

Reviews

Food and Globalization: Consumption, Markets and Politics in the Modern World. Edited by ALEXANDER NUTZENADEL and FRANK TRENTMANN
Oxford: Berg, 2008, 284 pp. £19.99 (paperback) ISBN 978 1 84520 679 6

As the editors (accurately) write, ‘the focus of this volume is to recover the material, political, and moral dynamics of food, connecting early modern to contemporary processes of globalization’ (p. 5). The approach – and many of the contributions – is historical and the focus is very much on the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century backgrounds to global food issues today. This is not a book about the food crisis and globalisation today. The relevance of history is soon clear, and underlined by the editors in an excellent short introduction. The book ends with a chapter by Trentmann which threads together some of the key ideas in the volume: empire, free trade and distributive justice, in a convincing and thoughtful way. In its conception and execution this is a scholarly and original book for the academic market, written from within a humanities tradition (footnotes rather than Harvard referencing), often elegant prose and measured judgement. It is the kind of synthetic, relevant history that we would expect from Trentmann and Nutzenadel.

The individual chapters tell different parts of the story. The first section begins with a chapter by the eminent anthropologist Sidney Mintz on the relationship between food, culture and energy, which reviews the role of food and taste to metropolitan diets, and the idiosyncrasies of different cultural practices. It is a gem: brief, discursive, humorous and yet to the point. Other chapters are more historically contextual: on global ‘beverages’ from 1500 to 1900, on horticulture after the American Civil War, on rice cultivation in Southeast Asia. The second section of the book looks at the ‘migration’ of food tastes and consumer cultures, largely stimulated by imperial ‘preferences’ and economic dependence. The third section deals with food markets and the international politics of food – ending with a chapter on transnational agribusiness within the United Nations system. The final (fourth) section takes the narrative into today’s world, with brief pieces on ‘postcolonial paradoxes’, and the ‘moral geographies’ of sugar.

This is a useful if rather heterogeneous collection. It uses a historical approach in a way designed to appeal to both historians and non-historians alike. I am equally clear that the discussion of globalisation would have benefited from more reference to the

burgeoning literature in the social sciences, but the volume would have then lost its key focus – on the historical dimension of processes. The title is perhaps a little misleading – it suggests more attention to issues that are scarcely discussed here – famine and food supply, nutrition policy, and perhaps particularly, the way in which the modern food system developed, through the international agricultural centres. It might also have taken in fair trade today, and ethical consumption today, but to have done so would have enlarged the already considerable breadth of the book. It is a nice piece of interdisciplinary work, and deserves serious critical attention from scholars in a variety of disciplines.

MICHAEL REDCLIFF, *King’s College London*

We believe it is good to have a range of opinion in order to promote scholarly debate and, therefore, are pleased to have received two reviews of the following book.

The Political Economy of Sustainable Energy. By CATHERINE MITCHELL
Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008, 248 pp. £19.99 (paperback) ISBN 978 0 2305 3711 8

Mitchell’s book comes at a time when energy policy and politics have never had a higher public profile, with affordability, security and sustainability of energy all receiving much mainstream media attention and requiring ever more urgent action. Her book focuses on environmental sustainability, responding to a pressing and fundamental question: how can the current economic and technological status quo be transformed in order that CO₂ emissions can be reduced quickly and sufficiently enough to avoid the worst effects of climate change. She argues with brutal conceptual clarity and relentless empirical support that the current governance framework in the UK, which she refers to as the Regulatory State Paradigm, in which governments ‘steer’ by regulation and ‘leave it to the market’ (p. 1) to deliver outcomes, acts like a ‘band of iron’ (p. 2) curtailing progress toward a low carbon future.

The text is enriched by detailed analysis of the UK’s energy markets and regulatory bodies as well as cross European comparisons and a case study of New Zealand’s energy challenges, all of which are presented to support the author’s argument that regulatory states which do not intervene to shape economic

flows in the emergent low carbon economy are seriously failing to bring about the technological innovation and deployment required to deliver a sustainable politico-techno-economic energy system. She develops a concept of an innovation 'fault line' (p. 12) and employs it to suggest that regulatory states have struggled to bring about system change due to the now institutionalised discursive regimes which favour large incumbent actors and are dominated by the short time horizons of commercial logics, a linear conception of innovation, and a reluctance to pick winners. Rather than limit herself to criticism of markets *per se*, however, Mitchell is compelling in her insistence that the state must 'intervene to create the niche and nursery markets and then to enable market expansion' (p. 93) rather than revert to command and control. She urges political and economic leaders to 'just do it' (p. 207).

