

could be protected in the text.' That should raise any reader's eyebrows. What is the virtue of allowing so many of those upon whom the analysis relies routinely to speak off the record? Who are these people, and why do they need to be shielded from the reader?

The author finds fault with journalists and purveyors of media, but seems unclear about her own place in that world. Is she an academic, an advocate for northern native people, a critic of non-natives living in the north, or an anecdotist? This seems like neither an academic book nor a careful reporter's summary — either of which would eschew unattributed sources, and each of which demands more coherent organization of the material.

One final point may serve to advise readers of my own perspective. I will admit that I read Aila's discussion of Alaska's *Tundra Times*, professor Lael Morgan, and the *Anchorage Daily News* with particular interest, since I was the editor of the Anchorage paper during that period, a job I held between 1983 and 1995.

Relying yet again on unnamed sources, Aila reports that 'tribal editors, writers and publishers' were critical of mainstream journalists winning prizes for 'mostly negative, inadequately researched portrayals of Native American people, issues and communities' — a clear reference to reporting on suicide and alcoholism among Alaska natives for which the *Daily News* won the 1989 Pulitzer Prize gold medal for public service. While there is no way to contradict her unnamed sources, I would point both Aila and readers who care about accuracy to the dozens of named Alaska natives included in that multi-part series, and to the numerous Alaska native health and welfare organizations that purchased thousands of copies of reprints for use in village alcohol-awareness programs. (Howard Weaver, *The Sacramento Bee*, 2100 Q Street, Sacramento, CA 95816, USA.)

**NORTH WITH FRANKLIN: THE LOST JOURNALS OF JAMES FITZJAMES.** John Wilson. 1999. Markham, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside. xx + 308 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-55041-406-2. Can\$27.95.

After Sir John Franklin's expedition in search of a Northwest Passage parted from the last whaling ships in Baffin Bay and entered the complex archipelago from which it would never escape, newspapers in Britain reported the last news brought back from Disco about the progress of HMS *Erebus* and *Terror*. Among the published documents were several letters from Commander James Fitzjames, captain of HMS *Erebus*, dated 7 June to 11 July. They were not official messages, couched in terms designed to please the Admiralty or exaggerate the achievements of the writer, but personal letters of a frank and informal nature, describing small but colourful incidents. They were interesting, readable, and optimistic in tone, so much so that they were later printed in the *Leader*, reprinted in *Nautical Magazine*, and issued as a pamphlet. The adventure was beginning; soon the ships would be on their own, threading their way through uncharted Arctic channels towards Bering Strait and the Pacific, capping centuries of effort.

There was no further news from the expedition. The extensive search for Franklin, which went on for a dozen years and ended with the discovery on King William Island of pathetic remains of the men, their equipment, and two terse notes, is a central theme in Arctic history — too well known to be summarized here. But because it did not reveal any detailed written records such as ship's log books, official dispatches, personal letters, or private journals, what actually happened after July 1845 is still almost entirely unknown. That gap cannot be bridged by any amount of archival research or Arctic fieldwork, unless, of course, the written records of the expedition come to light.

Yet, in a sense, the gap *has* been bridged by John Wilson in this compelling book of fictionalized history. He imagines that Fitzjames continued to write letters as the ships entered Lancaster Sound, encountered a barrier of ice in Barrow Strait, circumnavigated Cornwallis Island, wintered in the lee of Beechey Island, and pushed on to the scene of the disaster. His letters provide a detailed account of the expedition during a period of four years — the only surviving narrative of events. (Wilson's Fitzjames had the good sense to wrap the precious documents in sailcloth and cache them in a safe place, where they have subsequently been discovered.)

What Wilson has done is to assume the persona of Fitzjames and provide for us, through careful research and creative imagination, the letters he might well have written when the expedition was completely isolated. He has mimicked Fitzjames' literary style and continued the sorts of observations contained in the real letters (shipboard life, impressions of his fellow officers, and so on), while adding supposed events and imagined interpersonal relationships. The result is very convincing.

To be successful, a historical novel must project a realistic sense of period and place. While an author is free to exercise his imagination and creative talents in characterization and plot, he has to do so within the historical context. People, their clothing, diet, manners, and speech, must appear to belong to the era and the locality in which the novel is set. Landscapes, buildings, vehicles and other items of material culture must seem appropriate. The historical novelist is re-creating a geography of the past. In this, Wilson succeeds brilliantly. The letters paint vivid pictures of Arctic lands and seas, snow and ice, animals and plants. They describe the environment of the ship itself and what goes on within it. The gunroom conversations of the officers reveal their opinions on contemporary notions of Arctic geography — the possibility of an open polar sea, the distribution of land between Barrow Strait and Bering Strait, the best route of escape if they are inextricably beset.

