

for it, is one that is prominent in this discussion. Here too, the arguments are complex and detailed, and carefully supported with evidence. Later chapters bring the story up-to-date with accounts of the place of rum in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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People and Nature: An Introduction to Human Ecological Relations. *Emilio F. Moran.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, 218 pp. \$27.95, paper.

People and Nature is a slim volume that introduces the new Blackwell Primers in Anthropology. The aim of this series is to provide sophisticated introductions to central topics. Human ecological relations potentially span a broad field of engagement, from humanist contemplations of conservationist history, or practical remedial texts, to impassioned calls for “action now!” But Moran takes a different path, calmly explicating the interconnectivities and consequences of societal behavior, and only gradually revealing his basic thesis.

The volume begins by sketching the endangered state of the world and reiterating the dichotomy between people and the biophysical environment that is (stereotypically) attributed to Western (versus Eastern) thought and religion. Countless short examples and ideas from the literature are seamlessly intertwined. I began to wonder where we were headed: Another extended lecture on conspicuous consumption by self-interested hedonists? Or would the author make yet one more run at scientific and practical solutions? My own research and teaching include environmental history, and I was becoming impatient, since I happen to share a growing, middle-class ennui about the onslaught of doomsday prognoses, hectoring, or exaggerated claims, such as rising ocean levels.

The chapters and illustrations run a fairly standard trajectory from a prehistoric golden age (Chapter 2) to the urban-industrial revolution (Chapter 3), our role in the web of life (Chapter 4), information and decision-making (Chapter 5), the functions of institutions and self-organization (Chapter 6), and patterns of consumption in developing versus developed countries. There are photos of highway gridlock, blissful San hunter-gatherers, polluted skylines, deforestation maps, fertility trends, and ever-larger houses. But midway through Chapter 6, I stopped and began to seriously listen.

Recalling Rappaport’s ancient insights on the sacred in human evolution, Moran (pp. 118–21) reminds us of the role in communities of faith of sharing, and oneness with non-material, spiritual forces. Such communities ideally reject the linear logic of self-interest in favor of a circular logic of other-interest. Shared values, shared wealth, and common purpose can redirect citizens of good will to the needs of others. Moran laments a modernity in which “we have big houses and broken homes, high incomes and low morale . . . (as) we celebrate our prosperity,

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but yearn for a sense of purpose” (p. 175). His conclusion appeals to a primordial social contract; thus, “To regain our balance as a species we need to reconnect to our human evolution and our place in nature—the value to the human species of trust, community, shared values and reciprocity . . . to restore the value of people in the environment, and of our obligation to future generations” (p. 177). Here was a deeper ecological perspective, one that I too have learned to appreciate, but from ethnohistorical fieldwork and studying the classical agronomists, who understood sound ecological behavior as a civic responsibility (rather than a theological mandate) (Butzer 2005).

By stressing the ethical underpinnings of community-based behavior, Moran offers a neglected rationale why we “should” do better, one that is far more convincing than an appeal to our enlightened, economic self-interest. He does not rant, but subtly illuminates the tapestry of conventional human selfishness with a myriad of interdisciplinary threads. This is splendid ecoscience, and “traditional” anthropology at its best. My curiosity piqued, I paged back to the book’s dedication—to Emily Victoria, the author’s daughter, the girl who would say “No thanks, I have plenty.” Here was a noted, senior scientist gently explaining to a future generation the moral dimensions of our proper role within nature.

Consequently, I returned to reread the book with fresh interest. It is indeed a very insightful guide as to how our imperfect world currently works, and why. It is ideal for undergraduates, and others, who remain open to ideas such as altruism, reciprocity, and social justice. And it may revive the enthusiasm of instructors like me who also must chart the implications of what happens today for our children and grandchildren.

REFERENCE CITED

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Brown Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965–1975. *George Mariscal*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005, 348 pp., 18 halftones. \$24.95, paper.

What does a cartoon of Don Quixote with the black thunderbird of the United Farm Workers on his shield have to teach about the militant idealism of César Chávez? Just as much as the photo-ops with Robert F. Kennedy at his bedside during his fast, yet the first image (used in UFW newspapers) has been long forgotten while the second still resonates with viewers born decades after it was

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