

There was, in fact, little real understanding of the nature of science in the Admiralty, and objectives tended to be more geographical than scientific, although there was some recognition that the attainment of the Pole could not be the ultimate objective of Arctic research. Even in exploration, there was the handicap that the Royal Navy was hidebound in its approach to land travel, failing to learn anything from the Hudson's Bay Company and certainly nothing from the Eskimo. Eventually, the expense of repeated searches for Sir John Franklin and his crew, lost in an attempt to find the Northwest Passage, led the Admiralty to stop support for Arctic exploration for more than two decades. Pressure from scientists for its resumption was resisted on the grounds that the *Challenger* expedition was using all the available money, but in 1874 it became clear that it was necessary to assert British authority in the face of increasing US interest in the far north. The resulting British Arctic Expedition of 1875–76 discovered new coastline, carried out first-rate geological work, and collected extensive magnetic, meteorological, and tidal observations, although it was badly affected by scurvy and failed to reach the Pole.

After this expedition, other bodies came to predominate in exploration of the Canadian Arctic. The Hudson's Bay Company, virtually the sovereign power in these parts until 1870, had given logistical support to many naturalists and had employed meteorologists and collectors. However, it had been inclined to see the Royal Navy as an intruder rather than a contributor to knowledge, and had been little concerned with mainstream science. In the second half of the century, American explorers and scientists pushed along the west coast of Greenland and north through the archipelago. For a time the Smithsonian Institution was a main focus and clearing-house for Arctic science. The major contribution of the US to the International Polar Year of 1882–83, an expedition based at Lady Franklin Bay, Ellesmere Island, went appallingly wrong, but nevertheless produced valuable observations. After the turn of the century, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, more buccaneer than scientist, explored the region in 1908–12. His second-in-command, Rudolph Anderson, organized an impressive array of biological, geological, and geographical studies, and one of his associates, Diamond Jenness, who lived for a time with an Inuit family, later became Canada's leading anthropologist.

A general picture of the physical and biological features of the Canadian Arctic emerged from these diverse ventures and provided a strong basis for Canada's claim to sovereignty over the area. Being mainly descriptive and empirical, it had little impact on general scientific advance. Nevertheless, together with parallel work in the Antarctic, it maintained the holistic outlook, which we are now beginning to recognise as essential for the proper understanding of global processes, through a period in which the reductionist approach became regarded as the only correct one for a scientist. Professor Levere aptly sums up: 'Science, sovereignty, security, native rights, and environmental issues are seen today as interdependent.

The seeds for that interdependence were already germinating in the aftermath of the Canadian Arctic Expedition under Stefansson and Anderson' (page 423). (G.E. Fogg, School of Ocean Sciences, Marine Science Laboratories, University of Wales, Bangor, Menai Bridge, Gwynedd LL59 5EY.)

A YEAR IN LAPLAND: GUEST OF THE REIN-DEER HERDERS. Hugh Beach. 1993. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. xi + 225 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-56098-230-6. US\$29.95; £19.50.

LIVING ON THE LAND: CHANGE AMONG THE INUIT OF BAFFIN ISLAND. John S. Matthiasson. 1992. Peterborough, Ontario; Lewiston, NY: Broadview Press (distributed by Baily Distribution; available through Drake Marketing). 172 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-921149-93-X.

How to write about human cultures is one of the most-debated and problematic methodological issues within contemporary social anthropology. Few anthropologists would claim that absolute objectivity is possible, yet is reflexivity a valid alternative? Should a literary approach be adopted? And has post-modernism meant that, from what the anthropologist writes, the reader now learns more about the anthropologist than the people he appears to be writing about? Indeed, who is anthropology really for, and should it be popularised? There are no ready answers to these kinds of questions, but perhaps anthropologists should at least be making another way of life accessible and real, whatever their writing style.

The authors of these two books, one about the Saami in Sweden, the other about the Inuit of Baffin Island, succeed in doing this. They have chosen to write personalised accounts of their fieldwork experiences, yet, far from being detached spectators, both Beach and Matthiasson are ever present in their texts, acting as guides and helping the reader to see lives as they are lived, or rather as they were once lived. Both books capture a way of life without trivialising or being unnecessarily reflexive, and take as their focus the relationship between Arctic people and their environments.

Beach portrays a year-long journey through Lapland, as he experienced Saami life in the 1970s. His writing style is elegant and lyrical, giving the reader insight into the seasonal movement of Saami herders and their reindeer through the mountains and forests of northern Sweden. But it is also an account of an anthropologist learning about Saami ways, about detail in landscape, and, as well as herding, about fishing and hunting. The book is more travelogue and anecdote than anthropology, although there is room for this kind of writing to stand alongside more heavily academic material.

