this transit direction was accomplished a decade earlier (cf. Bockstoce, 2003). Southern extremities of two continents are conflated as the "Cape of Good Horn" (p. 96). The pattern throughout of using antiquated units of measurement followed by their modern equivalents in parentheses is more distracting than helpful; however, distraction becomes irritation when incorrect conversions have eluded copy-editing, as, for example "…4˚ Fahrenheit (5˚C)…" (p. 252).

A caution to other readers is that Struzik leaves limited room in his account for expressions of doubt and alternative explanations of the changes observed. "Now that man-made greenhouse gases are rapidly warming the Arctic,…" (p. 5 in the Introduction) amounts to the author's public profession of faith (admittedly shared by most scientists) in a complex web of cause-and-effect relationships. In a less competitive framework than funding-starved research into global change, continual doubt and re-examination of these relationships would strengthen ones that deserve belief as explanations, while downplaying those that are less predictively robust. Sentiments in the declaration above undoubtedly assured Struzik tribal acceptance for his embeddings with scientists along their figurative battlefront, where a camel's nose under the tent flap would be a genuine nuisance. Without denying the realities of rapid Arctic environmental change, however, a small number of agnostics question part or all of the trinity of beliefs implied above: that CO_2 is the major determinant of change; that this greenhouse gas is traceable entirely to human-mediated releases into the atmosphere; and that warming is the single significant symptom of change. If any one of these assumed relationships is found wanting, mathematical modelers face re-tooling. Perhaps only curmudgeons like me will yearn for a bibliography or footnotes that would substantiate claims such as that prolonged cold can no longer be counted upon to kill spruce beetles (p. 73) and nestling peregrine falcons are succumbing to rain-induced hypothermia (p. 209).

Apart from these cautions, *The Big Thaw* is a valuable portrait and chronicle of opposing postures in global change intrigue during this first decade of the 21st century. It is particularly fortunate that this reportage is predominantly Canada-based, for Struzik reflects fairly other national and cultural perspectives, their history, and their development. It is difficult to imagine a U.S. chronicler (using myself as a blatant example of inadequacy in this regard) being as reciprocally fair to Canadian and other Western perspectives and historical development as he is. Doubters from within the scientific community may not feature prominently in *The Big Thaw*, but Struzik grants enough latitude to First Nations' perspectives and to the resilient diversity they represent (p. 134–135; Chapter 7:159–182) that echoes of doubt and defiance persist in the form of "We'll adapt as we have had to for centuries" (e.g., p. 16).

Of all the topics covered by *The Big Thaw*, the most promising for catalyzing meaningful discourse may be the five scenarios outlined in the final chapter (p. 237–242). Each underscores gaps in understanding and various forms and extents of technological unpreparedness for dealing with new realities likely to result from Arctic environmental change.

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BODY AT THE MELBOURNE CLUB: BERTRAM ARMYTAGE, ANTARCTICA'S FORGOTTEN MAN. By DAVID BURKE. Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2009. ISBN 978-1-86254-833-6. xv + 170 p., map, b&w illus., appendix, bib., index. Softbound. AU$27.95.

The story of Ernest Shackleton's British Antarctic Expedition (BAE)—on which sledging parties made valiant attempts to reach the geographic South Pole and the South Magnetic Pole—has been told several times in recent years, with the emphasis varying between the entire expedition (Riffenburgh, 2004; Wilson, 2009) and the major participants, such as Professor T.W. Edgeworth David (Branagan, 2005) and Douglas Mawson (Riffenburgh, 2008). This book is a biography of Bertram Armytage, the expedition's third Australian (along with David and Mawson), but one who played a far less significant role than his countrymen, and, unlike them, failed to become a national hero. In fact, his story ended in tragedy the year after the expedition's return, when he committed suicide in his room at the elite Melbourne Club, an event that inspired the book's title.

My initial impression, even before opening the book, was that the choice of Armytage for a biography was a bit odd. Although the cover matter, the introduction, and at points the main text attempt to justify this selection, by the time I had finished the book, my opinion remained the same: that there was not enough interesting or significant about Armytage to warrant a full biography.

