meaning and origin of the word "aesthetics," which concerns itself with sense perception; that is, the perception of quality that derives from the nature of materials and their sensitive/sensuous handling by artists. They constitute innate aesthetics, i.e., "man's desire to make all representations magically effective—'par le désir d'obtenir l'efficacité' as M. Schuwer expresses it" (Read, 1936). Camille Schuwer suggests "that we have no right to make a distinction between the utilitarian and the artistic activities in primitive man: that primitive man does everything he does for a purpose, in total disregard of what we are pleased to call aesthetic qualities" (Read, 1936:8-9). In this regard, *Eskimo Artists* offers me its most stimulating argument, which is relevant to those controversial aspects of contemporary art criticism that deal with the meaning of and in both art and culture.

Dr. Himmelheber does not have any such pretensions; he simply intended his book to be a description of his fieldwork in the two areas he visited: the Kuskokwim River region and Nunivak Island. In terms of art, these two areas are quite different from most other areas. Thus it would be wrong to assume that this work makes any generalizations about the Eskimos or their art. The title of the book is somewhat misleading since Himmelheber's artists are highly specific, both as Southwest Alaska Eskimos and as artists. Many other atypical groups of artists from other regions and traditions also exist within the North American Arctic, including Greenland (cf. Swinton, 1977).

In reviewing the book I found I was stimulated both positively and negatively, and relived many of my own memories of frequent visits to the Arctic in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time I was also privileged to witness some incredible changes that were and still are taking place, although I see these changes with less pessimism than Himmelheber describes in his preface to the 1987 English edition.

Much work has been published about the Kuskokwim River region and Nunivak Island in the 1930s. The great merit of this book for all who study the various aspects of Eskimo art lies in the accounts of the narrative content of artwork and Himmelheber's personal insights (his humanism) into individual artists' concepts, stories and techniques, and his identification of the artists by name. Unlike the featured artists in most other ethnographic reports from the first half of the nineteenth century, Himmleheber's subjects are no longer romantically anonymous.

While this book is terse and direct, and rather nostalgic and sentimental, in the context of the times in which it was written, its factual accounts are pertinent to anyone with a genuine interest, professional or amateur, in the art of Native people.

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SILAS: THE ANTARCTIC DIARIES AND MEMOIR OF CHARLES S. WRIGHT. Edited by COLIN BULL and PAT F. WRIGHT. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993. 418 p., illus. Hardbound. US$59.50.

The publication of the personal papers of Charles Seymour Wright, who participated as a member of the scientific staff in Robert Falcon Scott's last expedition, represents a most welcome addition to the corpus of records on that venture, surely the most written about in polar history. The title relates to the nickname conferred upon Wright by Henry Bowers who, of course, himself enjoyed the sobriquet "Birdie." The editors, Colin Bull, a distinguished geophysicist, and Pat F. Wright, the subject's daughter, have skillfully woven Wright's diary, a subsequent memoir, field notes and family correspondence together with editorial comment, to present a coherent account of the expedition with particular reference to the part Wright played in it. Distinctions in the text between the different sources and comments depend upon a system of differing typefaces and margins that, while confusing at first sight, enables the essential continuity of the narrative to be preserved without the need for cumbersome footnotes.

The body of the text is preceded by a full introduction. This includes the well known story of how Griffith Taylor and Wright, at the time a Canadian research student at the University, walked from Cambridge to London to see Scott and Edward Wilson, the scientific director of the expedition, to seek places on it. Information is also presented relating to the scientific preparation for the expedition in which Wright took a full part. At the end is an equally full epilogue providing details of Wright's career after the expedition and of the many distinctions that he earned.

The outlines of the story are well known, but it is a measure of the success of the editors that the book would be equally interesting to the expert and to a person whose knowledge of the subject is confined to the merest acquaintance. Wright's formal duties related mainly to the study of penetrating radiation, but he involved himself in other scientific areas, notably glaciology, and took a significant part in the early stages of the polar journey itself. Wright was the discoverer of the tent in which Scott, Wilson and Bowers perished and the matter-of-factness of his account highlights its poignancy. Wright reflected in his memoir on the reasons for the failure of Scott's party to return and disagreed with the view of George Simpson, the expedition's

meteorologist, that there was an unexpected and rapid drop of temperature while the party was on the Barrier. This part of the text is illustrated with the weather record of the polar party for the months of February and March 1912 compiled from Bowers's log and the diaries of Scott and Wilson.