Although forceful, the strength of Mitchell's argument for a new paradigm in which barriers to innovation are removed is undermined by her fairly narrow engagement with regulation and state theory and her treatment of the energy system as a national entity with little mention of sub- or supra-national governance processes. However, these limitations do not detract from the transformative potential of this monograph. Its critical account of the status quo in the UK will be of interest not only to scholars of energy politics, for whom this ought to be an essential read, but also to state theorists, innovation scholars and those considering the relationships between the state, the economy and technologies.

GARETH POWELLS, *Durham University*

The Political Economy of Sustainable Energy. By CATHERINE MITCHELL

Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008, 248 pp. £19.99 (paperback) ISBN 978 0 230 53711 1

Professor Catherine Mitchell's *The Political Economy of Sustainable Energy* lays down the challenges of transforming the UK's energy system into one which is considerably more sustainable. She uses different paradigms to explore the reasons for the UK's poor performance in terms of sustainable energy and CO₂ reduction. Her central argument is that the current political-economic paradigm is not capable of delivering a sustainable energy system in the short time frames suggested by climate scientists as necessary to respond effectively to global climate change. The current paradigm, referred to in the book as the Regulatory State Paradigm (RSP), is characterised by a reliance on markets, industry regulators and low levels of

direct regulation from government. According to the author it results in a set of principles and policies that promote narrow, short-term economic considerations unlikely to deliver the types of innovation required to transform the energy system. Her vision of a sustainable energy system embodies numerous differences from those holding sway today, involving changes in attitudes, networks, policies, markets and technologies. All of this, she argues, requires innovation which the RSP currently stifles because of an obsessive focus on cost effectiveness to the detriment of other priorities.

Throughout the book, Mitchell endeavours to demonstrate how this (self-reinforcing) paradigm creates a barrier to sustainable energy through its principles, policies and institutions. She does this convincingly by isolating each of the system's foundational elements, starting with the most basic (principles) and examining their effects on the current system with reference to sustainable energy. She touches on all aspects of the energy system and covers nuclear power, renewable energy and markets in detail. In this context, the book focuses heavily on the electricity sector, which tends to limit the application of the book to other energy sectors such as transport and heating, where a similar critique also seems highly pertinent. Nonetheless, the nuclear chapter is particularly enlightening. It presents powerful arguments against new nuclear build in the UK. The book is very well structured with clearly linked chapters and coherent arguments illustrating the complexity and reality of system failure in UK energy policy.

This book stands out from others because it provides robust and credible solutions of how to overcome current barriers and to move to a more sustainable energy paradigm. The author utilises 'innovation theory' and examines other successful national policies. This empirical depth and gravity is based on the author's extensive personal experiences in the energy policy arena, having worked as energy policy advisor to both the UK and New Zealand governments. The book thus presents a rare insight into the world of energy policy gained from first-hand experience of policy making. The section on internal government processes is especially useful as it provides a window into policy development, which is often referred to as the 'black box' of policy making due to its opaque nature.

The book is gutsy, wielding valid and hard-hitting criticisms of the government. Its empirical richness and applied knowledge is thoroughly grounded and conceptualised within the current academic debate on energy policy, thus making the book relevant to a wide audience interested in sustainable energy and policy making more broadly.

SALLY MURRALL, *University of Plymouth*

The Sustainability Mirage: Illusion and Reality in the Coming War on Climate Change. By JOHN FOSTER
London: Earthscan, 2008, 170 pp. £19.99 (paperback)
ISBN 978 1 84407 535 5

In *The Sustainability Mirage* environmental philosopher John Foster claims that the pursuit of sustainable development – with its reliance on an ethics of the future and on the possibility of credible scientific prediction – is a mirage. It leads to ever-disappearing targets and displaced responsibility; ‘bad faith’ as he terms it. The pursuit of sustainable development ‘could now be about to mislead us dangerously, if not terminally’ (p. 4). His analysis of two decades of effort since the 1987 Brundtland Report first popularised sustainable development bears witness to his thesis. Instead, Foster calls for a different movement, a movement towards what he calls ‘deep sustainability’ – a philosopher’s call to pay attention to our inner life and to put to work our intrinsic values. The necessary motivation for changed and sustainable behaviour can only be found through individuals re-connecting with the sources of meaning that they each give to life.

