

photographs (a handful of *Curlew* and the vast majority of South Georgia), *Antarctic oasis* has 15 local or sketch maps distributed throughout. Their addition is very welcome and, for me, they were indispensable for locating the Carrs during their many treks and voyages around the island.

The authors are at their best when they describe their extraordinary encounters with the wildlife of South Georgia. Their mingling with elephant seals, Weddell seals, and a variety of penguin species — macaroni, king, and chinstrap — will stir the emotions of even the most experienced travellers and adventurers. Two full chapters are also devoted to the island's albatrosses (wandering, grey-headed, black-browed, and light-mantled sooty) and to other birds such as skuas, petrels, and Antarctic terns. On several occasions, individual birds and seals 'adopted' the Carrs, displaying absolutely no fear of their human neighbours. South Georgia's history — Cook's 1775 landing, Shackleton's crossing in 1916, Larsen and the whaling era, and the Argentine occupation in 1982 during the Falklands War are key examples — is woven appropriately into the narrative.

The publisher has maintained very high standards of quality of production, design, and editing with *Antarctic oasis*. The end maps of South Georgia are excellent, and the photographic printing would be difficult to match. The only thing missing is a list of key works on South Georgia, which I am sure were consulted by the authors in their research; such a list of recommended books would be useful to those readers unfamiliar with the Antarctic and South Atlantic region. In summary, *Antarctic oasis* is a handsome, readable book that will be an important addition to all polar, nautical, and natural history collections. (Lawson Brigham, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

GLOBAL WARMING: CAN CIVILIZATION SURVIVE. Paul Brown. 1996. London: Blandford. 235 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-7137-2602-4. £12.99.

Paul Brown is the environment correspondent for *The Guardian*, a man whose coverage of the various scientific, environmental, and political issues associated with the controversial area of anthropogenically induced climate change, or more specifically 'global warming,' has given him rare insight into the ramifications of the subject. He is a much-respected reporter of the issues that are covered in the growing number of summits, meetings, and symposia given over to the whole environmental issue. The subtitle and opening declaration of the introduction — 'Can civilisation survive the crisis it has created?' — gives an indication of the author's pitch, primarily on the side of those who believe mankind has already done irrevocable damage to the environment, leaving the option of mediating, rather than preventing, the possible devastating effects of global warming. However, Brown's journalistic zeal may be forgiven, for the book is the best general

account of the history, science, and politics of the global-warming debate that this reviewer has yet come across, and there is, as Brown states, much literature on the subject.

The book's introduction begins with the bold statement of the author's belief that global warming is a reality; there is no doubt in his mind that the time for prevarication has long since passed. The subsequent chapters review the background and scientific evidence for this assertion in considerable detail, with a broad discussion of the possible outcome should governments not consider the issue seriously enough to take appropriate action. This, of course, amounts to money being spent, particularly by the more solvent nations of the world, and international agreements being adhered to, with appropriate support given to those less able to implement controls due to financial constraints. Whether having read this account one subscribes to the supposition that disastrous consequences are on their way, or believes that less extreme effects are more likely, will depend on one's evaluation of the evidence. Indeed, one might find the evidence so sensational that it is unconvincing, but there should be no doubt that a closer look at the evidence presented elsewhere just might reveal a grain of truth, and the book's bibliography would be a good place to start. This reviewer was left with no doubt that the time for concerted international action is long overdue, but this must be mitigated by the belief, based on polar research, that mankind has brought about a radical change in climatic and oceanographic patterns.

This account of the global-warming process is at pains to explain the complexity of the global climatic/oceanographic system operating on the planet and the difficulties encountered in making statistically significant predictions of the consequences of uncontrolled discharge of industrial effluents. The review of these effluents, particularly the greenhouse gases and those implicated in the destruction of the ozone layer, is very thorough, but here again the author has shown himself aware of the difficulties likely to be encountered in controlling these substances. There now seems to be broad international agreement that there must be significant reduction in the release of these agents just to maintain present levels of damage. Brown has examined closely whether the current round of meetings and agreements has done enough to reach some sort of acceptable compromise and concludes that the subject is still very much open to discussion. The future implications of global warming as a consequence of disturbances to the natural and life-sustaining process referred to as 'the greenhouse effect' will, of course, depend on the climate model to which one subscribes. Nevertheless, the author points out the fact that all of the climatic models suggest 'some' damage to the environment as a result of a continued lack of control, and his assertion is that the scenario can only deteriorate if the nettle is not grasped before it is too late. However, there is a powerful anti-climate-change lobby that suggests that the climatic models are imprecise, even to the point of being totally wrong, and there have been accusations of model-rigging to secure research

funding. This account suggests that much of this debate is profit-motivated by those keen to oppose politically imposed effluent controls.

