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Publisher *Taylor & Francis*

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Chemistry and Ecology

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713455114>

A Review of: "INORGANIC CHEMISTRY AND THE EARTH: CHEMICAL RESOURCES, THEIR EXTRACTION, USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, by J. E. Fergusson, Pergamon Press (Environmental Science Series Volume 6) 1982. 400pp. ISBN 0-08-023995-1 Hardcover ISBN 0-08-023994-3 Flexicover"

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To cite this Article Spencer, John F.(1986) 'A Review of: "INORGANIC CHEMISTRY AND THE EARTH: CHEMICAL RESOURCES, THEIR EXTRACTION, USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, by J. E. Fergusson, Pergamon Press (Environmental Science Series Volume 6) 1982. 400pp. ISBN 0-08-023995-1 Hardcover ISBN 0-08-023994-3 Flexicover"', *Chemistry and Ecology*, 2: 3, 287

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/02757548608080732

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02757548608080732>

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Chemistry in Ecology, 1986, Vol. 2, p. 287
0275-7540/86/0203-0287 \$18.50/0
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Printed in the United Kingdom

Book Review

INORGANIC CHEMISTRY AND THE EARTH: CHEMICAL RESOURCES, THEIR EXTRACTION, USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, by J. E. Fergusson, Pergamon Press (Environmental Science Series Volume 6) 1982. 400pp.
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Yet another environmental volume, but this one is different, approaching an interdisciplinary field through applied chemistry and with no axe to grind. In its four parts the book investigates the origin and distribution of chemical elements, resources, extraction and use and environmental impact.

Although simplistic in parts the coverage of the subjects is broad demonstrating the involvement of both pure and applied chemistry in a way that is stimulating to both undergraduate and the higher academia. New ground is broken in that the geological coverage enables one to clearly see the bridges of interdisciplinary study keeping the context of the environment and social needs to the fore.

Fergusson concludes with a short chapter on analysis and data handling. There is no attempt to detail analytical methods but the synopsis of analytical approach, with tables and detection limits of some instrumental techniques and a comparison of methods, is most useful.

The Bibliography is good although inevitably there are some omissions which I, as a reader, would like to have had thrown in as a bonus. However, the presentation of text and graphics using the original typescript, for economy and rapidity of publishing, is most acceptable being easy to follow and keeping the price of the flexicover edition to a practical level. Why a hardback edition should cost twice as much is difficult to see and perhaps in many cases unnecessary since the Flexicover has proved very serviceable.

JOHN F. SPENCER