Foster has written a brave book. It is brave for challenging the shibboleth of sustainable development and brave for calling for an examination of the interior human world rather than of the external non-human world. It is a position with which I strongly agree, but I find Foster’s application of it annoyingly frustrating. I agree with him that the inadequacy of our response to climate change is related neither to the limitations of scientific knowledge nor to the suggested policy alternatives. I explore the reasons for this in my recent book (Hulme 2009). It is inadequate because we have ignored our inner life – what American eco-philosopher and mystic Ken Wilber has called our ‘interior world’ or what religious and spiritual traditions have long-called our ‘soul’. It is from this interior world of the self that meaning for life is found and our intrinsic values are established. For Foster, this ‘life-hope’ is the only adequate motivation for sustainable actions. All else is froth, show, illusion. In this respect Foster follows recent work by Crompton (2008), McIntosh (2008) and others.

My frustrations with Foster’s argument, however, are twofold. First, he seems not to follow through his position with regard to the limitations of scientific predictions about the future and the associated ‘scientific hubris’. There are serious limits to what science can predict of the future – ‘predictions are always underdetermined’ – and Foster himself argues that these limits are one of the flaws of the conventional sustainable development model. And yet he is still happy to uncritically present us with an apocalyptic future of a collapsing biosphere, an imploding civilisation and an uninhabitable planet (p. 99). And it is against such an imagined future that Foster wants us

to mobilise as if for war. But he can’t argue both ways at once. Either our knowledge of the uncertain future is tentative or else it is not.

My second frustration is more a sadness. Foster searches the inner life determinedly, almost desperately, to find bedrock for the motivation which he believes is needed to sustain his war on climate. Yet this search is dismissive of all religious and spiritual traditions – ‘religious traditions are a spent force’, ‘religion has effectively died’, ‘these spiritual resources have failed’. Whereas he approvingly, even if unknowingly, quotes Jesus – ‘what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul’ (p. 108) – at the same time he sweepingly claims that religious and spiritual traditions have nothing to offer. The sadness of this position is that of a materialist in search of a spiritual answer, but yet whose mind is seemingly closed to the spiritual dimensions of human experience. The recent books by McIntosh (2008) and Primavesi (2009) are worth reading here, while Dunlap (2004) offers a much more positive view of Foster’s search for meaning and sustainability.

There is much to commend about this book. Foster engages at the right level, both with the deepening human tension of living in the over-consuming present while being aware of the unrepresented future, and with the value-action gap which all of us, to varying degrees, encounter in our behaviour. And he honestly reveals some of the structural limitations of the sustainable development paradigm. But the book also shows for me the limitations of a materialist worldview for making sense of our current predicament.

MIKE HULME, *University of East Anglia*

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An Introduction to Sustainable Development. By PETER R ROGERS, KAZI F JALAL and JOHN A BOYLE
London: Earthscan, 2008, 416 pp. £18.99 (paperback)
ISBN 978 1 8440 7520 1

The premise of *An Introduction to Sustainable Development* is to provide a basic introduction to the key concepts, perspectives and issues of sustainable

development. In an effort to not overwhelm those seeking a broad introduction to sustainable development, the authors have focused on the 'methodologies, institutional and policy frameworks' that will enable societies to progress towards sustainability. The book is a well written, easy to read and engaging introduction to sustainable development.

The first two chapters introduce the concepts, perspectives and challenges of sustainable development. Subsequent chapters focus on selected issues that influence sustainable development, including environmental management policies and tools, social policies, environmental economics, sustainable development indicators, environmental law and legislation, and international institutions and cooperation. The book concludes by considering whether life on earth is sustainable, ending on a refreshingly optimistic note.

