

SEARCHING FOR THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION: THE ARCTIC JOURNAL OF ROBERT RANDOLPH CARTER. Edited by HAROLD B. GILL, Jr. and JOANNE YOUNG. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1998. ISBN 1-55750-321-4. 201 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, glossary, bib., index. Hardbound. US\$28.95.

Books about the Arctic grew increasingly popular during the nineteenth century, especially at mid-century as the saga of the search for the lost Franklin expedition began to unfold. Particularly popular were explorers' first-person accounts of their experiences, often illustrated with dramatic engravings of spectacular Arctic land- and seascapes. In 1859 Mudie, the British lending library, stocked 1000 copies of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, 2500 of George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, and 3000 of Leopold McClintock's *Voyage of the 'Fox' in Arctic Seas*.

The texts of such books usually combined retrospective narrative and description with supposed actual quotations from on-the-spot journals. The quotations from journals, however, had usually been carefully edited by both author and publisher before they saw print. In the case of British naval officers they had also been pre-censored, so to speak, because those officers knew that their superiors were likely to scrutinize their journals at the conclusion of an expedition. Honesty and indiscretion about the nastier aspects of those long months, often years, in the Arctic—the frictions among the men, the mistakes made, the horrors witnessed, the pain and fear experienced—were frowned on by the nineteenth-century equivalent of naval public relations specialists. And anyway, as Pierre Berton has commented, given the nature of naval officers “the stiff upper lip prevailed.”

Only in recent decades have many manuscript journals of explorers been published unedited, printed as they actually were written. One of the latest is the journal of Robert Randolph Carter, First Officer of the *Rescue*, the smaller (81 tons) of two small brigs on the 1850 United States Grinnell Expedition in search of the missing Franklin Expedition. During the fall, winter, and spring of 1850–51, there was a considerable gathering of ships along the southern coasts of Devon and Cornwallis Islands—seven British and the two American. The original plan was for the ships to spread out, searching in all directions for signs of Franklin (the Americans initially intended to probe northwards into Smith Sound). But ice conditions finally forced them into the one area and more or less locked them in, although the two American ships finally were carried by the ice all the way from Wellington Channel out into Baffin Bay. A major discovery was made, and Carter was present at the time: relics and three graves of the Franklin Expedition were found on Beechey Island. Other than participating in that discovery, the Americans accomplished little, except that all of them survived—no small accomplishment, given their inadequate ships and equipment. Much to Carter's relief, they did not attempt to stay over for a second winter.

Carter's account demonstrates both the strengths and the weaknesses of unrevised journals, written (as most of them were) by men who made no pretense of being professional writers. There are moments of candour that reveal how the strains of Arctic expeditions abraded their members, and there are bursts of spontaneity that somehow make events that occurred long ago seem real and immediate; but there also is much cursory recording of dull fact in pedestrian prose. Before and after the Grinnell Expedition, Carter led an interesting life as a scion of a distinguished southern family and as a naval officer, but his mind as it is revealed in the journal is not particularly interesting, and it takes an interesting mind to write an interesting journal, even if the events recorded are exciting.

Carter was undoubtedly intelligent, but he is usually unimaginative when he sets pen to paper. Paradoxically, that might be one of the appealing aspects of the journal. He was a sort of everyman, and we recognize what probably would have been our own reactions to things, even though we might be embarrassed to admit it. Most of us probably would keep journals as limited as his. He complains a great deal, especially early in the journal: he frets about his rank on the expedition; he despises the little *Rescue* as it wallows its way to Greenland; only two months into the expedition, he thinks that they should return home before winter; he often questions (but not to their faces) the decisions of his superiors. When he goes aboard the English naval ships, he is jealous of their comfort in comparison to the discomfort of the *Rescue* and the *Advance*. He says little about the British officers themselves, except at one point to suspect them unjustifiably of hiding evidence of Franklin's plans from the Americans. He does not try to describe or analyze the characters of his fellow explorers. Although he is workmanlike in describing problems in Arctic seamanship, he expresses little aesthetic or emotional reaction to the power, beauty, and terror of the Arctic phenomena that he witnessed.

The limitations of his journal can be clearly seen when it is compared to Elisha Kent Kane's published account of the same expedition. Certainly it is unfair to compare a carefully written published book to an unedited manuscript journal, but the differences between the two are not merely the result of the difference between immediate as against retrospective writing. Kane, a general scientist in the nineteenth-century vein, had a wide-ranging and imaginative mind. He was curious and knowledgeable about all natural phenomena and also steeped in literature and art. Even allowing for editing before publication, the journal entries quoted in his book are richer in facts, emotions, insights, and descriptions. One senses that Kane kept his journals partly for the pleasure of doing so, whereas Carter kept his as a matter of duty.

