

those books, Limbaugh has established close correlation between his reading pattern and the evolution of the narrative. It is a revealing study that takes nothing away from the final version provided in the last chapter.

Both journeys, the one taken by Muir and Stickeen, and the one taken by Limbaugh, an examination of the creative process, are memorable. Anyone interested in wilderness philosophy, John Muir and his writing, a good adventure story, glaciers, or a fine example of scholarship will enjoy this book. (Pamela Davis, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

FREEZE FRAME: ALASKA ESKIMOS IN THE MOVIES. Ann Fienup-Riordan. 1995. Seattle: University of Washington Press. xxi + 234 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-295-97397-8. \$US29.95.

Freeze frame: Alaska Eskimos in the movies provides a history of the representation and, more crucially, the misrepresentation of Eskimos in the cinema. Central to Ann Fienup-Riordan's thesis is the claim that an archaic and culturally indeterminate Eskimo stereotype has often stood in for its modern, culturally diverse, counterpart. From the early part of the century, the fiction of the Eskimo with 'igloo, parka, polar bear, implacable gods, and a frozen clime' (page 71) was frozen irrevocably onto single frames of film. Even such a classic early film as Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the north* (1922), which offered a 'realistic portrayal of Eskimos,' was little more than a fiction of its director (page 48).

The historical gloss of these images gave the false impression that contemporary Eskimo culture was somehow frozen in the past. The Eskimo was misrepresented as the quintessential 'noble savage,' about to make contact with an already sullied western civilisation. Generations of subsequent Hollywood filmmakers embraced the erroneous stereotype, denying the many decades of cultural and technological exchange between Eskimos and other cultures. Instead, Hollywood replicated, honed, and perpetuated its preferred Eskimo stereotype until it solidified in popular consciousness as the reality of contemporary Eskimo culture. Considered alongside the case of the American Indian, this treatment of Eskimos is far from unique, but it does illuminate the processes by which ethnic stereotypes are created and accepted by other cultures, even in the face of contemporary evidence.

The Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson, for example, recognised that in *Nanook*: 'the action was acting, the costumes had been designed, that scenes had been rehearsed' and yet such misrepresentations still proved to be attractive and enduring in popular culture (page 49). Hollywood directors were not explorers, ethnographers, nor anthropologists, but their visual images were more potent, carried more cultural authority, and were more pervasive than the word of experts. Although making movies never has been and never can be the art of accurate representation, such images have had an astonishing power to be

misleading, permitting their generators to make strange, short-sighted pronouncements. The majority of filmmakers, like William Van Valin, for example, revelled in the exotic, emphasising Eskimo strangeness, and condescendingly regarding Eskimos as childish, cheerful, and simple. Others, like Robert Flaherty, stressed their resemblance to us, but emphasis lay always in ignoring 'Eskimo reality in favour of their pure past' as an unspoiled mirror-image of our own sullied society (page 52).

In *Freeze frame*, it is this subtle art of deception that the author brings to the reader's attention. Film is imprinted not only with visual images, but also with the prejudices and cultural values of its users. Film cannot pretend to show the world as it is, but only how the filmmaker would like it to be, leaving authors like Fienup-Riordan to reconstruct the history of those who controlled the image. In this respect, her work is excellent, including biographies of directors and actors, and exhaustive plot résumés. She offers a very detailed analysis ranging from the attitudes of early Hollywood filmmakers to their myth-making descendants, creators of such present-day productions as *Northern exposure*. The process of Eskimo misrepresentation, it would seem, is still very much alive.

Fienup-Riordan invites the reader to consider the possibility that such dated Eskimo misrepresentations and their authority should seem naive to us now. Paradoxically, this is where the book rests on slightly shakier foundations. In these changing times, when Yup'ik and Iñupiaq peoples have appropriated media tools to determine their own self-image, there could be a revisionist tendency to go too far the other way. The author levels criticism at the film *The savage innocents* (1960), starring Anthony Quinn, because it contained no 'real Eskimos' (page 5). Yet, one is left to wonder what 'real' Eskimos are, and whether they would have been any more successful than 'pretend' Eskimos at representing themselves in this Hollywood-driven picture.

In the foreword to the book, Gary Fife refers to *Freeze frame* puzzlingly as part of 'the knowledge bank of information that can be trusted' (page ix), as though it is possible to recover a 'true history' of Alaska (page x). Such a project may seem laudable, but is, regrettably, impossible. Like all history, the 'reality' and 'truth' of the Eskimo is no more than a social construct for Eskimo and westerner alike. Witness the case of Ray Mala, son of an Iñupiaq mother and a Jewish-American father who is claimed by the author as 'The first Alaskan Eskimo Film Star' but not the first Eskimo/American film star.

