

stocks would have been preserved for biological posterity and the ensuing slaughter would have been prevented.' Bjørn L. Basberg (Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Helleveien 30, NO-5045 Bergen, Norway.)

CIRCUMPOLAR LIVES AND LIVELIHOOD: A COMPARATIVE ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY OF GENDER AND SUBSISTENCE. Robert Jarvenpa and Hetty Jo Brumbach (Editors). 2006. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. xiv + 330 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-8032-2606-3. £35.00. doi:10.1017/S0032247407246340

As an undergraduate anthropology student during an era concerned with feminism, heavily influenced by the scientism of cultural materialism, I was taught that the status of women within any given society was a direct consequence of women's contribution to subsistence. For foragers, I learned that the division of labour dictated that men were normally the hunters while women gathered plant foods, and that in northern zones where the climate dictated that diets contained few plant foods, women's status was very low indeed. As a young feminist, I found the sweeping certainty of such analysis troubling and unfair, but could not, at the time, recognise that my discomfort lay in the apolitical basis of cultural materialism.

Thirty years later, through the efforts of Robert Jarvenpa, Hetty Jo Brumbach, and their colleagues and contributors to this collection, it is also clear that the claims that northern women did not hunt and/or were insignificant contributors to subsistence were simply wrong. Northern women were, and in many cases continue to be, intimately and actively involved in food procurement. *Circumpolar lives and livelihood* reports on a controlled comparison of gender and subsistence work in four circumpolar societies. Brumbach and Jarvenpa directed the project and conducted ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological research in a Chipewyan community in sub-Arctic Canada. Their collaborators — Carol Zane Jolles, Elena Glavatskaya, and Jukka Pennanen — worked among Iñupiaq Eskimos (Little Diomed Island, Alaska), Khanty (western Siberia, Russia), and Sámi (Finland), respectively. For each society the ethnographers have written two chapters: the first provides a general cultural overview focussing on gender relations and subsistence practices; the second presents detailed descriptions of two different food procurement activities. Introductory and concluding chapters by Jarvenpa and Brumbach frame the case studies.

In each of the four societies, animal proteins provided significant contributions to the traditional diet. The data presented by the four research teams reveal, however, that both men and women are intensively involved in procuring and processing animals for food. In all four groups, men (at least in modern times) are the ones primarily tasked with obtaining large animals for

food, but women hunt and herd animals as well. Both Khanty and Chipewyan women, through fishing and rabbit snaring, have been responsible for the everyday provisioning of protein foods. Iñupiaq women control and manage food storage and distribution. Sámi women carried the burden of caring for cattle, and Sámi girls were indispensable to all subsistence activities. As Brumbach and Jarvenpa point out, the data presented in the case studies also reveal that the assumption that men are 'hunters' is at least in part a consequence of our only partial understanding of what is entailed in procuring animals for food. 'Men generally shoot the animals. This highly restricted moment in the provisioning process is sometimes narrowly conceptualized by men and women alike, and indeed by Westerners, as "hunting"' (page 55), but that in fact 'the moment of dispatch is but a fleeting fragment in the total enterprise of hunting' (page 289).

It is also critical to recognise how colonialism and geopolitical events have affected subsistence practices, social organisation, and the gendering of tasks. Interviews with consultants of different ages indicate that the current, gendered differences in subsistence work are of relatively recent origin. The establishment of permanent settlements and state services, especially schools, served to restrict the mobility of women and children who previously moved seasonally along with men. Instead, contemporary women engage in subsistence tasks that can be conducted from a home base, and the editors note that '[g]ender differences are encoded in the physical landscape as well. The historical processes of increasing divergence in gender roles and reduction in family mobility have contributed to an increase in a gendered division of space within homesteads and settlements' (page 47).

This is a highly readable and useful study that adds to the understanding of the ways that social relations inhere and are embedded in tasks. The explication of the research methodology and the structured approach to the reporting add to the strength of the combined case studies. I was slightly disappointed with the absence of contextual information in the chapters on the Khanty. We learn almost nothing about the role of the Soviet state in transforming Khanty subsistence practices and social relations or about the effects of hydrocarbon exploitation during the post Soviet era. I found Glavatskaya's statement that Khanty society is 'conservative' and that Khanty gender roles 'have not undergone significant changes' (page 115) difficult to believe, but given the general lacuna of ethnographic literature in English about Siberian peoples it is not easy to evaluate the assertion. In contrast, Jukka Pennanen provides significant information about the relationship between Sámi and the Finnish state and describes the manner in which the state has influenced both Sámi subsistence activities and their gendered practices. For example, he reports that the Sámi community he studied took up and subsequently abandoned cattle raising in response to Finnish laws regarding land tenure. Sámi women were responsible for the care of the cattle, but

transferred their energies to handicrafts production for cash once it was not necessary to keep cattle.