The latter chapters of the book are concerned with the political arguments both for and against the imposition of legislative controls based on the current round of international agreements. It would appear that there is a broad political awareness of the importance of monitoring and control of discharging damaging effluents into the environment and the global implications if this is not controlled. Brown is firmly of the opinion that enough has still not been done, and this reviewer tends to agree. However, as a subscriber to the Gaia hypothesis, this reviewer does not believe that mankind has yet reached the point of irrevocable damage and does believe that civilisation will survive. Nevertheless, the book is certainly a convincing argument for anthropogenically induced climate change and, as such, will reinforce the argument that governments should take notice of their scientific advisors when they predict a potential catastrophe.

In conclusion, this book is an excellent introduction to the global-warming debate, with the proviso that the reader is aware of, and takes account of, the wide variety of prediction and opinion that is generally available. The interested reader would do well to follow up on the author's bibliography as an avenue to further research into this diversity of opinion. (Norman Davis, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

BRIEF REVIEW

INUIT, WHALERS AND CULTURAL PERSISTENCE. Marc G. Stevenson. 1997. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. xxii + 400 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-19-541217-6.

Contemporary anthropologists working amongst the Inuit face two major problems: firstly, the classic ethnographies written by the likes of Boas, Rasmussen, Birket-Smith, Jenness, Nelson, and Holm are substantial pieces of work that describe first-hand an almost 'traditional' way of life before extensive contact and modernisation brought profound changes to Inuit society. While the early ethnographic methods employed may be questioned in light of current field techniques, the classic works have often overshadowed more recent anthropological texts simply by virtue of the sheer quality of the data gathered and by its

analysis. In short, work done between the 1880s and the 1920s has been a hard act to follow. Secondly, current debates about ethics and representation played out within a context of the politicisation of Inuit culture make it difficult for the anthropologist to set his or her own research agenda. Increasingly, because the anthropologist is working from a position of advocacy or in an applied context, very little research contributes to more general anthropological theoretical perspectives, although it is often germane to land claims struggles or policy debates.

It is interesting to speculate, therefore, whether Marc Stevenson's book represents a new departure for Arctic anthropology. At a time when the anthropologist is struggling to produce something original, and when Arctic archaeology still revolves around arguments to do with environmental determinism and cultural materialism, Stevenson demonstrates that the historical record and early anthropological accounts of Inuit social structure and ecological relations provide a wealth of data waiting to be analysed. Using the early anthropologists as 'informants' and drawing on the records and accounts of whalers, traders, and others, Stevenson has produced an impressive historical account of change and resilience in Cumberland Sound, Baffin Island, and focuses on the social organisation of the Iglulingmiut and Netsilingmiut. With anthropological debates concerning Inuit kinship and social organisation forming the background, Stevenson draws on both archival material and his own fieldwork experience to argue that, despite change through contact, the two principles of *naalaqtuk* (respect and obedience) and *ungayuk* (closeness and affection) continue to form the basis of Inuit society in Cumberland Sound and Central Inuit social organisation. Encounters with Euro-Americans, particularly in the nineteenth century, did not transform Inuit social structure, but made it more resilient. Thus, Stevenson argues that it is far too simplistic to understand Inuit society in terms of a direct link between environment and people. Rather, Inuit social organisation is a dynamic and complex product of environment, history, and social structure, and that this has been largely ignored by anthropologists and archaeologists. The essence of Stevenson's book is to challenge the environmental determinists on the one hand, and the cultural materialists on the other. In doing so, he suggests a more informed way towards understanding the complexity of historical and contemporary Inuit communities throughout the Arctic.