

the absence of "class" receives much attention, important patron-client ties joining community members receive only one page of discussion and do not merit inclusion in the concluding chapter. The authors also stress that the sense of a common "Indian" identity binds those without access to water to the elite. Yet, on this crucial point little evidence is offered and the importance of this bond is asserted rather than demonstrated.

This book offers an important and fascinating case study of the complex relationship between irrigation and social organization in two indigenous communities. In attempting to integrate the various levels of analysis, they employ a model of "class" that does not do justice to the rich evidence they have gathered.

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The Domestication of the Human Species. By Peter J. Wilson. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989.) xvi + 201 pp. Bibliography, index.

Near the end of his study of the role of domestication in the evolution of human culture, anthropologist Peter J. Wilson writes, "We take living with a roof over our heads and within four walls so much for granted, as the fulfillment of a 'need' for shelter, that we really have not questioned whether shelter is a natural fact of life and whether it makes a difference to the way we are" (p. 180). Wilson may not have intended his work as a contribution to environmental history (apart from its contribution to anthropology), but it is a significant one. If environmental history is the art of taking *nothing* for granted, and has as one of its aims the clarification of the dynamic relationship between nature, the manufactured environment, and human social relationships, then Wilson has succeeded in bringing needed attention to a component of that relationship that is often overlooked precisely because it is so close to us—and because it, in fact, largely governs how and what we see.

Wilson uses the term "domestication" in its literal sense, to refer to the process, beginning perhaps 15,000 years ago and now all but complete, by which human beings have settled into permanent dwellings. "Domesticated people are those who live (and mostly work) in houses grouped together in hamlets, villages, and small

towns as distinct from people of the past and the present who use only temporary dwellings or no dwellings at all. . . and people who live in large cities and work in factories, offices, and so on" (p. 4). As Wilson's study makes clear, in the process of domesticating ourselves we have not simply put a roof over our head; we have given structure to time and space, to our human abilities, and to our lives. Our shelters are filters, affecting human perceptions and responses to the natural and social spheres beyond, while simultaneously changing the relationships and psychology of the people within.

In exploring these changes, Wilson first reviews the evolutionary basis of hominid social behavior and, in particular, the role of visual perception. The point is a central one: vision provides the main channel for "the flow of attention and perception that regulates social life" (p. 21). For higher primates, the only impediments to this flow are the natural barriers in their environment. "Individuals in the same group remain more or less constantly in view of one another and can easily monitor, be sensitive to changes, and react to each other appropriately and accurately" (p. 21).

Within nomadic hunter/gatherer societies, this constant attention and openness is retained, but adapted in diverse and sophisticated forms. Many modern anthropologists and ethnographers have seen the lack of obvious physical and social structures in these societies as indicative of their "primitiveness." Wilson turns this perception neatly on its head. These cultures, he argues, lacking the conscious concept of a permanent boundary, and are instead guided by *focusing*—on other individuals in their group and on features in their landscape. In a sense, the lack of rigid structures that the moderns see (indeed, focus on!) in these societies, tells us as much about modernity as it does about the "primitive." Wilson's discussion of this topic becomes even more important as the last of the world's surviving hunter/gatherer groups are absorbed by neighboring cultures. As Wilson shows, the human family is permanently losing not only special ways of life and knowledge, but a mode of perception, a manner of knowing and seeing this world.

In the remainder of his book, Wilson discusses the ramifications of the switch to domestic life and the construction of boundaries around and between, village plans, and other architectural structures; the aesthetic and qualitative aspects of production in "precapitalist" economies; the division of public and private space, with the attendant impacts on civic and private; the vital role of hospitality in, literally, opening closed doors; the effect of divided space on human preoccupation with power, its expressions, and its control; the

connection between architecture and the emergence of history. Along the way, there are unexpected and fascinating insights. Domestication, Wilson notes, by erecting artificial barriers, allowed purposeful deception and pretense to become important factors in human social relations, ultimately to be refined into a more purely nasty state: witchcraft. But do not despair; Wilson also offers some compensatory comfort, pointing out that "the ethical injunction to 'love thy neighbor as thyself' became . . . important . . . during the time of domestication, for this was when being a neighbor was established as a social concept and as a social role. Before domestication it had no significance, no social meaning" (p. 183).

The Domestication of the Human Species provides rich coverage of a hitherto underrepresented aspect of environmental history, and many important leads for future inquiry. With Wilson, the reader will begin to see houses and fences in new ways, and perhaps the stars as well—when the opportunity next arises to sleep out under them.

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Nuclear Fear: A History of Images. By Spencer R. Weart. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.) xiv + 535 pp. sources, notes and index. Cloth, \$29.50; paper, \$14.95.

The most acute environmental threat that faces the world is that of nuclear war. This threat has shaped our military posture, political institutions, economy, culture, and psychology for nearly a half century. Yet, oddly, it is at best a minor object of discussion in the field of environmental history. This is unfortunate because the production, testing and threatened use of nuclear weapons have environmental as well as military, political and economic impacts.

The few studies that have been published demonstrate that there is no need to wait for a nuclear war before historians can examine the relationships between nuclear weapons and the environment. For example, Roger Anderson and Michele A. Stenehjem each examined weapons production as a source of environmental contamination (*ER* 13:69-92 and 13:94-112). In his book, *DDT* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981; pp. 102-4), Thomas R. Dunlap explored the role that nuclear fallout played in making the American public weary of claims that technology will better the human condition. My paper,