The editors' introduction and epilogue to Carter's journal give an adequate summary of his life and career before and after the Grinnell Expedition, and also sketch the

general story of Arctic exploration during the century. They make little mention of Kane's book, not taking advantage of the chance to compare the two works. There are a few minor errors. They assume that Henry Hudson's son was with him on his last fatal expedition, but, in spite of legend, that can be doubted; they place Stefansson at Dartmouth College in the 1920s, but he did not go there until decades later; they call this reviewer a "scientist," but he gave up the sciences in despair when he failed freshman chemistry. The illustrations include photographs of Carter's family and its famous estate in Virginia, the Shirley Plantation, as well as some of Carter's sketches made during the expedition. The only maps are reproductions of nineteenth-century maps that are very hard to read. Any book on Arctic exploration, especially exploration of the complex Arctic Archipelago, should have at least one map designed specifically to clarify the text, and the lack of such a map in this case is a serious shortcoming.

*Chauncey C. Loomis*  
*Professor of English, Emeritus*  
*Dartmouth College*  
*P.O. Box 58*  
*Stockbridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*  
*01262*

**INUIT MORALITY PLAY: THE EMOTIONAL EDUCATION OF A THREE-YEAR-OLD.** By JEAN L. BRIGGS. Department of Anthropology, Memorial University of Newfoundland. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. 275 p., maps, appendix, notes, glossary, bib. Hardbound. Cdn\$30.00.

Jean Briggs made an indelible mark in anthropology with her 1970 publication, *Never in Anger*, a remarkable account of fieldwork with the Utkuhikhalingmiut around Chantrey Inlet in the Canadian Northwest Territories. No less inspiring and of equal importance is her latest monograph based on fieldwork with another Inuit group, the Qipisa of Cumberland Sound, Baffin Island. Linking the older work with the new is the explication of Inuit socialization, but the most recent work is simultaneously narrower and broader in its presentation. On the one hand, Briggs cranks down the microscope to examine the multi-layered, complex meanings exuding from common, ordinary scenes presented as "plots and dramas" she observed between one child, Chubby Maata, and significant others in her social world, including the anthropologist. On the other hand, her depiction is a movable feast: her meticulous accounting lays bare the detail of the interaction, allowing for any number of possible readings and interpretations. The resulting near-chaos is reined in through Briggs's adept discussion of her own understanding, based on her long-term acquaintance with these and other Inuit groups and individuals, of the most likely meanings and motives contained in the dramas.

Disclaiming in the introductory chapter the aim of producing a holistic portrait in her book, Briggs envisions the enterprise of cultural research as deriving an approximate understanding of *processes* by which meaning is created for individuals and social groups. The author demonstrates the difficulty of extracting critical data when acting as both an empathetic outside observer (and imperfect note taker) and inside participant. While psychoanalytic theory informs the account, as do many other perspectives, none dominates the analysis more than Briggs's recounting of her own insights. Paradoxically, although mention of grand theory or universals is largely absent in this writing, it could be said that germination of a theory of culture and emotion underlies this work, as shown in the following statement (p. 13):

I expect to find, among Inuit as among ourselves, that at the deepest level all action and all motives derive from emotions—hungers, fears, angers, attachments; that emotions are shaped by powerful experiences, which are culturally and individually variable; that motives are by no means all conscious and many meanings cannot be articulated at will—though some may be consciously recognized when pointed out, even when they cannot be called to mind spontaneously; and, finally, that motives rarely if ever come singly but instead are multiple, "overdetermined," and very often contradictory.

The bulk of the chapters take the reader through description and analyses of the major recurring scenes for "babies" on the cusp of the transition to the status of child; these scenes are sequenced from the less complex to those with more elaborated themes. Most chapter titles contain key questions or phrases heard in interchanges with young children: "Because you're a baby"; "Are you a baby?"; "Want to come live with me?"; "Who do you like?"; "I like you, I don't like you." Briggs asserts that by questioning children, adults cause them to think about core emotional issues, including the awareness of being adored (as well as highly vulnerable) in the "baby" status, the importance of controlling feelings of greed and anger, and the recognition of dependence on loved ones for care and sustenance. Although this portrayal implies that Inuit training is at least partially consistent and cohesive, Briggs shows that the system contains many contradictions and strains from within.

I consider the major contribution of this book to be not only its value as a model for the conduct of fieldwork, but its frank and open treatment of the process of interpreting that experience. An important secondary issue is the extent to which her portrait of Inuit socialization of morals and emotions is a "foundational" template for the Inuit in a more general sense. The author implies that the culled core questions resonate with Inuit groups across the Arctic, including those living in modern Inuit communities (p. 7, 11, 16). Perhaps they do, but this notion requires verification. It is important to keep in mind that Briggs resided