The book takes an implicitly economic-based approach to sustainable development, which may not appeal to those interested in exploring the environmental, social, ethical and philosophical elements of sustainable development. Some chapters of the book are strong, particularly those relating to the authors' areas of expertise, such as the role of international financial institutions (chapter 12), environmental law (chapter 7), and environmental economics (chapters 9–11). In other areas the book is weaker; despite acknowledging that there are many definitions of sustainable development, the authors provide only a brief discussion of the theoretical and conceptual debates surrounding sustainability and sustainable development. In addition, in their attempt to avoid overwhelming the reader, the authors have limited discussion of substantive issues, such as deforestation and water resources, to basic information, and in some instances, a cursory sentence or two. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the authors' background in economics and international financial institutions, the book does little to challenge conventional wisdom on the benefits of economic growth, the Western model of development, nor does it engage with emerging debates, such as wellbeing and citizenship. Furthermore, for those wishing to explore the issues raised in more depth, the authors offer relatively few sources of further reading, and many of those it does suggest were published some years previously.

An Introduction to Sustainable Development is a laudable attempt to cover a vast and contentious subject and, as the title suggests, should appeal to those seeking a general introduction to the topic.

JULIA TOMEI, *King's College London*

A New Diplomacy for Sustainable Development: The Challenge of Global Change. By BO KJELLÉN
Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, 186 pp. £60.00 ISBN 0 978 415 95839 3

Bo Kjellén has been at the heart of international diplomacy for over four decades, playing an influential in brokering deals at the Rio World Summit on Sustainable Development of 1992 and subsequently steering the Convention to Combat Desertification. In *A New Diplomacy for Sustainable Development* Kjellén draws on his experience to reflect on the changing context for collective international action on issues such as climate change. The central argument is that we have entered a distinctively different era in which traditional concerns for national security and trade are being replaced with a multilateral concern for global environmental sustainability. This 'anthropocene' era poses a new set of urgent challenges and requires a 'new diplomacy'. The problem is that despite some positive moves in the right direction, international diplomacy is not yet equipped for the challenge of finding a genuinely global solution. As Kjellén points out, 'traditional diplomatic and power politics continue to rule the world' (p. xvi), there is inertia in the system, and appropriate structures are needed for the tasks in hand.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one, 'Concepts', explores the challenge of global sustainable development and sets out its implications for international relations. Part two explores the practice of negotiation, with chapters on international development (the north–south divide), and relations between Europe and the United States, both of which focus on the search for an international agreement on climate change policy. Part three, 'global sustainability for the twenty-first century' concludes by setting out some of the challenges of the new diplomacy and suggesting some ways forward.

The main strength of the book lies in the insider perspective it offers on the realpolitik of negotiation. Kjellén has a clear sense of moral purpose and it is difficult to disagree with the argument that climate change takes international diplomacy into new and uncharted territory. However *A New Diplomacy* is not as revealing or hard-hitting as it might have been, both in terms of lifting the veil of negotiation and also in its vision for future change. To this end, the way forward is largely restricted to relatively unchallenging proposals for reforming the United Nations and a call for action to be grounded on research. There is frequent reference to tensions between the author's academic and practitioner viewpoint, with the practitioner side of the equation tending to win out in terms of an emphasis on realistic, possible and gradual solutions. Academic readers already familiar with debates around climate change will find that the book lacks substance. However it is to be hoped that by taking a pragmatic and somewhat conservative line, *A New Diplomacy* will succeed in reaching out to the politicians and diplomats who are currently shaping the new global governance.

AIDAN WHILE, *University of Sheffield*

Environment and Citizenship: Integrating Justice, Responsibility and Civic Engagement. By MARK J SMITH and PIYA PANGSAPA

London: Zed Books, 2008, 294 pp. £18.99 (paperback) ISBN 978 1 8427 7903 3

The emphasis on social theory in geography, and more particularly in nature–society circles, has allowed researchers to raise important questions about the relationships between humans and non-humans. However, few scholars articulate how their abstract theories and concepts could be applied in practice. Having said this, Smith and Pangsapa's book tries to engage theory with practices to suggest how civic engagement can allow citizens, industries and corporations to become environmentally responsible, thus enabling them to articulate policies that would encompass social and environmental justice. The authors go beyond simple environmental criticism to suggest political reforms that are essentially driven by the adoption of what they see as a 'new political vocabulary' (e.g. environmental ethics, entitlements and obligations, rights and duties, norms and values) that leads to what they conceptualise as the 'politics of obligation'. For them, this new politics of obligation refers to the contestations occurring where new social constellations of obligations, duties and responsibilities can be articulated by a myriad of different actors negotiating different forms of environmental ethics. These two novelties provide a foundation that allows citizens to perform new relationships with their biophysical and social environments. This shapes what the authors describe as 'ecological citizenship', which implies that humans have obligations towards non-humans, obligations to 'be cautious about embarking upon any project that is likely to have adverse effects upon ecosystems' (p. 80).

