization and living a wage-labour, Fourth-World existence, the pace and human cost of so-called civilization has been incalculable. Cultural transformation that began with the trickling arrival of Euro-Canadian interlopers in the last decades of the nineteenth century became an invasive avalanche from the 1940s as successive waves of non-Aboriginals swarmed northward, bringing with them the extension of the Canadian nation-state. Canada's northern frontier witnessed a particular form of the fabled white man's burden, and it is debatable whether government mandates were more arrogant than they were aggressive. Combined with health care, housing, and economic development, the arrival and inception of formal education became one of the frontiers and foundations of the extension of the welfare state, if not the Canadian nation itself. Even today, despite numerous experiments in decolonization, education remains largely a comprehensive instrument to transmit and enforce Euro-Canadian ideals, standards, and aspirations to an Aboriginal nation, all in order to fulfil the perceived southern need for social and economic development in the region. For over a century, externally directed formal education has disrupted Inuit lives and disoriented the very students it sought to educate. Through the delivery of teacher-directed models of formal education, it has been the instructor, often parochial and compulsively conventional, who has delivered and enforced a Euro-Canadian ideology of education aimed at the acquisition of skills and knowledge that would, it has been hoped, equip Native students to function at the level desired and required by Euro-Canadian society.

In the contemporary Arctic, many Inuit students and their families routinely identify the unsuitability and the inapplicability of their experience of Euro-Canadian education. Predicated upon a teacher-centred approach to learning, and delivering a culturally incompatible curriculum ("hidden curriculum"), all the while maintaining a compulsory and disciplined classroom dynamic, the Euro-Canadian school is often little more than a factory of colonial tutelage. Further,

education in the Canadian Arctic remains uncharacteristically anti-Inuit, often primarily based on a system typified by implied and demonstrated deference both to those adults present in the classroom (non-Inuit teachers, themselves often sojourning southerners) and those who are absent (the principal, administrators, etc., based in regional administrative centres like Inuvik, Yellowknife, Iqaluit, and Quebec City). Unlike the Inuit households and hunting camps spread across the tundra landscapes, which by comparison are richly egalitarian and socially relaxed, *Qallunaat*-controlled schoolrooms remain environments of close surveillance, in which teachers continue to hold dominion over their controlled places where an inherent (if unavoidable) degree of routine and regimentation has been imposed on everyone. It is within the past and present context of the Arctic classroom that *Nunavik* opens.

Vick-Westgate begins by offering an overview of educational change in the post-colonial Arctic, shifting quickly to deliver a brief historical sketch of Nunavik, including an outline of European contact and the concomitant cultural upheavals that were to follow. It was with the signing and implementation of a regional land-claim agreement with the governments of Quebec and Canada – the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) – that the Nunavik Inuit struck the Aboriginal-controlled Kativik School Board (KSB). The first Inuit-controlled school board in Canada, the KSB "was charged with forging a new system out of the existing federal and provincial schools, including reworking the instructional programme and replacing the physical plants" (p. 85). Indeed, this was no easy feat when considering the dictates of Arctic logistics, the need to involve Elder "tradition bearers," and the requirement to strike and deliver culturally inclusive staff training programs for Inuit and *Qallunaat* teachers and their school-support workers. *Nunavik* is an impressive record of the lengthy and trying struggle for Aboriginal autonomy, and Vick-Westgate delivers a comprehensive register of critical pathways to community-controlled education and guidelines for mobilizing stakeholders and "getting things done." As a handbook to building minority-controlled education strategies, policies, and procedures, the current work is impressively resourceful.

An aged but fitting maxim in circumpolar studies has long posited the over-representation of Inuit in popular and academic canons – *Never was so much written, by so many, about so few*. As the object of *Nunavik*, the Inuit themselves are new to neither academic inquiry nor the Western gaze, and lamentably Ann Vick-Westgate is no exception. Her admiration, romance, and fascination with the Inuit is palpable in this book. She professes great respect for the Inuit, but leaves readers uncertain as to just why they should share her enthusiasm. Additionally unclear is her fluency (or lack thereof) with

the elements of what she describes as "traditional Inuit education," as the cultural context of formal education in Inuit lives is not made apparent here. As well, she seems to confuse education with socialization and conflate skills with values, while not realizing that the former is literate-based, individualized, institutional, episodic, and formal; the latter a process often orally focused, collective, communal, continuous, and unceremonious. This may be a fatal deficiency: in Inuit communities, past and present, all manner of socialization is learner-centred in the extreme. Indeed, it is through social apprenticeship, individual technical exploration and experimentation, playful discovery, and the continuous, if not spontaneous, search for Elders, children, and adults who can pass on a needed skill, that the critical corpus of knowledge is obtained, shared, and delivered to future generations – not in the regimented and hierarchical environment of the *Qallunaat* schoolroom.

