Lackey, Robert T. 2003. *Quarterly Review of Biology*. 78(4): 499-500. [Review of: *Searching for Sustainability: Interdisciplinary Essays in the Philosophy of Conservation Biology*. Bryan G. Norton, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2003].

SEARCHING FOR SUSTAINABILITY: INTERDISCIPLINARY ESSAYS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONSERVATION BIOLOGY. *Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Biology.* *By Bryan G Norton. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.* $85.00 (hardcover); $30.00 (paper). ix + 554 p; ill.; index. ISBN: 0–521–80990–8 (hc); 0–521–00778–X (pb). 2003.

Terms such as sustainability, sustainable development, biological integrity, biological diversity, ecosystem management, and ecosystem health frequently are at the core of policy debates in part because their precise meanings are the subject of vigorous scientific argument. Further, there are profound policy ambiguities, even apparent contradictions, embedded in each of these terms. For the past two decades, Bryan Norton has been a leader in trying to bring intellectual order to the search for meaning for these now ubiquitous terms.

The author is a philosopher by academic background and, not surprisingly, approaches his task with intellectual enthusiasm and logical rigor. The book consists of 27 of his previously published essays arranged in six sections. The first section contains five essays that consider pragmatism in environmental policy and especially dissects the ideas of Aldo Leopold. The next four essays discuss the role of science in ecological policy, particularly the roles of conservation biologists and natural resource managers in developing sound public policy. The third section (five essays) attempts to link economics and ecological policy. Of particular interest to Norton is the challenge of relating con-

sumer preferences (e.g., enhancing individual economic security, maximizing personal mobility) to other professed priorities (e.g., achieving biological sustainability, preserving biological diversity). The fourth and fifth sections attempt to bridge the gap between philosophical analysis and practical solutions to ecological problems, and address the analytical challenge of incorporating often amorphous, conflicting human preferences into policy analysis. The final section (five essays) is an attempt to develop a comprehensive approach to environmental evaluation and management.

To some biologists, the articles, with their detailed scholarly discussions, may take on the tenor of a "how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" debate, but the practical implications of these discussions are potentially significant. For example, when discussing whether science is, or can ever be, value-free, Norton bluntly asserts that "[m]y involvement with the EPA illustrated how the anachronistic insistence on a sharp separation of science and value can skew the entire policy process . . . [which] rendered the EPA ineffectual" (p 105).

Overall, this is an excellent book, but it does have a shortcoming in that it is a collection of previously published, stand-alone essays, and thus there is considerable redundancy overall. A thorough editing of the entire volume would have better focused the message. Norton does, however, provide a useful service by consolidating his considerable past contributions to the field of environmental philosophy under a single cover.

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