Nevertheless, the desire for cultural self-determination is clearly valid and intelligible in the face of a persistent, perhaps ignorant, desire to rely too heavily on Eskimo stereotypes. The cheerful inanities of such films as Steven Seagal's *On deadly ground* (1994), with its quota of 'heavy' looking Eskimos, and 'Igloo-shaped sod houses' are more obviously ludicrous than in the past, but are still demeaning and silly (pages 198–199). To be charitable, they are perhaps best understood in the context of an actor

turned filmmaker whose previous works are not best noted for their *vérité*. It is hard to take the portrayal of Eskimos seriously in a film where the invincible Seagal rides around in buckskins like a bad imitation of Daniel Boone and Clint Eastwood's 'The man with no name' rolled into one.

Such misrepresentations, though, are becoming a little too hackneyed, not to mention damaging, crass, and overtly misleading. In the face of such a cinema, where created myth, it would seem, is still preferable to any semblance of actuality, Fienup-Riordan's achievement is her recognition that differing cultural perceptions not only exist, but co-exist, in a way that should be illuminating for all concerned. Her careful exposure of the processes through which naive westerners have been taught by film to perceive Eskimos, is worthy of our attention. (Ian Higginson, Centre for History and Cultural Studies of Science, Rutherford College, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX.)

THE ICE-AGE HISTORY OF NATIONAL PARKS IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS. Scott A. Elias. 1996. Washington, DC, and London: Smithsonian Institution Press. ix + 170 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-56098-524-0. £13.25.

This book is the second in a series that details the Quaternary history of several regions within the United States (the first being *The ice-age history of Alaskan national parks*). The aim of the series is to educate the non-specialist reader in aspects of Quaternary science that are of specific relevance to the areas in question. In doing this, it is hoped that the reader will gain an awareness of the natural world in these places. This book is not intended to be used for textbook purposes, nor is it sufficient in terms of field examples to be regarded as a tour guide. However, it provides an interesting overview, written in an informal manner, of the physical processes that acted to shape the landscape, and of the biological issues that relate to the evolution of the modern environment in the national parks of the Rocky Mountains.

The book is split into two sections. The first consists of an introduction to a number of subjects within Quaternary science that are useful, in terms of background knowledge, to the reader to understand the subjects discussed in section two. Information about Quaternary palaeontology and geochronological methods are presented in a way that assumes no previous knowledge of these topics. This section of the book is very similar to the comparable section in the first volume in the series and begs the question whether every book in this series will carry the same first section. In fairness, however, the two books published to date benefit from the inclusion, albeit duplicated, of a simple summary of science relating to the understanding of the last ice age.

Having presented the necessary background information, the book describes the ice-age history of each national park in the Rocky Mountains. It is written in a style that reads as though the author is giving a public lecture. As various stories unfold, there are often interesting tangen-

tial discussions that relate indirectly to the subject matter, but that are fascinating to read nonetheless. This feature of the book is a credit to Scott Elias, whose writing style I find to be thoroughly entertaining. A very useful glossary is provided as an appendix, which will help the lay-person in understanding the text. In addition, a number of publications are cited that give references for readers wishing to know more about the subject.

Readers of this book will acquire an appreciation of the formation of the geomorphology within these parks, and therefore will be educated about geological and glaciological processes that acted, during the past 1.7 million years, to create the dramatic scenery in these regions. The various methods of formation of the numerous lakes that exist in these regions are also discussed.

The text is well supplemented by many instructive diagrams and pictures. Unfortunately, the lack of detailed maps, which could have indicated the exact locations of some of the field examples, will disappoint those attempting to find the features described. The scope of the book does not end with the Earth sciences; Elias also includes discussion on the biological and ecological issues since the last ice age. In addition, he also indicates what is understood about the human and other animal inhabitants of these regions at around the end of the last glacial. In doing this, he describes the transition of the post-glacial world from 10,000 years ago to the present-day situation.

In summary, this book provides the reader with an awareness of the natural world within these unspoilt regions of the United States. Although this is not an academic book, it will be of much interest to visitors who wish to know about the formation and evolution of these majestic regions, and how the floral and faunal communities have dealt with the significant climate change that has occurred since the end of the last glaciation. (Martin J. Siegert, Centre for Glaciology, Institute of Earth Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3DB.)

SHACKLETON'S BOAT: THE STORY OF THE JAMES CAIRD. Harding McGregor Dunnett. 1996. Benenden (School Farm, Benenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN174EU): Neville & Harding. x + 150 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-948028-02-5. £20.00.

The story of the epic voyage of *James Caird* from Elephant Island to South Georgia will be familiar to readers of *Polar Record*. However, that should encourage, rather than deter, them from buying this book. Not only is the journey of 1916 recounted, but, as Sir Vivian Fuchs writes in his foreword (page iv):

Here, for the first time, is the consecutive story of the *James Caird's* survival. Originally she was saved by the Norwegian whalers at South Georgia in 1916. The boat then arrived in Birkenhead in 1919. Thereafter the history of her travels is quite remarkable — Middlesex Hospital, then the Albert Hall, the roof of Selfridges, Ely Place in Frant, Kent, Dulwich College as a gift, the British Polar Exhibition, the National Maritime Museum; and so to her final resting place back at Dulwich