



Removing Mountains: Extracting Nature and Identity in the Appalachian Coalfields (A Quadrant Book)

Rebecca R. Scott

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A coal mining technique practiced in southern West Virginia known as mountaintop removal is drastically altering the terrain of the Appalachian Mountains. Peaks are flattened and valleys are filled as the coal industry levels thousands of acres of forest to access the coal, in the process turning the forest into scrubby shrublands and poisoning the water. This is dangerous and environmentally devastating work, but as Rebecca R. Scott shows in *Removing Mountains*, the issues at play are vastly complicated.

In this rich ethnography of life in Appalachia, Scott examines mountaintop removal in light of controversy and protests from environmental groups calling for its abolishment. But *Removing Mountains* takes the conversation in a new direction, telling the stories of the businesspeople, miners, and families who believe they depend on the industry to survive. Scott reveals these southern Appalachian coalfields as a meaningful landscape where everyday practices and representations help shape a community's relationship to the environment.

Removing Mountains demonstrates that the paradox that faces this community-forced to destroy their land to make a wage-raises important questions related not only to the environment but also to American national identity, place, and white working-class masculinity.

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