

into these influences. This book presents the latest results in this area of research, and derives from a major international project named ANTOSTRAT (Antarctica Offshore Acoustic Stratigraphy), started in 1990 under the auspices of the SCAR Group of Specialists on Cenozoic Palaeoenvironments of the Southern High Latitudes. The project involved a data-collection phase, during which 13 countries provided multi-channel seismic data to a library, and the results were presented at a symposium in Siena, Italy, in 1994. The papers in this volume are based on those presented at the symposium. In addition to providing a state-of-the-art account of the geological evolution of the continental margin of Antarctica, the book is intended as a launching pad for future cooperative projects, including offshore drilling on the Antarctic continental shelf (which requires the highest quality seismic data to locate safe drillsites).

The volume consists of three main parts: (1) scientific papers dominated by seismic interpretations; (2) a seismic stratigraphic atlas of some 45 maps in a separate folder of the Ross Sea; and (3) CD-ROMs containing digital maps and seismic data. These data have been provided to help educate students and scientists, and to stimulate cooperative projects, in order to enhance our understanding of the Antarctic geosphere and cryosphere.

The papers are written by leading Earth scientists, especially geophysicists, and may be grouped as follows. Two general papers describe the seismic stratigraphy and marine record from the whole continental margin. Then follow a series of papers dealing with specific areas: five on the Antarctic Peninsula region and five on the Ross Sea. Unfortunately, Prydz Bay, where much work has been undertaken, and other areas are only given limited attention in the general papers. Many papers consider how ice advances and recessions have influenced the seismic stratigraphy and sedimentary facies of the continental shelf, and the significance of these fluctuations in terms of climatic and sea-level change. Although the geophysical interpretations are excellent, the application to interpreting depositional environments is somewhat simplistic, especially in light of modern work on understanding glaciomarine sedimentary processes. The book also contains three appendices, the most useful describing the atlas and the CD-ROM data.

The atlas provides a comprehensive set of well-produced fold-out maps, some in colour, of the Ross Sea. The maps include compilations of bathymetry, seismic 'travel-time,' unconformity depths, and isopachs (thicknesses) of particular seismic units. In addition, numerous fold-out seismic profiles, on which the main structures are indicated, are included. Much of these geophysical data are usefully tied in to drillsites previously cored, including those of the Deep Sea Drilling Project in 1972 and the New Zealand sites of the 1970s and 1980s.

The CD-ROM accompanying the volume is readily installed on a PC. The seismic profiles and maps are clearly depicted in colour on the screen, and there is scope for enlarging certain portions of the former. The bulk of

the information is from the Ross Sea. Given that these data are plotted also on the fold-out maps, most non-specialists will find these more useful, as the authors have highlighted the main faults and unconformities on them.

Overall, this volume represents an important addition to our understanding of the Cenozoic evolution of Antarctica. It is well presented, and the editors are to be congratulated in their compilation efforts. My only quibble is the absence of an index. (M.J. Hambrey, School of Biological and Earth Sciences, Liverpool John Moores University, Byrom Street, Liverpool L3 3AF.)

JOHN MUIR'S 'STICKEEN' AND THE LESSONS OF NATURE. Ronald H. Limbaugh. 1996. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. xviii + 185p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-912006-84-6. \$US22.95.

This is a delightful book on many levels: it is a good adventure story, a fascinating study of John Muir's development as a thinker and writer, and a compelling narrative about the creation of this story.

Stickeen is, at the simplest level, a man-and-his-dog adventure story. One foul morning in July 1880, Muir departed camp to explore the Taylor Glacier in the Gulf of Alaska. *Stickeen*, the camp dog, followed. The two walked for miles, jumped numerous crevasses, and then turned for home as darkness loomed. In this failing light, they suddenly found themselves in a heavily crevassed area, stranded on an island with a deteriorated ice bridge as their only means of escape. How they managed this escape is the climax.

Muir told the story for 15 years and the details changed as the man did — from an explorer who recited a thrilling narrative of his adventure, to a philosopher who imbued the tale with knowledge gained during the intervening years. Both Muir and his publisher, Robert Underwood Johnson of *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, thought that translating the story from an oral to a written one would be a simple task. In fact, it was not until 1897, three years after their initial discussions, that Muir submitted to *The Century Illustrated* what he felt was the completed manuscript.

The original version did not mention the dog or even hint of his presence. Only after Muir revised his 1880 notes did *Stickeen*, named after one of the towns in the area, become a part of the narrative. It is likely that, at the time, Muir did not recognise the dog's importance to the story. Limbaugh likens the creation of this written story to 'a work of art, it was not reality but a version of reality, an interpretation of a single day's adventure rather than a simple description.' It is through this narrative that Muir could express what he could not say publicly. In this popular story, his more radical views on the human/nature relationship could be told as a parable 'on the worth of animals and their importance to mankind.'

Limbaugh traces the development of *Stickeen* through Muir's reading. Muir had a working library of some 1250 volumes, and, because he made notes in nearly 40% of

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