Circumpolar lives and livelihood is a significant contribution to the growing literature about circumpolar peoples that has been made possible by the end of the Cold War. (Pamela Stern, Centre for Sustainable Community Development, East Academic Annex 2100, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, British Columbia V5A 1S6, Canada.)

ROBERT AND FRANCES FLAHERTY: A DOCUMENTARY LIFE, 1883–1922. Robert J. Christopher. 2005. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. xxiv + 453 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-7735-2876-8. \$Can44.95; \$US39.95. doi:10.1017/S0032247407256347

Ask any person with polar interests what they associate with the name Robert Flaherty and the answer will be immediate: *Nanook of the north*. This is the classic film, made in 1922, that chronicles one year in the life of an Inuit family in the Hudson Bay area. When screened, the film has the ability to grip the attention of the viewer and to wring his or her emotions from sadness to hilarity, seemingly within a few seconds, in a way that may be paralleled by no other film. And there is the wonder of how it was made in such difficult circumstances and the skill with which it was done. Cinematography was, in 1922, a technological leap ahead from what it had been in the great days of the heroic expeditions in the south, but, discounting this, many viewers might conclude that Flaherty was even better at his craft than had been Herbert Ponting or Frank Hurley, those two giants of the previous era. An additional point, and one that is fundamental to the film, is that it was made at precisely the time when cinematography had arrived at the level of technological advancement at which it *could* have been made and at which Inuit life *could* be portrayed as it originally was before outside influences became excessively intrusive. As put by the author, the far north was 'in a state of transformation and steep decline from its indigenous ways, while... [cinematography] was in an awkward but nascent ascendancy' (page xiv). They coincided with felicitous results that will endure forever in the canon of great works of the cinema.

But ask the same person what else is associated with the name Robert Flaherty, who he was, and what he did before the making of the film, and you are likely to receive a puzzled smile. For in truth no name so well known to the polar community in general has so few actual facts commonly attached to it, other than the mere four words of the film title.

This book seeks to remedy this deficiency with regard to the period before 1922 when Flaherty leapt into fame on the back of *Nanook of the north*. And it does so not simply by presenting the biography of Flaherty but by employing lengthy extracts from the diaries and other prose writings that he made from 1906 until 1922. The book is, in a sense,

a double biography since the same strategy is adopted with regard to Frances Flaherty, Robert's wife, who was far more than a mere satellite in the filmmaker's career, but a talented person in her own right. She also maintained a diary, and this affords fascinating parallels with the diaries of Flaherty himself.

Flaherty was born in 1884 in Iron Mountain, Michigan, the son of a successful mining engineer, who soon moved to Canada and whose work took him from one mining site to the next, thus preventing the young Flaherty from having a settled home life in one place but giving him a taste for life in remote areas. Flaherty's formal education seems to have been minimal but he did acquire an excellent practical knowledge of geology, mining, and surveying from his father and this stood him in good stead in later years. He travelled widely in northern Ontario and this naturally led him into the area of Hudson's Bay, where he met his first Inuit. He undertook four expeditions to the area on behalf of Sir William Mackenzie, a prominent entrepreneur with mining interests, for whom his father had worked. These were, at the start, primarily geological, and Flaherty's major achievement was the 'rediscovery' of the Belcher Islands. However, Flaherty, who had developed artistic tastes, had become interested in photography and the possibilities offered by the new motion picture business, and Sir William funded the necessary equipment. Flaherty's early effort, film taken in Baffin Island, was destroyed in a disastrous fire in 1918 and so he had to start again. The result was *Nanook of the north*.

Frances Flaherty, whose maiden name was Hubbard, was born into more elevated social circles than those of her future husband, being the daughter of a well-known academic geologist. She attended Bryn Mawr College and met Flaherty in 1903, while she was travelling in Canada. The attraction was immediate but they did not marry until 1914. She was a woman of considerable enterprise and used her comprehensive network of social contacts very much towards the advancement of her husband's career.

The book is organised into chapters each of which has an introduction, setting the scene, and this is followed by long sections from the relevant accounts by Flaherty, many of which were explicitly intended for Frances to read. She is the diarist in the case of one chapter.

Flaherty's diaries were maintained for much of the time in situations of considerable difficulty, during exhausting sledging trips with Inuit companions, for example, and they are extremely informative about the conditions that he encountered. The style improves throughout the sequence until the last, entitled in the book 'The Port Harrison diary.' This was from 14 August 1920 to August 1921 and covers the period during which the film was made. It is a considerable work of literature: the writing is full of 'lyric power and acuteness of observation' as, for example, in the descriptions of the landscape around Cape Smith (page 379). But the main interest of this diary is that in it we meet Nanook