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come to terms with the productive and economic side of human communities. This is in stark contrast to the literature on biodiversity and sustainability, which has produced a great deal of acrimonious debate between biodiversity conservation and sustainable development interests rather than acknowledging that both are important and moving on to seek practical ways advance both concerns. Using the real world cases that it presents, the book highlights how efforts to address environmental and social issues comprehensively have arisen out of the limitations of prior efforts to address these issues in isolation. The book is firmly grounded in the inclusive beliefs that: (1) we can simultaneously work toward the goals of environmental quality, social justice, and economic vitality; (2) each of the different sectors - public, private, and non-profit - has a contribution to make; and (3) real progress is made when these players are able to find areas of common concern and develop corresponding actions.

None of the authors find unqualified successes in the cases that they discuss, and they pragmatically note failures and successes, as well as hopeful and discouraging signs for the future. The perspective that emerges is that the quest for sustainable communities is a turbulent process of interacting interest groups, fragile progress mixed with setbacks, solving of old problems and discovery of new ones. This process is messy, but produces concrete improvements in many environmental and social indicators over time. Yet problems are rarely fully solved, and new problems emerge, making sustainability always a work-in-progress. By fully embracing the complexity and uncertainty found in the cases, the authors position themselves to lay out a strong agenda for future research and practice. (In keeping with the inclusive nature of the book, the authors are able to discuss both implementation needs and research needs in a synergistic way, rather than seeing one as being more important than the other)

Kraft and Mazmanian effectively sum up the lessons of the book and lay out a future agenda in their concluding chapter. They see environmental policy at the beginning of what could be a profound transformation towards a sustainable communities approach, but with the direction and extent of this transformation depending on how certain key challenges are met. One of these challenges is developing public involvement and governance processes that can address the ever-present conflicts in goals among interest groups and find sufficient consensus that to support concrete initiatives. A second challenge is developing indicators and monitoring methods that can inform policy choices. The third challenge is for researchers to conduct comparative research involving cases with different histories, types and levels of initiatives, and degree of success or failure to produce the empirical knowledge and theories (social, cultural, economic, and political) that can bring about shifts in human behavior and progress towards sustainable communities.

This book makes a significant contribution towards the theory and practice of sustainability by analyzing a series of case studies with the common framework of the three epochs of modern environmental policy. Although the book is clearly much stronger on urban and regional planning issues than natural resource management issues (i.e., issues within the scope of EPA's authority, rather than within the domains of the US Departments of Interior and Agriculture), it successfully lays out a strong framework that can be applied to many aspects of recent and current environmental policy. Its pragmatic focus will provide useful guidance to practitioners who are working in environmental policy and management, while at the same time providing a real-world anchor that can guide academic and applied researchers in their efforts to contribute to environmental policy and management.

Paradise for Sale: A Parable of Nature. By Carl N. McDaniel and John M. Gowdy. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2000, xiv, 225 pp

Reviewed by David Zurick, Department of Geography, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY 40475

The authors selected Nauru, a tiny tropical island in the western Pacific Ocean, as metaphor of their grim environmental trajectory of the world. It was not a bad choice. The lunar landscape of Nauru counters most intuition about Polynesia as paradise. In place of coconut palms and lush gardens, one finds on Nauru that much of nature has been eliminated and eighty percent of the land rendered useless, a wasteland, because of unbridled phosphate mining since 1901. During the past century, the island, which supported human life for 2000 years, has become incapable of self-supporting its inhabitants, even while they became richer in the process. The environmental collapse in Nauru paralleled the emergence of the global economy, noted in the island's history of colonialism, modern-day politics of

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state development, and new measurements of social progress simply as wealth. In such ways, Nauru is a microcosm of events occurring worldwide, leading, in the authors' estimation, to the current crossroads of human life on Earth, wherein we choose between the likelihood of global environmental and societal collapse and the design of more sustainable lives.

The small size of the island makes manageable the authors' political ecological analogy, which spans much of human history and the global economy. Such scalar leaps are fraught with uncertainty. This book, unlike others that attempt a global study of what is essentially a multitude of small stories writ large, benefits from its well-placed focus on a single small island. It is too bad the authors spent so little time there. A longer residence on Nauru might not have led the authors to different conclusions about the world, but it would have provided the reader with a greater assurance about the book's interpretation of the island.

In eight chapters, illustrated with thirteen line drawings and maps, the book charts the course of the denudation of Nauru's natural landscape. The mythology and prehistory of Nauru, recounted in narrative sketches, tells about several thousand years of human inhabitation, during which the islanders lived off the land and the sea in reasonably sustainable ways. Despite the many romanticist assertions of the authors, life on Nauru was not necessarily harmonious or devoid of conflict and misery. Nauru society, like that of other Polynesian islands, experienced its share of warfare, natural disasters, famine, political strife, and bad choices. But at the end of the day, the human needs of the population, checked in size by the carrying capacity of the island, were met by the bounty of nature. Nauru occupied this rather envious position well into the European era of discovery and colonization. Its remote location, and lack of natural resources of initial interest to the world market, kept at bay the modernizing forces of the western world. This was to change, gradually at first with the appearance of European beachcombers, rum, and guns in the mid-1800s, and more rapidly beginning in 1888 when Germany annexed Nauru as a Protectorate following a decade-long civil war on the island. The Germans imposed order, but the Nauruans lost their self-sufficiency in the bargain. Twelve years later, with the signing over of phosphate rights to the London and Sydney-based trading concern known as the Pacific Islands Company, the islanders lost something more - their land. Agreements between Germany, Britain and the newly-formed Pacific Phosphate Company assured the rapid removal of phosphate reserves on Nauru and the eventual formation of its lunar wasteland. During the interim, Nauru became one of the richest places on earth, with per capita incomes approximating the most highly developed industrialized societies. The cost of such wealth to the islanders' natural and social health, however, has been great.

