

stuffs from Spanish California, but although Spanish officials let Rezanov take away a cargo of grain, they refused his requests for a regular trade. Disappointed in the practical and scientific results of his efforts, Langsdorff returned to Europe by way of Alaska, Kamchatka, and Siberia, reaching St Petersburg in March 1808.

It is good to have this accessible edition of Langsdorff's book included in the Alaska History series of the Limestone Press, but the editorial policy is open to question at several levels. Both the amount and standard of annotation are inadequate. To read that Chirikov 'was second in command under Vitus Bering on the First Kamchatka Expedition. He also assisted Bering in organizing the Great Northern Expedition from 1733–43' (volume II, page 43, note 2) would seem to reverse the order of things. To be told that Roggeween, who died in 1729, visited Easter Island in 1772 (volume I, page 61, note 4, and volume II, page 280) is carelessness. To discover that Bligh, born in 1754, 'was Captain Cook's sailing master on his second expedition between 1772 and 1774' (volume I, page 60, note 1) is absurd, and suggests that nothing on Bligh more recent than the erroneous entry in the *Dictionary of national biography* (1903) has been consulted. More vexing than such errors at the margins is that little effort has been made to include citations to much recent work in English, which one might reasonably expect in such an edition. The sections on the attempts to provision Russian America from California carry no mention of the work of James Gibson on this subject; the introductory material on Russian activities in the Pacific lacks any reference to the books of Glynn Barratt; even the general editor's volume on Rezanov's mission to California fails to find a place. Finally, the six-page index is the poorest I have seen in a work of this scale. Readers will look in vain for place-names or events relating to the expedition's visit to Japan; they will have to be content with a single, all-purpose entry: 'Japan (Oct 1804–Apr 1805), 161–218.' (Glyndwr Williams, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS.)

THE LANGUAGE OF EMPIRE: MYTHS AND METAPHORS OF POPULAR IMPERIALISM, 1880–1918. Robert H. MacDonald. 1994. Manchester: Manchester University Press. xii + 268 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-7190-3749-2. £40.00.

The language of empire is the latest book in the Manchester University Press 'Studies in Imperialism' series, a steadily growing and continually impressive collection of works that is making a key contribution to the study of imperialism by demonstrating that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this phenomenon was based on much more than political, economic, or military decisions. Imperialism was equally a complex interplay between government and the populace, an interplay that had a wide variety of mediators and interpreters, and that, although it at times led to dramatic displays or jingoistic outbursts, was generally part of a much deeper, more ingrained, and more widespread cultural and intellectual expression in an

era of unrivalled European supremacy and expansion.

As has been shown throughout this series, by the end of Queen Victoria's reign, all levels of British society reflected, were influenced by, and were instrumental in an imperial nationalism that emphasised monarchism, militarism, and cultural superiority *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world. But how were these concepts communicated? How did empire itself gain any popular meaning?

In this book, Robert H. MacDonald has attempted to uncover how the very concept of empire was constructed, imparted, and changed. To do this, he has focused on the role of language — that is, of imperial discourse as a specific style of language with a very powerful and privileged way of communicating — in creating and conveying knowledge, images, and myths. Specifically, he has examined the metaphorical constructions of empire in what he has defined as popular texts — fiction, poetry, popular biographies, juvenile literature, and, to a considerably lesser extent, the press. The author's sophisticated analysis and subsequent interpretation of these documents make the book an unquestioned success as far as it goes. The only question is whether its net should have been cast a little wider.

The subject of the book is one that has direct significance for the exploration of the Arctic and the Antarctic during the 'Heroic Age' of polar exploration. Indeed, the British advances into the far north and south were presented to the public in much the same way, and for many of the same reasons, as the empire's expansion into Africa and Asia. A close reading of the same general sources that MacDonald has used shows how many concepts of empire normally applied to new or developing lands in the tropics are equally related to the polar regions. Unfortunately, from a polar perspective, the author has based all his examples on Africa and Asia, with little regard for the overall picture of imperialist-nationalist exploration and expansion, which, of course, included the Antipodes, large areas of North and South America, the Arctic, and the Antarctic. In doing this, he not only excludes at least one relevant audience, he also misses the chance to break out of the model so frequently imposed on imperial thought — that linking it directly to only Africa or India. Had the author even tangentially brought in some of the key polar figures of empire — Franklin, Scott, or Markham — his arguments would have been considerably strengthened and broadened. (Beau Riffenburgh, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

IN A CRYSTAL LAND: CANADIAN EXPLORERS IN ANTARCTICA. Dean Beeby. 1994. Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press. xii + 262 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-8020-0362-1. £19.00; US\$29.00.

Some years ago I corresponded with the author of this book in connection with a short paper in which I had brought together, probably for the first time, the names of a dozen Canadian Antarctic explorers. In this paper, I concluded