

Reviews

POLAR REGIONS ILLUSTRATED

POLES APART. Flegg, J. 1990. London, Pelham Books. 192 p, hard cover, illustrated. ISBN 0 7207 1838 4. £18.99.

This work very lavishly illustrated (at least as many colour plates as pages) with photographs by Eric and David Hosking combined with several from classical sources. Although largely concerned with the animal life of both polar zones it has introductory chapters about the geography and history of the regions, and one on the plant life. The work presents a popular account of Arctic and Antarctic natural history with particular attention to the present effects of human activities. It is intended for the non-specialist reader and does not include a bibliography (although eight 'further reading' references are provided). Similarly vernacular rather than Linnean names are used for species and the Imperial system of weights and measures appears.

This treatment leads to a somewhat insubstantial approach to some subjects. A few instances are; Robert Peary's claim to have attained the North Pole is credited without question or any indication of the substantial doubt about it, estimates of whale populations are given without indications of their reliability (or sources), Ny Ålesund is credited as the most northerly town, and the indications of current environmental problems are decidedly simplified. The photographs are of high quality throughout and greatly enhance the attractiveness of the book; many were mainly obtained during several tourist cruises. A proportion are from the Falkland Islands which I consider an unusual extension of the boundary of polar regions. There are Arctic and Antarctic maps, and three pages of index. (R. K. Headland, Scott Polar research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER UK.)

ANTARCTICA: A PORTRAIT

ANTARCTICA, THE LAST FRONTIER. Laws, R. M. 1989. London, Boxtree. 208 p, hard cover, illustrated. ISBN 1 85283 247 9. £14.95.

The author has been involved with Antarctic regions for over 40 years and was Director of the British Antarctic Survey for 14 of these. The book thus has a very comprehensive scientific foundation and is an excellent introduction to the region and its current circumstances. It was produced in conjunction with an Anglia Television programme with the intention to 'bring to as wide a public as possible the uniqueness and importance of the Antarctic, both in its resources and the key role it can play in helping to avert environmental disaster on our planet'. The first chapter gives a description of the physical aspects of Antarctica which is followed by an account of the Southern Ocean. Several chapters on the biology of various systems follow with accounts of the recent research. A

final chapter 'Man and the Antarctic' gives a concise note on exploration and exploitation of the resources of Antarctica from the earliest discoveries to the present. This continues with a note on possible mineral resources and several contemporary world problems affecting Antarctica. The chapter concludes with a note on the development of the Antarctic Treaty system and some speculation about the future.

A helpful selection of diagrams and maps is included (although Chile will not appreciate the unfortunate omission of Territorio Antártico Chileno from the territorial chart). There is a brief bibliography with a good selection of appropriate works and three pages of index. The book is very well illustrated with the author's material, the resources of the British Antarctic Survey and other organizations. The publisher has managed to produce it at a very reasonable cost. (R. K. Headland, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER UK.)

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

SADIE BROWER NEAKOK: AN INUPIAQ WOMAN. Blackman, Margaret B. 1989. Seattle, University of Washington Press. 274 pp, photographs, maps, hard cover. ISBN 0-295-96813-3.

The daughter of Charles Brower, who came to Barrow, Alaska, as a commercial whaler, and his Inupiaq wife Asianguataq, Sadie Neakok grew up between two worlds. She learned to sew skin clothing and to run a dog team, but she also had to obey her father's curfews, and at age fourteen she was sent to San Francisco for high school. Upon her return she began a career dedicated to helping to ease Barrow's Native community into the American educational, legal and political system.

Endowed equally with courage and compassion, Sadie began as a schoolteacher, moved on to become a public welfare worker, and eventually took on her most challenging position: magistrate. When she started school in San Francisco, 'I didn't know what a president was, or his cabinet, Congress, all those things' (p 88). Thirty years later, as magistrate, she had to apply the laws of the state to the residents of Barrow. As the wife of an *umialik*, or whaling captain, Sadie also had a full slate of work at home. In between raising a dozen children and spending time hunting, trapping and fishing. Sadie had to make the clothing for her husband's whaling crew, and distribute the bounty of the whale to the community when the crew was successful.

Margaret Blackman compiled Sadie's life history from taped interviews, which evolved from a field school in archaeology and oral history for Barrow High School students. Most of the book consists of lightly-edited transcripts of those interviews, interspersed with Blackman's notes, giving background and other relevant information. Blackman also includes a lengthy opening

chapter, providing a deft portrait of Barrow and a concise history of the North Slope and the Inupiat. The result is an excellent book about a remarkable woman. Blackman's own text is informative without being obtrusive. It includes comments about Sadie made by colleagues and friends, and fills out our view of Sadie without overshadowing Sadie's words. Sadie's stories give insight into Native life in Barrow, the struggles of modernization, and the transformations which she has helped her home town to undergo while retaining the vitality of its Inupiaq culture. (Henry P. Huntington, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER UK.)

