

southern Africa, resiliently and resourcefully confront their problems, by drawing on, and renewing tradition and activating potent spiritual and political energies. It is a portrait of the Bushmen that leave little room for prerevisionist or intro-textbook fancies about peripheral, "harmless," passive people, with iconic, archaic and disappearing life- and folkways. The Ju/'hoansi, as well as other Bushman communities all over southern Africa, are addressing themselves to the political issues of their time and their land and nation. This book may well contribute to having their voices heard.

Eric Alden Smith and Joan McCarter (eds.), *Contested Arctic: Indigenous Peoples, Industrial States, and the Circumpolar Environment*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997, 156 pages.

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You cannot read this book without digesting the message that the Arctic is indeed the frontier of contemporary colonialism. The controlling gaze may have shifted focus somewhat, but the inspecting and regulating of people and animals persists in the historical space of today's "contested Arctic."

Most of the papers in this edited volume were presented in 1996 at a one-day interdisciplinary symposium on human-environmental interaction in the circumpolar north. A first glance at the table of contents might suggest an imbalance of geographic areas because, of the six papers, three address problems of pollution in the Russian North—though one of these compares Natives in northwest Siberia and northern Alberta (Aileen Espiritu). Since the opening up of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, the West had much to learn—and Russia is evidently ready and willing to tell. This book excels in accomplishing its goal of illuminating intersections of "industrial pollution, Arctic ecosystems, national ambitions, and indigenous cultures."

In his introduction, Eric Alden Smith provides us with a succinct discussion of the historical beginnings of ecological degradation (colonial style) as well as current global environmental problems across the circumpolar north. Appropriately, the first chapter in the volume is written from an emic point of view. Charles Johnson reminds us that Native people are active participants in the Arctic ecosystem and are greatly concerned about effects of global warming and Arctic environmental contamination by organochlorines and heavy metals; he argues that these problems can be related to a decline in the physical and social health of circumpolar peoples. In Craig ZumBrunnen's account of the Russian North, significant health problems have been demonstrated in 28 of the 29 cities which have significant chemical industry pollution related specifically to the defence sector. There, the legacy of harmful industrial processing (including mining) gives little reason for optimism as the problems in Russia are now quite

serious. In fact, only 15% of Russia's population reside in areas where the ambient air quality meets health standards. Conspicuously, the Arctic metropolis of Noril'sk is deemed to be the city in all of Russia with the most contaminated air.

Cultural conflict following resource extraction from the Arctic's "storehouse of wealth" is discussed in two additional papers (by Fondahl and Espiritu) which address problems common to Indigenous peoples in the Russian and the Canadian North. The fragility of the Arctic ecosystem is generally downplayed by the developers (or should we say, destroyers) whose manoeuvres engender losses of various kinds to Northern Native peoples. Loss of traditional subsistence regimes (such as hunting or reindeer herding), loss of control of their own environment (including loss of land) and loss of other sociocultural traits which identify them as Inuit, Cree or Saami are examples of human rights issues examined in chapters written by Collings and Beach, and of the Indigenous peoples of Russia in the chapter written by Gail Fondahl, who also examines the development of their land claims.

Peter Collings examines some of the underlying assumptions of wildlife management in the Canadian North. The "tragedy of the commons" paradigm has been used in arguments of famine, overfishing and wildlife overexploitation, and Collings debates how sociocultural contexts can affect conditions that lead to environmental degradation resulting from overexploitation of resources. He argues that social and cultural limitations implemented by the Inuit themselves continue to be effective mechanisms in the prevention of resource depletion. The James Bay Cree, too, have employed a successful system of resource management by means of hunting and fishing territories, as well as by a culturally sanctioned self-limiting principle to take only what is needed.

This book reveals significant information about the real situation in the former U.S.S.R. For example, Craig ZumBrunnen tells about dozens of "secret cities" which were established by Stalin to develop the atom bomb, and discloses little-known facts like nuclear power plants being built without radiation containment vessels, and the secret injecting of billions of gallons of atomic wastes directly into the ground at three separate sites. Not only are the Russian people suffering from the consequences of such irresponsibility, transboundary pollution of toxic products is a growing threat to Arctic peoples across the globe.

One of the great strengths of this book is in its ability to address social and political issues as they relate to various actual problems of pollution, and also to perceptions of pollution by groups with vested interests. For example, a perception of ecological damage being caused by reindeer which, it is contested, are allowed to overgraze and trample the tundra in Swedish Lapland, is a position disputed by Hugh Beach in the final chapter. In spite of, or perhaps because of, seemingly disparate cultural contexts and realities, this book sheds new light on changing sociopolitical and ecological problems faced by Arctic peoples around the globe.
