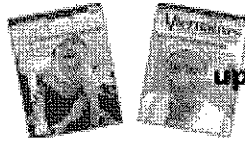


# Alternatives

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL IDEAS & ACTION



## Subscriber Service:

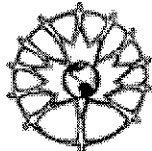
update your address, renew your subscription,  
order back issues, general feedback

[About us](#) [Journal Issues](#) [Subscription orders](#) [Reviews](#) [Resources](#) [Contributing](#) [Advertising](#) [Support](#)

- ▶ CANADIAN NEWS
- ▶ GLOBAL NEWS
- ▶ CAMPAIGNS
- ▶ RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Follow up

Click on "Follow up" for web links from the current issue of Alternatives Journal



ESAC-ACÉE

Alternatives is the official journal of Canada's green learned society, the Environmental Studies Association of Canada.

### Contact Us:

Alternatives Journal  
Faculty of Environmental Studies  
University of Waterloo  
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1  
Canada

**phone:** (519) 888-4442

**toll free:** (866) 437-2587

**fax:** (519) 746-0292

**email:**

[info@alternativesjournal.ca](mailto:info@alternativesjournal.ca)

**web:**

<http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/>

## Colours of Green

Search the web  Search



Winter 2003  
Volume 29, Number 1

### Ecology of Empire

**Book Review:** Imperial Ecology: Environmental Order in the Empire, 1895-1945, Peder Anker, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 2001.

Reviewed by David B. Brooks

Peder Anker has written a fascinating account of how ecology from botany as a discipline in parallel (but competing) school of thought in Britain and in South Africa during the first half of the century. The extraordinarily detailed book contains at least three themes: how, in each school, what had been natural science not just transdisciplinary but a worldview including human history; how, despite sharp differences between the mechanistic British and the holistic South African school, both schools support imperialist policies and colonial administrations.

Today, ecology is commonly seen as one of the "new" interdisciplinary fields of study that could avoid the tunnel vision that is alleged to characterize engineering, science and economics. However, in its characterization, Anker has demonstrated that the very interest in the pride of ecology also contains dangerous tendencies. British ecologists concluded that politics was but another branch of science and that appropriate political conclusions could be determined "scientifically". South African ecologists concluded that, if plants and animals had appropriate niches, so too did human beings - they convinced themselves that northern races were more highly evolved; they concluded that black races should remain in a submissive position. A few ecologists challenged these conclusions, but, with the nature of higher education, they did not get much of a hearing. Anker also describes how some Canadians wondering about many of the native peoples took note - though they had to rework the

Imperial Ecology will tell most readers more than they want to know, but Anker writes well, which makes the dense text easier to read.

Happily, he has an eye for juicy tidbits – such as the pronc an ecology professor at Yale that climate had a lot to do wi cycles, as it did with the Russian revolution and with sexua Japanese brothels.

David B. Brooks is director of research for Friends of the Ea

**REFER A FRIEND TO THIS PAGE**

Your Name:

Your Email Address:

Your Friend's Name

Your Friend's Email Address

Your Message:

(OPTIONAL: add your message above or below the text we already have there for you.)

Here is an article that you might find interesting:  
Ecology of Empire

**Send Email Now**

Please Note: The E-mail address you enter above is not sa only used to send a link to the page and to notify you if an could not be delivered.

home page | feedback | administration  
© Alternatives 2003. All rights reserved.  
Updated: 29 April, 2003



Part of thegreenpages.ca network.