



## Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger

### Julie Sze

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Julie Sze's clear and authoritative *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger* discusses the history and philosophy of environmental justice, drawing a link between environmental and community activism within the growing social movement and recognizing that "race, indigeneity, poverty, and environmental inequity are linked in a toxic brew."

This Marxist analysis is peppered with jargon that's defined in the glossary. Though the content is dense, the prose is accessible and passionate. It exhorts its audience to reconsider ideas of American exceptionalism, the "religion of whiteness," the excesses of corporate capitalism, and other dominant social and political beliefs to see how they negatively impact people, animals, and the environment. While remaining upbeat and certain that we can move forward with imaginative new means of governance and consumption that limit toxic effects, she underlines the urgency of acting now, in a time of regressive political governance and climate-change denial.

Numerous environmental justice examples illustrate chapter's themes, from the 2016 resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Reservation to the lead contamination of public drinking water in Flint, Michigan. The idea that poor and marginalized communities suffer the brunt of economic and political injustice is not new, but Sze casts such brutal acts as "slow violence," rooting them in European settlement traditions of land theft, colonialism, and racism.

*Environmental Justice* is a rousing primer that illuminates the movement's core principles. It demonstrates how interconnected disparate social movements are and shows that they can coalesce into more powerful networks. Sze's ideas about how activists and artists should forge stronger coalitions and use social media and storytelling in new ways to promote their messages is inspiring, even as she notes that "we have much more work to do."

RACHEL JAGARESKI (January / February 2020)

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