Although this book attempts to reconfigure environmental politics, and to show how it could become possible for humans to care for non-humans based on ethical principles, the way in which the authors try to seduce their readers with this argument is problematic, especially for human geographers working at the nature–society nexus and for political ecologists. Despite warning against universal solutions and uncertainties in the production of science, the authors repeatedly describe the biophysical environment by terms such as ecosystem, biodiversity and resources. By using this terminology, they reinforce the power relationships that scientific discourse and practices have established between humans and their biophysical environment. This leaves less space for renewing environmental discourse and politics than the authors would wish their readers to believe. Rethinking environmental politics through the same mindset that contributed to the construction of resources and their scientific management means acknowledging the

legitimacy of a market-oriented quality of non-humans that underlies these terms. This weakens the aim of this book. Despite this problem, this book should be seen as a useful attempt to engage academia with citizens and environmental politics and could be useful for those interested in rethinking the role of civic engagement in promoting environmentally friendly policies and practices.

SEBASTIEN NOBERT, *King's College London*

Jewish Topographies: Visions of Space, Traditions of Place. Edited by JULIA BRAUCH, ANNA LIPPARDT and ALEXANDRA NOCKE

Aldershot: Ashgate 2008, 390 pp. £ 55.00 ISBN 978 07546 7118 3

The long-lasting, diasporal Jewish culture, an imagined community which has been sustained as a network society across countries, continents and civilisations, has been globalised for centuries before our time. It is quite surprising, therefore, that while a myriad of scholarly work has placed much emphasis on how time and history have shaped Jewish heritage and identity, only little attention has been paid to the significance of space and place. Following the 'spatial turn' and the emergence of cultural studies, this book is a first step in addressing the scarce research on Jewish space and places. It is a laudable plan which only scratches the surface and needs to be continued. Relying on Lefebvre's notion of lived spaces, this book highlights the spatialisation of daily life in Jewish communities across the world. *Jewish Topographies* contains 18 articles in four parts: the first focuses on material signs that define areas as Jewish; the second part explores how Jews make their vicinity Jewish; the third part studies three real and virtual journeys that Jews have undertaken; and the fourth part highlights the performativity embedded in Jewish landscapes – the mediascape of Middle Eastern music and a miniature theme park in Israel, and the foodscape of Russian Jews in New York. The concluding chapter by artist Julian Voloj is a lively description of a virtual place of Jewish identity and community. These intriguing case studies are preceded by an excellent and thorough introduction in which the three editors interweave space and place with Jewish studies. They identify six binary lines typical of academic research of Jewish space: Israel–Diaspora, religious–secular, leftist–rightist and Zionist–post-Zionist (p. 13). The entire collection is an admirable attempt to bridge these opposing stands; yet, the list of contributors reveals an additional dividing line in the writing about Jewish space and places – that between geographers and non-geographers. While cross-disciplinary discussions often yield fruitful insights, they also reflect on the relationships geographers have with their

domain of research; this book calls attention to Jews in geography, most notably the venues of Israeli human geography.