General readers may stumble with the pace at which she presents the ethnography and ethnohistory of the Inuit of northern Quebec, leaving many without a requisite body of cross-cultural background to digest what is to follow. Others may become confused when Vick-Westgate conveniently blends circumpolar case-studies, leaving the reader to homogenize Inuit from Greenland, Alaska, and Canada, past and present, across an inescapably vast transnational landmass encompassing seven countries and dozens of indigenous groups. The contemporary Inuit reality is not, as she casually suggests, the struggle for Inuit to accommodate two worlds – the traditional and the modern spheres. Rather, the contemporary circumpolar existence is steeped in the acute necessity to straddle multiple worlds, where the majority now live in urban areas and Aboriginal territory is increasingly coveted for mega-project resource development in an ever energy-hungry world. Other readers may come away not entirely certain as to just what it is that the people of Nunavik desire from formal education: what purpose does it play in contemporary Inuit lives and communities? How does the KSB define and measure culturally appropriate education? Had she undertaken more first-hand cross-cultural contact and community-based ethnography beyond what she describes in the introduction as a brief "field trip" – and to only three of the fourteen communities of the region – she might have been able to include a greater degree of detail, thus conveying a higher level of cultural legitimacy here. Indeed, selected life-histories, comprehensive interviews, community surveys, and a "snow-level" ethnography of day-to-day life in rural northern Quebec might complete an otherwise inchoate scholarship. At another level, *Nunavik* seems without a discernable flow to the text, leaving the book lacking a narrative consequence. In places the text scarcely seems to have an author, rather appearing more a collection of self-assembled catalogues of

meeting minutes, policy directives, community consultation reports, and program vision statements. By way of example, in the final thirteen pages of chapter five ("The Kativik School Board: the first 10 years"), the reader tackles no less than six sets of fulsome lists and three lengthy (two-page) quotations.

However, despite any shortfalls, *Nunavik* makes a solid case for Inuit-controlled education. In the final analysis, Vick-Westgate's commitment to the Inuit students and education stakeholders in Arctic Quebec is undeniable; her desire for a return to Inuit community-based education is as laudable as it is palpable. For those seeking a roadmap of the cultural and institutional repatriation of education in a rural (remote) region, *Nunavik: Inuit-Controlled Education in Arctic Quebec* will be an invaluable inventory of critical pathways, policy models, community protocols, and local initiatives. For others, focused more on the historical and cultural context of minority-controlled education, then and now, it may be a disappointment.

M.J. Whittles
Thompson Rivers University

Stéphane Castonguay et Camille Limoges. *François Blanchet. Tome 1 : l'étudiant et le savant.* Montréal, VLB éditeur, 2005, 396 pages.

Stéphane Castonguay et Camille Limoges ont à leur palmarès de nombreuses réalisations : professeurs, chercheurs, conférenciers, auteurs et collaborateurs de longue date dans la diffusion d'articles et d'ouvrages scientifiques. Si Stéphane Castonguay est titulaire, depuis 2003, de la Chaire de recherche du Canada en histoire environnementale du Québec, à l'UQTR, Camille Limoges, un pionnier de l'histoire des sciences au Québec, est considéré comme le père de la politique moderne québécoise en matière de sciences et de technologie. La recherche et la diffusion de l'histoire des sciences constituent pour eux une priorité.

Cette étude sur François Blanchet s'inscrit logiquement dans leur démarche scientifique. Publié chez VLB éditeur, le premier tome de *François Blanchet* n'est pas ce qu'on pourrait appeler un ouvrage facile, d'abord en raison de la complexité du sujet, mais également dans sa facture, plus familière aux spécialistes, étudiants et chercheurs