

for research. Notwithstanding this, the book provides some valuable insights into how behavioural research has already helped in conservation and how the science can aid future conservation efforts.

The book admirably meets its objectives of encouraging behavioural researchers to consider conservation in their work and of showing environmental managers the value of behavioural

research in conservation. Many practical applications were detailed, some of which have already been successfully implemented and some (such as the use of hormone measurements to determine animal stress levels) show considerable promise in the conservation of wild populations. I thoroughly recommend this book not only to behavioural researchers and conservation managers, but to anyone with an interest in conservation.

The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature

David Suzuki, with Amanda McConnell
Greystone Books, Vancouver, 1997
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THE majority of David Suzuki's books have been a response to the processes causing environmental degradation. In *The Sacred Balance*, he addresses the apathy behind these processes. If people are apathetic or indifferent to the degradation of their environment, it is almost impossible to bring about the change which can lead to environmental restoration and biological conservation. Poor environmental attitudes dominate in western society. Re-establishing the link of humankind to nature is the key to changing attitudes and Suzuki explains the physical, social and spiritual needs that must be satisfied to achieve this.

Suzuki targets an audience with a range of environmental beliefs and education levels. By targeting a wide audience, Suzuki hopes to ensure as many environmentally poor attitudes as possible can be changed. However, the majority of readers will already have an environmental ethos. Reaching a new and environmentally apathetic audience will take more than a book.

The book contains five main sections, an introduction, physical needs, social needs, spiritual needs and a concluding chapter. The initial section establishes the need for humans to get back to nature to ensure the future of the planet. Suzuki presents a number of environmental issues and how the current "needs" of humans are mostly material possessions which mirror the consumerism of society. The first section captivates the reader, stimulating them to continue reading.

The second section details the physical needs of humans that are provided by the environment; air, water, soil and energy. This section is well constructed. Each chapter explains why each physical need is necessary for human survival. For example, in relation to air, Suzuki describes the composition of the atmosphere and how it is vital for our survival in terms of oxygen intake and climate control. Following this is an explanation of why each need is under threat from human

activities. Using the previous example, Suzuki details the problems associated with air pollution. He concludes by establishing the importance of all the living organisms on the planet.

The third section relates to the social needs of humans. It explains the need for a stable family unit and the love and security this can provide. Suzuki believes that people will be more inclined to focus their attention on environmental problems if their personal problems are minimized. This concept is further expanded to establish the necessity for communities becoming closer. Strong ties within communities will ensure environmental problems are addressed on more than an individual basis.

The fourth section of the book, written by Amanda McConnell, discusses the spiritual needs of humans. Humans require justification for their existence. McConnell explains how humans are made of the earth and thus must look to nature to find spiritual meaning. It is at this point in the book that the reader truly begins to understand why Suzuki believes re-establishing the link with nature is the key to a sustainable future. Although well written, the different style of McConnell detracts from the flow of the book.

The final chapter provides guidance for people who want to arrest environmental degradation.

The Sacred Balance is beautifully written and similar to previous books written by Suzuki. In *A Matter of Survival* (1990), with Anita Gordon, Suzuki emphasized the importance of changing attitudes, while in *The Wisdom of the Elders* (1992), with Peter Knudtson, he explored the stories of native groups in relation to nature. *Time to Change* (1993), covers much of the information that is presented in *The Sacred Balance* but, it is not just the information that impacts on the reader, it is how it is presented. By placing the emphasis on fulfilling human needs, Suzuki offers a new approach to addressing environmental degradation.

If even half of the people of the world read this book and followed the advice provided, the future would be a lot less bleak. Unfortunately, most people will not even be aware of its existence. Perhaps for his next book, David Suzuki should explain how to increase the exposure given to environmental texts.

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