The introduction points to the modest interest of geographers in Jewish life and of Jews in the 'element of geography' (pp. 5–7). This is well demonstrated by the professional and disciplinary background of the contributors who are mostly not geographers, though geography constitutes the pillar of this volume. Because Israel is an unusual case of Jewish spatiality and a unique Jewish place, and because its very existence and involvement in the Middle East conflict is primarily a spatial issue, this lack of geographers is especially disturbing with regard to Israeli, typically Jewish, human geographers many of whom study political and historical geography. Observers of Israeli geography have noted its skew toward practical and problem-solving subfields intimately associated with planning, GIS and other practical specialties; the tendency has been to adopt a conformist stance in addition to the shedding of Israel's pre-national, Jewish (as different from the Biblical-Hebraic) heritage. Consequently, many Israeli geographers have also distanced themselves from recent intellectual developments letting colleagues from neighbouring disciplines to expropriate much of the terrain that has traditionally been theirs (Golan 2002; Bar-Gal 1999; Waterman 2007). To a great extent this can explain the scarcity of chapters authored by Israeli geographers. Yet, it can hardly justify the absence of some of those few who study (often cortically) the spatialisation of Israeli and Jewish ways of life (e.g. Blumen 2002; Yiftachel 2006), nor the absence of geographers who studied Jewish life outside Israel (e.g. Bar-Gal 1985; Newman 1985; Valins 2003; Vincent and Warf 2002) from a book in a series which is 'primarily geographical in orientation' (from the back cover). In that sense, this book is a note of warning to Israeli-Jewish human geographers: as many rarely apply recently developed perspectives to their natural research (home, area), others who have filled the scholarly void might erode their professional authority and debilitate the legitimacy of the departments of geography in local academia.

Notwithstanding these upsetting professional consequences, *Jewish Topographies* is a rich, fascinating book. It would benefit scholars of Jewish studies who are urged to consider the significance of place and space for the multifaceted Jewish way of life. It offers geographers the opportunity to explore the distinctive geographies of the Jewish collective from a variety of local and global perspectives.

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- Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe.** Edited by MICHAEL JONES and KENNETH R OLWIG
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, 628 pp. US\$35.00 paperback ISBN 978 0 8166 3915 1 and
- The Nordic Model: Scandinavia since 1945.** By MARY HILSON
London: Reaktion, 2008, 234 pp. £15.95 paperback ISBN 978 1 86189 366 6

'Nordic Landscapes' is a collection of essays describing and discussing landscapes and their meanings, as region and place within the Nordic countries, in contrast to landscape as scenery. An introduction by the editors is followed by 22 chapters grouped into five nationally or regionally defined sections: 'Denmark', 'The North Atlantic' (Iceland, the Faeroes and Greenland), 'Sweden', 'Norway', 'Finland' (incl. Åland) and entire 'Norden', each comprising two to five chapters. Including the editors, 21 authors have contributed with their insights gained in up to several decades of work with the landscapes they have chosen to present. The character of the book is thus clearly advanced. However, the final section consists of two more introductory and regional-geographic overview chapters, including a map of the entire Nordic territory. Most authors work within human, environmental or physical geography, but a variety of other disciplines are represented as well: anthropology, archaeology, agricultural and environmental science, ethnology, landscape architecture, landscape ecology and landscape

planning. Consequently, the book appears as diverse as the authors' scientific backgrounds and the Nordic landscapes are themselves: it covers a large variety of landscapes, which the respective authors define according to political and administrative borders, or to the physical appearance of areas caused by particular land use practices. Areas presented vary much in their physical appearance, from the Western Norwegian mountain and fjord landscape rich in contrast to the Finnish 'landscape of nuances', the Åland archipelago and arctic environments. Methods and materials used to explore different landscapes include people's practices and narratives, literature, land use statistics, (historical) maps and aerial photographs, paintings, heraldic arms, landownership and use rights, and vegetation, the latter especially as physical remnants of former land use activities. Investigations have been carried out on very different scales, from nation-wide to the territory of a single farm. The book's character is thus not primarily comparative, and not all national sections cover the entire areas of the countries. The strength of the book rather lies in the generally broad geographical framework and the depth with which the contributors treat the landscapes they have studied. Another clear strength of the book is the numerous links between chapters, both within and across different sections. By explicitly referring to, or relating information to, areas treated in other chapters, authors nicely illustrate bonds that tie 'Norden' together. It is thus very valuable to have all the texts collected in one Nordic book. The texts are readable, thoroughly referenced, and the illustrations are generally of good quality. However, a few 'maps' are lacking scale and north arrow, and it would have been helpful if all of the studies at the sub-national scale had included a map of the location of their study area within the respective country. For scholars within and outside the Nordic countries the book gives a comprehensive account of conceptualisations of landscape, practiced approaches and methodology. Not at least it provides deep insights into the landscapes presented in the different chapters.