I read this book with mixed feelings. It is nicely-written, handsomely-produced, and the story it tells resonates well with much of our current understanding about the sustainability of life on Earth. Generally, I shared the authors' views about the problems of modern society, which led them to examine Nauru in the first place, and I was intrigued with their self-appointed task of constructing a global metaphor from a tiny, real place in the midst of the Pacific Ocean. But ultimately I grew wary of their analysis because it was based upon the intimate details of an island with which they have little personal familiarity. In some kinds of study, this may not be such an important thing, but in an explication of the collapse of nature and societal values, a personal connection to the place and people under study are paramount. The story the authors recount about Nauru is an important one. As the authors assert, its lessons are not so different from those contained in the stories of other societies and places on the planet. The authors do not have a very hopeful ending for their environmental story, either writ small in Nauru or upon the grander stage of the entire planet. As a consequence, whether about life on tiny Nauru or the affairs of the wider world, the comprehensive view of the book is decidedly negative and even, in some ways, defeating.

I imagine the idea of placing their global analysis of unsustainability on the shoulders of a small island was initially appealing to the authors because it offered them a chance to avoid platitudes, an all-too-common aspect of much current environmental writing. To a large extent, particularly when they write about global events, they succeed. The author's understanding of the current plight of the world is comprehensive, and, in my mind at least, essentially correct in its broad sweep and assertions. Their ideas have broad application and should be considered. But in applying their global vision to Nauru, they unfortunately fall into a secondary trap of platitudes, not about generalities, which they successfully avoid for the most part, but about the specifics of life and society on Nauru and other remote places like it. What they write about Nauru is not necessarily false, but their reliance upon secondary sources nudges their assessment of the island too much in the direction of a predetermined outcome. Along the way, life is over-simplified and the nuances of culture are missed. This problem enlarges in Chapter Four, entitled "Living the Myths," to encompass other world societies such as the Australian Aborigines, the Kalahari !Kung, and the Ladakhis. In a few pages, they sketch the outlines of some of the oldest and richest cultures on the planet, linking them to the Nauruans and to the world at large. This would be a Herculean task if done properly. In a few pages, the authors could at best bring to light a straw man sketch, hence exposing the weakness of their analysis. The Aborigines, the !Kung, and the Ladakhis, like the Naurus, have a life projected upon them, which may not be a good

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fit at all. To suggest, for example, that the Ladakhis once sang constantly, but that now, because they have heard professional singers and are embarrassed by their own singing, sing less, is both naïve and wrong, which a visit to the cultivated fields of Ladakh in September would quickly point out (p. 92-93). Chapter Four, although comprising only 24 pages of a 225-page book, seriously flaws *Paradise for Sale*, because it erodes confidence in the reader in the authors' more comprehensive global analysis. If they didn't get it right with the specifics, are they correct in their overall assessment of the world?

I finished the book with the same misgivings I had when entering into it. In part, this was due to the book's premise about Nauru as metaphor of the world, but also because of a certain ambiguity that arose from the authors' assertions about the process of writing the book. On the first page of the Prelude, we read that the authors selected Nauru as a study site based upon an article in the *New York Times* and that one of the authors then visited the island to "check it out," presumably to conduct field research there. On the first page of the Coda, however, located at the very end of the book, we read that the visit to Nauru only occurred at the behest of a reviewer after the entire manuscript was completed and needed only "fine-tuning." I appreciated the honesty of these statements, but the chronology of research and writing, as well as the purpose and duration of the Nauru field visits, were troubling to me. That said, this book is a good choice for anyone interested in a considered, ultimately realist in its pessimism, overview of the world's environment and the consumption-oriented worldview of industrial society that has contributed to its recent decline. The authors' global knowledge is impressive and their sincerity is obvious, and where they successfully draw Nauru into the debates about the sustainability of the larger world, they do so with great effect.

The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India, by Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, xviii, 289 pp.

Reviewed by Lynn Vincentnathan, Department of Anthropology, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL

Writing against some current trends in the social sciences and in South Asian studies, Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany, in their book *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*, provide a solid argument for why untouchables still constitute a viable category in modern, democratic India. The main thrust is not only that discrimination against untouchables persists, though the worst of its ritual pollution based component is fading away, but that untouchables on the whole have not escaped from poverty, despite the plethora of government anti-poverty programs. Furthermore, because of untouchables' growing assertiveness coupled with the advances they have made (more perceived than real), caste Hindus are increasingly engaging in violent backlashes against them. These all serve to perpetuate the "fault line," as the authors put it, between untouchables and caste Hindus.

The book draws on history, including orthodox Hindu and bhakti literature, to show that untouchables -- though referred to by other names -- have been a part of Indian society for centuries, if not millennia. The authors discuss the problems surrounding the term "untouchable," but fortunately do not dwell on the issue of whether untouchables actually exist or are an artificial category created and used by others, as Charsley (1996) contends. However, their whole book can be seen as a strong refutation of this thesis. While they do not cite Charsley (1996), they do partly answer his criticisms by revealing the great diversity among untouchable castes and internal splits within them. Unlike Charsley, who follows current fashion by criticizing the British, they commend the British for contributing to an enhanced pan-Indian untouchable consciousness, but lament the difficulties in creating a unified untouchable political base. They cover much of India, describing a variety of untouchable castes, movements, and situations, focusing more heavily on Bihar, Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab-Haryana, and Tamil Nadu. Regarding the fact that most untouchables throughout India do not perform polluting work, but are mainly agrarian laborers -- which Charsley (1996) uses to bolster his claim that the term "untouchable" is wrong -- Mendelsohn and Vicziany, following a critical perspective, suggest that the ideology of untouchability has probably been used for the