Whereas we tend to perceive the tools and methods of the Franklin era as crude, antiquated, and ineffective, Fitzjames' letters give us the vastly different view held by Franklin and his men at the time. They were proud to belong to the best-equipped expedition ever to leave the

shores of Britain. They boasted about their steam engines, screw propellers, water desalinization devices, and foods preserved in airtight cans. They saw themselves as vanguards of a highly sophisticated society in which towns were already linked by rail networks, and were being connected by a system of telegraph communication. There was even talk of laying a submarine cable across the Atlantic! Fitzjames and Lieutenant James Fairholme mused about the fascinating possibility that it might one day be possible to send a message rapidly all round the world by wire. Would there ever come a time, they wondered, when a ship in Arctic seas could somehow communicate with civilized places?

To summarize the book would give away too much and deprive readers of the pleasure of making their own discoveries. It is enough to say that Fitzjames describes the disintegration of the expedition before he writes his last words (and reveals a long-kept secret) on 26 August 1849.

The book's dust cover features a watercolour by Samuel Gurney Cresswell, one of the many naval officers who went looking for Franklin a few years later. Illustrations in the text are from an obscure book on exploration published 30 years later, showing the Arctic as publishers like to show it — dark, threatening, and dangerous, with quaint native inhabitants and fierce animals. I think it would have been more effective to carry the Fitzjames fiction a step further and illustrate his letters with the sketches he might have made of subjects relating specifically to the expedition — the ships, the officers, their clothing and equipment. These could be based on contemporary pictures in newspapers and periodicals (for example *Illustrated London News* published a sketch of the very cabin occupied by Fitzjames). A map inside the covers is entitled 'Fitzjames' Arctic 1845–1849,' but this is a little misleading. Based on modern maps, it shows the delineation of coasts as we know it now (and of course as it really was at the time), but it does not portray the Arctic as Fitzjames and his colleagues knew it. *Their* Arctic was a region of mystery in which the true distribution of land and sea was still unknown, and it is disappointing that Fitzjames did not paste into one of his letters a map of the period to show what Europeans knew about the Canadian Arctic and what they did not. Considering that the expedition was observing and charting some coastlines for the first time (the northern part of Cornwallis Island, for instance), he might have been tempted to draw sketch maps in his letters to show these regions, and I feel sure he would have drawn a sketch map of Beechey Island to show the storehouses and other buildings they built, the place where they buried their dead, and the position of the wintering ships in the bay.

John Wilson, a resident of British Columbia, has previously written highly praised books of historical fiction for children. This book, aimed at an adult audience, maintains his high standards, and will be a fascinating read for anyone interested in Arctic history. (W. Gillies Ross, Department of Geography, Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Quebec J1M 1Z7, Canada.)

**THE FRESHWATER BUDGET OF THE ARCTIC OCEAN.** E.L. Lewis (Editor). 2000. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. xxii + 623 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-7923-6439-2. £132.00; US\$208.00; NLG 425.

'You can't always tell a book by its cover' is a common axiom of literature, in all its various guises. This axiom certainly holds true for the 623-page tome entitled *The freshwater budget of the Arctic Ocean*. The philosophy, depth, and breadth of this marvelous book is rather poetically encapsulated in the preamble by the multi-talented Mark Serreze:

*The water that runs to the Arctic sea,  
Ought to be balancing P minus E.  
While all of us know this has to be true,  
Why then, we ask, are our budgets askew?*

The other verses that Serreze has penned are equally appealing as an eloquent expression of the complexities and associated challenges faced with the task of summing up the current knowledge of the freshwater budget of the Arctic Ocean. From my perspective the task these scientists set for themselves is nothing short of extraordinary. The book successfully captures the current state of knowledge, and the various areas requiring investigation, in each of the primary components of the Arctic system that affect, or are affected by, the freshwater flux within the Arctic Ocean.

The book takes what is commonly considered to be an 'Arctic systems' perspective. We all know that the Earth-atmosphere system in the polar regions consists of a series of complex interactions amongst the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere. The authors of this text take on the task of examining the role of the freshwater flux within the first three of these spheres. Given the magnitude of this task, I can hardly be critical of them for restricting their work to the physical system by ignoring the biosphere.

The book begins with the science drivers associated with freshwater fluxes in the Arctic system. The primary pathways for the influx of freshwater are defined as precipitation (solid and liquid), terrestrial hydroclimatology, evaporation, and oceanic advection (including sea ice). The timing, magnitudes, and processes associated with these pathways are investigated from the perspective of the ocean-sea-ice-atmosphere system and in particular the role that the atmosphere and hydrosphere play in defining the processes that control ocean circulation.

The book provides valuable measurements of state variables for various components of the system; indicates the current understanding of several of the most important processes controlling this system; critically examines issues relating to areas of controversy within this broad disciplinary field; provides several chapters that review and illustrate aspects of the current scientific toolbox (modeling, reanalysis data, remote sensing, station data, etc); and provides the necessary background and thematic linkages amongst the 24 chapters in the text.

The first two chapters of the text provide a broad overview of the hydrosphere and the atmosphere, focusing