'The Nordic Model' is an account of the history of the Nordic countries in various respects: the book includes five core chapters on Politics, Economy, Welfare, International Relations, and Society. These chapters are preceded by an Introduction on 'The historical Meanings of Scandinavia' and followed by a Conclusion asking whether there is a future for the Nordic region. Aiming to provide such an overview for a group of five countries may be ambitious. Already in the preface the author expresses an awareness of several traps, which actually seems to have prevented her from stepping into them: the book gives the impression of a very thoroughly researched and quite balanced treatment of all five countries. The degree of detail is as high as one can expect, and

sometimes even beyond. The book is very well written. There is actually one thing that made me puzzled several times while reading: 'Norden' (with or without quotation marks), 'the Nordic countries', 'Scandinavia' and 'the Scandinavian countries' are used as synonyms, whereas 'the three Scandinavian countries' refers to *Skandinavia*, comprising the Scandinavian-speaking countries Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Instead of a remark on the internationally confusing English use of 'Scandinavia' in the Introduction, I would have wished that the author had adopted the Nordic peoples' use of 'Scandinavia' as *Skandinavia* and otherwise used 'Norden' or 'the Nordic countries'. In sum the author explains convincingly how – in spite of some cultural overlap with neighbouring areas of Russia, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Northern Germany and the British Isles – the Nordic countries still represent the core area for what is referred to as 'the Nordic model'. And I fully agree with her statement that the Nordic countries represent an area that is predestined for internally comparative studies. Hilson refers to influential geographers (Olwig, Paasi, Pred), but she is a historian, and this is rather clear all the way reading through her book. However, I think her work can be useful for many geographers due to a gap I perceive in geography's own recent literature. Two English language geography books that provide synoptic overviews of Norden and its countries from the 1960s and the 1980s (Sømme 1968; Varjo and Tietze 1987) have become outdated in many respects today. A more recent comparative Nordic regional geography (Gläßer *et al.* 2003) is unfortunately of limited use internationally, because it has (so far) been published only in German. This gap is covered by both 'Nordic Landscapes' and 'The Nordic Model' – to some degree. Thus, maybe the latter of the two could start a series with 'The Nordic Area: A Geography' as the second volume?

SEBASTIAN EITER, *University of Bergen, and Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute*

The Natures of Maps: Cartographic Constructions of the Natural World. By DENIS WOOD and JOHN FELS. London: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 230 pp. £25.50 ISBN 978 0 226 90604 1

This beautifully illustrated and richly detailed text clearly delineates several ways in which we instill maps with their power and it elaborates thoroughly on the sources of that power. Part one establishes and defines the authors' quest to find 'where the power (of maps) comes from'. It defines the path along which they hope to find the answers and attempts to provide the reader with the necessary tools to accompany them on their journey. In part two the authors explore

how eight inherent 'natures' of maps provide maps with the power to create rather than merely depict nature. This part is rich with insightful analysis and an array of significant maps in history including *Peters World Map* and *Land Cover Portrait/Conterminous United States* alongside popular maps such as those published by the National Geographic Society, the United States Geological Survey. Wood and Fels use these maps to illuminate ways in which both scholars and lay readers may critically engage with the sources of meaning and power of maps.

As the authors note in their introduction, several sections of the text, especially those discussing semiotics, cognitive cartographics, and the propositional logic of the map, may be difficult for some readers. In no way, however, should the relative difficulty of some sections discourage the lay reader; the majority of the text provides some of the richest and most provocative deconstructions of maps available in the field of cartography today.

While the beauty of this book should not be overlooked or minimised, Wood and Fels acknowledge in their introduction that the necessity of using reduced images in the text does not do full justice to the maps themselves. They attempt to address this by including detailed views of some of the more significant features of the maps and recommend that readers try to obtain full-scale copies elsewhere to enhance their reading experience. There are so many maps included, however, that readers may end up on their own not insignificant quest to locate copies of the maps. A supplement to the book that included full-scale copies of the most significant discussed maps would be highly beneficial, as would making high-resolution images available for readers to access on line (though Wood and Fels would likely argue that some of the experience of the maps would be lost without the act of 'unfolding').

The Natures of Maps is an important step forward from Wood and Fels' previous work, *The Power of Maps* (Wood and Fels 1992). Having already recognised the power inherent in maps, they now work to reveal the sources of that power. Readers who are new to the field of cartographic theory will benefit greatly from all of the introductory materials to the text – especially the historical background presented in the foreword by John Pickles from the University of North Carolina.