Born in 1869, the fourth son in one branch of a large Victoria family that had grown wealthy through the wool industry, Armytage led an early life not dissimilar to those of countless others of the British Empire's pampered social and economic elite. He loved riding, hunting, and shooting, and when he left Australia to attend the University of

Cambridge, his shining moments proved to be not in academics but in rowing in Jesus College's first boat at the Lent races of 1888. After a year in Cambridge, Armytage returned to Australia, where he became an artillery officer, intermittently helped run his family's estates, married well, and lived a life of general ease but little purpose. In 1900, he joined the 6th Dragoon Guards to serve in the war against the Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, but after the close of operations in South Africa, he resigned his commission and returned home.

Armytage's step onto the international stage came after Professor David helped Shackleton obtain a £5000 grant from the Australian government. This money allowed the BAE shore party to increase by three: David, Mawson, and Armytage, the last of whom signed on as a general helper, and to give special attention to the ponies that Shackleton hoped would help him reach the Pole.

In the early months at the base at Cape Royds, Armytage seemed despondent and frequently unable to get along with his colleagues. But Shackleton temporarily moved into a cubicle with him, and apparently worked his magic, because the Australian's spirits picked up and he was eventually given sole charge of the ponies. In the spring of 1908—while Shackleton's party headed for the South Pole, and David led another towards the South Magnetic Pole—the Western Party, comprising Armytage, Raymond Priestley, and Sir Philip Brocklehurst, went into the mountains and valleys west of McMurdo Sound to conduct geological studies. Armytage was in nominal command, but the party's work was hampered by Shackleton's restrictive orders and by a feud that developed between Armytage and Brocklehurst. Upon the expedition's return to civilization, Armytage was included in the honours that were bestowed upon Shackleton and his party. But, apparently depressed, he left England without his wife and committed suicide shortly thereafter.

As might be expected from an author as accomplished as David Burke, the book is very nicely written. But, although it outlines Armytage's life, it never achieves an in-depth understanding of him. This is not surprising, in that none of Armytage's diaries or correspondence are extant other than a newspaper interview and one report to Shackleton. Unfortunately, this lack of personal insight dooms Armytage to being simply carried along by the brief history of what Burke calls the Australian 'squattocracy' and the simple retelling of the tale of the BAE, rather than being an independent, central figure who can legitimately be focused upon.

Although the book is a nicely produced paperback, its content would have been well served by a thorough fact check; despite the assistance of three researchers, numerous errors have crept in. Perhaps most annoying is that Raymond Priestley's last name is constantly spelled "Priestly." Also, Shackleton is many times referred to as "The Boss," a nickname not really used during the BAE. Other mistakes include that the Scottish industrialist who first backed the BAE was named William (and not James) Beardmore (p. 57). All 15 men of the shore party were not housed in "Oyster Alley" in *Nimrod* on the voyage south (p. 57); only 12 were, as Shackleton and James Murray shared Captain England's cabin, and David shared with Dr Michell, the ship's surgeon. Cape Royds is 18 geographical miles north of Hut Point, not 23 (p. 65). And several of the captions in the photographic sections contain inaccuracies, including the statement that "Shackleton purchased 10 Manchurian ponies from China"; in point of fact, he obtained 15, but was able to take only 10 south for lack of space on his tiny ship.

Another annoyance is the author's tendency to speculate on the basis of incomplete sources. Two examples stand out as misleading. First, Burke hints that had Armytage been included in the Southern Party, Shackleton and company might well have attained the Pole (p. 121, 136). This idea seemingly is based on one line from Frank Wild's diary, in which he complained about the performance of Eric Marshall and Jameson Adams. Each member of the Southern Party felt hard done by at times, yet each made essential contributions. To assume that replacing either Marshall or Adams with Armytage would have allowed the party to travel an additional 194 geographical miles (the distance to the Pole and back from the farthest south) ignores the yeoman work each did, as well as the fact that Shackleton turned back simply because the food was running out. I don't think there is any real evidence that Armytage could have made a difference in this case. The second example is the indication that Armytage's suicide was perhaps influenced by his wife Blanch's affair with an old friend (p. 136–137). Burke indicates that "rumours persist" that she had an affair (p. 137), but at no point is the slightest evidence given.

In summary, the book is an enjoyable read, gives interesting details of 19th-century life in Australia and a brief history of the BAE, and tells everything there is to know about this minor Australian character. However, those who desire a fuller story of the expedition—and Armytage's participation in it is certainly the primary reason he is of interest—will be better served by other works.

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