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REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PLASTICS GONE? MENAGE A TROIS IN THE SEA SURFACE MICROLAYER

Nanoparticles as Vectors of Environmental Chemicals

H.G. Brack

Pennywheel Press (440 pp.)

\$21.00 paperback

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BOOK REVIEW

A comprehensive collection of information about nanoparticles and their impact on the environment.

In this environmental science book, the fifth installment of the Phenomenology of Biocatastrophe series, Brack (*Handbook for Ironmongers*, 2013, etc.) presents a short narrative of the environmental damage done by tiny plastic nanoparticles, followed by a substantial annotated bibliography on the topic. The “Ménage à Trois” of the title refers to the complex, harmful relationship between nanoparticles, chemicals, and microorganisms, which the author blames for environmental problems. The main narrative takes up less than a quarter of the book; most of the pages are devoted to an extensive list of relevant sources, taken from peer-reviewed publications, environmental think tanks, activist organizations, and government publications from around the world. Instead of summaries, which traditionally accompany annotated bibliography listings, the author offers quotations from many of the works. Throughout the narrative, Brack applies a variety of names to the current era (including the “Age of Plastics,” the “Age of Income Inequality,” and the “Age of Information Technology”), and he does not shy away from eloquent indictments of the modern world, as when he references “the ever increasing growth of pyrotechnic petrochemical nuclear society...in the context of a vulnerable biosphere in crisis.” He also doesn’t hesitate to provide descriptions of chemical processes (“Autotrophic photosynthetic cyanobacterium may dance with our xenobiotic visitors, but marriage is unlikely”) or indulge in hyperbole, as when he compares climate change to the Holocaust and tea party groups to the Taliban. The book relies on specialized terminology—a list of acronyms used in the text runs to five pages—and assumes that readers have a high level of scientific literacy. As such, this book is not intended for a general audience and would be ineffective as an introduction to the problems of nanoparticle pollution. However, it does provide a wealth of information and a thorough, detailed compilation of current research for readers who have an existing knowledge base on the subject and seek impassioned analysis.

A fervent warning about environmental dangers accompanied by a thorough list of resources.

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