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References

Wood D and Fels J 1992 *The power of maps* Guilford, London

Tectonic Geomorphology of Mountains: A New Approach to Paleoseismology. By WILLIAM B BULL. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007, 316 pp. £42.50 ISBN 978 1 4051 5479 6

The question 'Why can't you predict when the next one will happen?' is a common question for anyone working in the field of earthquake seismology. Any reader of this book will soon appreciate the complexity of the processes and interactions occurring in active mountain belts, and see why we have a long way to go before we can fully predict earthquake hazards. The emphasis in this volume is the information that we can obtain from looking at the characteristics and effects of ancient earthquakes in mountain belts.

The book aims to lead the reader through the diverse and large field of tectonic geomorphology in active mountain belts, providing a good introduction to many of the key concepts required in the study of active mountain belts, and ample references and direction for further reading. The reader is first taken through some of the basic concepts of tectonic geomorphology: complete chapters are dedicated to bedrock uplift (chapter 1) and the processes that control the response of the landscape to that uplift (chapter 2), before being introduced to issues specifically relating to active mountain belts and paleoseismology. The central portion of the book covers the geomorphic features of mountain fronts and the tools that can be used to assess the response of the mountain belt (chapters 3 and 4) to the generation and modification of fault scarps (chapter 5). These chapters provide a well-written and clearly illustrated overview of the subject, with a very good balance between the text, the images of the landscapes, and the graphical representations of the concepts and features under discussion. The final chapter is devoted to paleoseismology, and presents case studies from two areas showing the effects of seismic shaking in two contrasting settings using data from a number of different techniques. Here there is an emphasis on the acquisition of data rather than on interpretation, and a little more summarising at the end of each section would perhaps help readers new to the field.

The detailed and in-depth chapters on active mountain belts, and the processes which operate on them, would benefit anyone beginning to investigate the wider field of tectonic geomorphology. The book is well structured and clearly written, and is recommended to anyone wanting an introduction to the tectonic geomorphology of active mountain belts, or for those looking for a course textbook for senior undergraduate students.

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Bioremediation of Petroleum Hydrocarbons in Cold Regions.

Edited by DENNIS M FILLER, IAN SNAPE and DAVID L BARNES

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 288 pp. £65.00 ISBN 978 0 5218 6970 6

This excellent monograph can be considered the first one dedicated to hydrocarbon remediation in cold regions. It is now engaged in the growing research area of natural resources and their sustainable exploitation in areas such as Greenland and Antarctica, which increases noticeably the interest in this topic, given present-day environmental changes in these areas.

Currently, there are many general books on bioremediation with up-to-date information mixed with basic principles, but these texts sometimes suffer from lack of application to real issues. However, bioremediation, that some years ago was merely one more possibility for site remediation, is now becoming a real industry. Therefore, specific and applied volumes such as this one are required. In fact, one of the main challenges for bioremediation treatments emerge wherever temperatures are low and soil conditions are complex. In this sense, this extremely well written book is important and documents very clearly and in depth bioremediation works in cold areas. Additionally, the wide variety of authors of individual chapters really boosts the contents and the different points of view. In my opinion, the only issue is the near total absence of photography within the book.

After a vast and systematic introduction including the description of regulations (chapter 1), chapters 2–6 condense the scientific basis on the subjects of microbiology, soil science and spill science when dealing with frozen/cold regions. Chapters 7–9 are more conventional and typical of bioremediation texts, although the focus of the contents on cold regions make them extremely interesting. Finally, chapters 10 and 11 are particularly motivating, given that recent and innovative ideas for remediation are introduced. For instance, the emerging technologies described in this section, such as the ‘low-cost’ heating and others relating to groundwater treatment, will be undoubtedly very useful in the near future.

As a conclusion, the book can be considered an excellent tool for environmental engineers working in cold regions, but also it will truly satisfy an extensive number of readers (scientists, students, engineers, planners etc.).

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Correction

In the September 2009 issue of *The Geographical Journal*, an error was made in the review of ‘New Geographies of Race and Racism’. The editors of this book are Claire Dwyer and Caroline Bressey, not Claire Dwyer and Caroline Bassey.

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