Wright's comments on his fellow participants in the expedition are astute and humorous. The only expedition member of whom he seems not to have approved was Edward "Teddy" Evans, but he was not alone in that.

The editors have included details relating to the procedures adopted by Wright for undertaking his scientific work and these are amongst the most interesting and valuable parts of the book. It is clear that very great stamina and endurance were required as evidenced by a quote from expedition photographer Herbert Ponting:

> Wright . . . seemed to be impervious to the elements and used to kneel for hours beside his transit telescope, observing the occultation of stars. (p. 160)

Wright's record of the same duty was:

> Pendulum swinging is quite a strenuous business, $2^1/_2$ hours at a time, twice a day in a damn cold cave with one ear at a telephone, one eye at a telescope … and one bare hand writing down. Then comes 2 hours outside also with one telephone at one ear and one eye at one telescope. … and a temperature hovering around – 40 [°F] with a wind at 25 m.p.h. occasionally. (p. 161)

Equally of interest is the section on Taylor's reconnaissance of the Western Mountains in which Wright participated as glaciologist and this part of the book is informed by detailed maps showing the route taken.

The presentation of the book is most attractive. It has been handsomely produced to a high level of quality rather than down to a price which is all too common nowadays. Virtually every page has well-executed sketches by Pat Wright that represent the fruits of very considerable research into the subject and lend immediacy to the text. The book includes a list of participants in the expedition, a particularly detailed index, and relevant maps.

The editors have placed all those interested in the history of antarctic exploration in their debt. They and Ohio State University Press are to be warmly congratulated for their work in producing this volume.

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THE CRYSTAL DESERT: SUMMERS IN ANTARCTICA. By DAVID. G. CAMPBELL. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992. 308 p., 2 maps, appendix, notes, references, index. Softbound. US$10.95.

I once had a conversation about scientific writing with Joe MacInnis, M.D., the Canadian writer, marine scientist and arctic diver. He suggested that while many scientists write well for publication in scientific journals and a small audience of specialists, few had the ability to write well about their work for publication in popular science journals or books aimed at a broader audience of non-specialists. I often think of that comment when I write for scientific journals and I was reminded of it again as I read *The Crystal Desert: Summers in Antarctica.*

The author, David Campbell, is a marine biologist and currently Henry R. Luce Professor of Nations and the Global Environment at Grinnell College. The book was written after he spent three summers at the Brazilian research station, Comandante Ferraz, located on King George Island in the South Shetland Islands, 200 km north of the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula. In this, the "Banana Belt" of Antarctica, he studied the life cycles of parasites that live in seals, fish and crustaceans. In his words (p. 19), "This book is about living for a summer in that Antarctic outpost."

Normally I would be discouraged by such a description because I have grown tired of reading often dry, monotonous accounts of other people's daily activities, experiences and suffering in the polar regions. In this case, however, this brief description of the author's purpose appears at the end of the Prologue, which has already given the reader a pleasant hint of the style and scope of the book they are about to read. The book describes aspects of life and work at Comandante Ferraz, and delves into the history of human activity in the region, particularly as it relates to science and exploration, and the exploitation of marine resources, namely sealing and whaling. But above all, this book is a popular natural history of King George Island and the adjacent lands and waters of the Southern Ocean.

In Chapter 1, "Seabirds and the Wind," we cross Drake Passage from Southern Chile to King George Island aboard the *Barão de Teffé*, a Brazilian Navy supply vessel. This offers the opportunity to introduce some of the complexity of the regional meteorology and oceanography and their role in promoting the rich bird life of the area. The descriptions of petrels and albatrosses gliding, dipping and soaring as they followed the ship reminded me of my own experiences standing on the pitching and rolling stern of an icebreaker watching the apparently effortless flight of these long-distance wanderers.

Chapter 2, "Memories of Gondwana," begins with a hike to change the tape on an automatic weather station data recorder, and to replace some burned-out bulbs on the crucifix at the summit of a mountain. We might wonder at the latter, but many of the ice-free areas of King George Island, and elsewhere in Antarctica, are littered with the remains of human folly and foible and disregard for the fragile environment. However, it is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss environmental damage. Rather, we learn about natural environmental change, the discovery of petrified tree trunks and fossil leaves and flowers, even the jawbone of an opossum, and their implications with