

Green networks

Timothy O'Riordan

Fantasy, the Bomb and the Greening of Britain. By Meredith Veldman. Cambridge University Press: 1994. Pp. 325. £35, \$54.95 (hbk); £12.95, \$17.95 (pbk).

AT first sight there does not seem much to connect the fantasy writings of C. S. Lewis and J. R. Tolkien with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the rise of environmentalist protest in Britain. It all sounds like a quiz for the radio programme 'Brain of Britain'. But Meredith Veldman creates a most plausible intellec-

of control. British imperial power has waned, but its citizens still yearn for the time when Britain was a force in the world. So the fantasy is complicated by a paradoxical interpretation of social change, where adherents of the new order search for some areas of speciality where Britain can once again lead the world. Artistry, intellectual inventiveness and caring for humanity on a peaceable Earth could be such causes. This mood does intertwine the three themes of Veldman's book. The search for a better coexistence is a powerful connector.

The third idea is the desire to make this new world compatible with human values. This means getting on top of big technology, big government, big industry and big science. This is where Veldman's analysis suffers from what seems like an artificial conjunction. The environmental movement is far more complicated than these simplistic 'antis'. So too are the convoluted writings of Tolkien and Lewis. The CND movement was genuinely fearful of true holocaust, but it was not especially anti-bigness so long as it could be harnessed in the cause of peace and goodwill.

This is a clever book, well written, thoughtfully presented and subtly connected. In each of the three areas of primary analysis there is work of authority and scholarship. One cannot but be impressed by the brave attempt to connect fantasy, anti-nuclearism and the early Green movement into a single strand. But one could connect many other areas of the arts, political protest and social reform if one looked hard enough. The author's synthesis is not in itself a fully convincing argument, but it is certainly a cleverly presented one.

What makes the environmental movement tick is not its romanticism but its hard-headedness. It is a thoroughly sophisticated operation that has always been grounded in a mixture of science, politics and an appeal to inner morality.

One senses the same of CND. Science has always played a powerful role in these movements, but always through a sideways look. This is surely their strength and their legacy. □

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New in paperback

Art Restoration: The Culture, the Business and the Scandal by James Beck with Michael Daley (John Murray, £12.99). A controversial attack on the conservation profession, holding it to be at the mercy of scientists and attribution-seeking curators. The argument failed to convince *Nature's* reviewer, who said that it was "seriously undermined by selective and misleading use of evidence" (Ian McClure, *Nature* **366**, 521; 1993).

Flatland by Edwin A. Abbott (Oneworld, £4.95, \$7.95), a reprinting of this perennial science-fiction classic, first published more than a century ago.

Animal Minds by Donald R. Griffin (University of Chicago Press, \$14.95, £10.25). The book "has no equal in the sheer range of species, studies and behavioural phenomena that [Griffin] draws together" (Andrew Whiten, *Nature* **360**, 118; 1992).

Kepler's Physical Astronomy by Bruce Stephenson (Princeton University Press, \$14.95), an analysis of the development of Kepler's laws.

Vital Signs 1994-1995: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future by Lester R. Brown, Hal Kane and David Malin Roodman (Earthscan, £10.95). The third annual edition of this popular source of environmental information from the Worldwatch Institute.

Sir Joseph Banks: A Global Perspective edited by R. E. R. Banks, B. Elliott, J. G. Hawkes, D. King-Hele and G. Li Lucas (Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, £12). A collection of 20 papers arising from a conference held last year at the Royal Society, London, to commemorate the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the British botanist.

Evolution in Age-Structured Populations by Brian Charlesworth (2nd edn) (Cambridge University Press, £19.95, \$29.95). Of the first edition, published 15 years ago, *Nature's* reviewer wrote: "An important book which can be recommended to anyone with an interest in population genetics and evolutionary biology".

Dynamics of the Standard Model by John F. Donoghue, Eugene Golowich and Barry R. Holstein (Cambridge University Press, £25, \$39.95).

Quantum Field Theory by Lowell S. Brown (Cambridge University Press, £25, \$39.95).

Chemical Oscillations and Instabilities: Nonlinear Chemical Kinetics by Peter Gray and Stephen K. Scott (Oxford University Press, £25). Intended for chemists, mathematicians and engineers.

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REASONS

London protest — the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has always been grounded in a mixture of science, politics and an appeal to inner morality.

tual case, even though its practical application may prove less persuasive.

Veldman seeks to make the connection through three interrelated schemes. The first is some sort of arcadian myth that the old ways are being split asunder by technology, big power politics and a general lack of social care in government, industry and science. This activates a romantic antisocialism that was always embedded in British culture. Various events trigger it, and nuclear power in all its manifestations is one of them.

The second theme is the sense of a loss