Matthiasson, on the other hand, compares Inuit life as it was lived on the land in northern Baffin Island in the early 1960s with that of settlement life a decade later. Descriptions of camp life in the 'contact-traditional' period are accompanied by summary accounts of the influence of the whaling era, the implementation of federal

policy, the transition from trading post to settlement, relations between Inuit and white Canadians, and the politicisation of Inuit culture. But again, the reader also learns about Matthiasson arriving in the Arctic as a young anthropology student and about his life with an Inuit family.

Very few books about the north written by anthropologists have made an outstanding contribution to general anthropological theory. Many, however, have added to the vast literature of popular accounts of Arctic peoples. Neither of these two books makes any theoretical claims, nor are they intended to; indeed, Matthiasson says that he 'shied away from discussion of anthropological issues of theory and methodology' (page 158). However, both are good examples of the kind of anthropological literature contributing to an ever-increasing popularisation of anthropology, and will perhaps raise methodological questions about ethnographic writing. This should not be taken as criticism — they are well worth reading. (Mark Nuttall, Department of Human Sciences, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH.)

THE NATURE OF RUSSIA. John Massey Stewart. 1992. London: Boxtree Limited. 192p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-85283-138-3. £18.99.

Throughout the Cold War, reports and rumours of long-term abuse of the Russian countryside by the Soviet government were a cause for concern in the west. It appears that these concerns have been justified, and the true horror of environmental destruction and misuse is beginning to emerge. As recently as April 1993, Russia officially admitted to the dumping of radioactive waste in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. John Massey Stewart's book, based upon three one-hour episodes of 'Survival' shown on ITV in 1992, addresses some of these issues, while at the same time managing to convey a sense of the beauty of Russia and its many indigenous species of plants and animals.

The first chapter gives an overview of Russian history as it has affected the land — from the use of fur-bearing animals as a source of tax beginning in the ninth century (the fur-tribute system began in 859 and lasted for almost 1000 years), through the slash-and-burn techniques used by the first agriculturalists, to the disastrous collectivisation of farms initiated by Stalin in the 1950s. The remaining seven chapters take distinct types of habitat (tundra, taiga, steppe, the Caucasus mountain ranges, the volcanic Kamchatka Peninsula, the Russian far east with its monsoon-like summers and bitter winters, and lakes and rivers). In each, the wildlife is carefully described, and information from history is used to compare the status of flora and fauna today. The author describes the chequered history of the *zapovedniki* (reserves) and *zakazniki* (reserves with limited protection) under a variety of regimes: the first conservation order for game in Russia was in the eleventh century; Peter the Great (1682–1725) ordered afforestation schemes in the southern steppe; Catherine

the Great (1762–1796) abolished these (although she banned hunting between March and June); by 1917, the first six nature reserves were established; in 1951 and 1961, many reserves were abolished; in 1990, there were around 160 reserves, some of which are protected under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.

However, the book not only concerns itself about the effect of humans on the Russian environment, but about the diversity and size of the country and its unexploited wildernesses. The quality of the illustrations in the book is outstanding, and, although this is a book for the general public, the text is informative, detailed, and well-written. (Liz Cruwys, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

GLACIAL MARINE SEDIMENTATION: PALEOCLIMATIC SIGNIFICANCE. John B. Anderson and Gail M. Ashley (Editors). 1991. Boulder: Geological Society of America (Special Paper 261). viii + 232 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-8137-2261-6. US\$47.50.

This Special Paper produced by the Geological Society of America arises from a symposium on glacial marine sedimentation held in Denver in 1988. It consists of 14 papers with the overall aim of elaborating the main differences between glacial marine sedimentation in high polar and more temperate latitudes. The main conclusion is that, although local glacier variability often confuses the issue, there are broad contrasts in the environment of deposition, which are reflected in the sediments. In temperate environments, glacial marine sedimentation is characterized by the presence of tidewater glaciers and abundant meltwater; these produce deltas, fans, stratification, and a dominance of suspension deposits. In polar environments, glacial marine sedimentation is dominated by the presence of floating ice shelves, and there is a near absence of meltwater; thus, there are few deltas, and fans and deposits are typically massive, laminated units dominated by sediment gravity flows.

These conclusions are based on an interesting mix of papers. One group of papers looks at present-day sedimentation in Antarctica and Alaska. Highlights are the various models of sea-shelf sedimentation in Antarctica and the high rates of sedimentation focused at the termini of Alaskan tidewater glaciers ($24 \text{ g cm}^{-2} \text{ d}^{-1}$). Also, it was remarkable to discover that graded sediment couplets form as frequently as twice a day in response to tides. Other papers look at glacial marine sedimentation during the warming stage of the last glaciation in the Canadian high Arctic and the Gulf of Maine. The Maine papers are particularly interesting for their insight into the large volume of sediments associated with the retreat of the Laurentide ice margin as it withdrew from the late-glacial sea, the big eskers, and sub-aqueous fans, and the evidence that the esker deposits within one ridge must be time-transgressive. Finally, there are papers looking at glacial marine sedimentation in the late Cenozoic (Alaska) and detailed discussions of two late Precambrian and two late