THE ORIGINS OF MAN

CHILDREN OF THE ICE: CLIMATE AND HUMAN ORIGINS. Gribbin, J. and M. 1990. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. 199 p, hard cover. ISBN 0-631-16817-6. £15.95.

A work of popular science, and a miracle of condensation in view of its awe-inspiring time-scale, this book attempts a layman's exposition of the origins and evolution of mankind set in the context of changing world climates. It is a synthesis of other books by the same authors in these and related fields and derives from a BBC Radio Four series of the same title. The question that the Gribbins set out to answer is 'Why are we here?'. How is it that humans are among the most successful forms of life on Earth today? The story begins about 370 million years ago with the emergence on land of our ancestors the amphibians. The consequent evolutionary processes and their speculative causes are discussed with frequent side-tracking into such disciplines as geology, palaeontology and cosmology.

The chief mechanism for effecting climatic change is seen by the authors as continental drift. Thus a fragmenting of Gondwanaland some 65 million years ago brought about the catastrophic global cooling which in turn led gradually to the extinction of the once all-dominant dinosaurs, allowing the mammals to achieve prominence. During the Quaternary continental drifting brought about the spread of ice in high latitudes, the first in a series of ice ages, broken by short interglacial periods, which gave rise to the evolutionary events which forced some tree-dwelling apes out of the African forest to evolve into *Homo erectus*. To respond to climatic challenges this creature increased the size of its brain pan to become *Homo sapiens* about 100,000 years ago. Thus, the authors claim, we can today truly call ourselves 'children of the ice'.

The rest of the book lies mostly in the realm of history. During the ice ages *Homo sapiens* completed the peopling of the world. In a few brief pages we see how climate affected the great migrations, the rise and fall of empires, the Viking colonies in Greenland and their failure due to a 16th-century cooling. More recently frost fairs on the Thames, Dickensian Christmases and the Irish potato famine are among the numerous examples of climatic determinism. Finally a glimpse into the future warns predictably of the consequences of our profligate use of

fossil fuel and the consequences of global warming due to man himself, ultimately leading to a return to the 'dinosaur days'. In conclusion the authors furnish us with an appendix giving an explanation of the cause of ice age cycles in the light of recent research. This is a stimulating and controversial book. An evolutionary time-scale is the sole visual aid though — more would have been helpful. (H. G. R. King, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER UK.)

DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURE

THE INUPIAT AND ARCTIC ALASKA: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF DEVELOPMENT. Chance, N. A. 1990. Fort Worth, Holt, Reinhart and Winston. (Case studies in cultural development). 242 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-03-032419-X.

This volume is a welcome addition to a series of case studies in cultural anthropology, aimed at undergraduates in the social sciences. As such, it also supplements the author's previous book for the same series *The Eskimo of North Alaska* (1966). That work was based on fieldwork carried out on the North Slope in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Taking a community-focused approach, the study examined economics, kinship, the socialization of children and local politics. While describing traditional Inupiat lifeways, Chance discussed recent social change and demonstrated the positive nature of cultural integration. Like many anthropologists at the time, he was guided by a 'functionalist' perspective (with its emphasis on social harmony) and theories of 'westernization'. This latest work aims to correct Chance's earlier theoretical influences, by considering the effects of colonialism and its accompanying social and economic exploitation.

After setting the scene with a history of the first migrants into Alaska, right up to encounters with Russian and American colonialists, Chance draws on his earlier fieldwork in giving us a picture of Inupiat social life. While details of traditional culture are outlined, the effects of Euro-American influence are examined. Throughout, the emphasis is on the Inupiat response to colonialism and development; the introduction of new technology into the subsistence economy, improved health care, education, Christianity and the erosion of shamanism, epidemics because of western diseases, and the emergence of a wage economy.

Based on more recent research, the author devotes the final part of the book to threats to Inupiat culture, land, and Native rights owing to the development of oil and gas exploitation. This section comes across as a clear and penetrating analysis of the responses to economic development in Arctic Alaska. Following the discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay, the Inupiat have had to deal with pressing contemporary change that has seriously harmed and eroded their cultural life. Chance discusses this, together with land claims settlements, the establishment of corporations, the defence of subsistence rights and cultural identity. The latter is of deep concern for the future. Inupiat economic and social life has been transformed by