

Book Reviews

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book of value to all science teachers and points up the areas where these disciplines intersect with each other and with the social sciences. The book would be a useful reference in a high school library for students seeking more advanced information and ideas.

Charlotte Glaiser
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THE SINKING ARK: ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN MALAYSIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

by David Lee. 1981. Heinemann Educational Books, Inc. (4 Front Street, Exeter, NH 03833). 85 p. \$8.95.

In this book the author has given us a much-needed summary of the ecological conditions of this part of the world. Pressures created by overpopulation, commercial utilization of the forests, the necessity for additional agricultural land, and pollution of water and air are discussed in a tone of urgency but without undue panic. The book is not another treatise of "doom and gloom" but a studied expression of concern and an attempt at education. The major objective of the book is to alert the "thinking layman" who may be in a position to correct the several environmental "sins" that are occurring.

The book is written with as little technical language as possible. Wherever technical terminology is used, it is defined in the flow of the text or in the glossary. The few times in which scientific names of plants or animals are used add to clarity. For these reasons, the book would be a valuable adjunct to libraries for sixth-grade readers and beyond.

The author uses most of Chapter 1 to weave an ecological story between the obnoxious-smelling but deliciously fruitful durian (*Durio zibethinus*) and its pollinator the fruitbat (*Oenyceria spelea*). The durian is dependent upon the bat for its fruit production. The bats roost only in limestone caves that are now being quarried to support the growing cement industry; thus one enterprise might destroy another seemingly unrelated one. The author has done well to give us several examples of short-sighted actions such as this that have caused irreparable damage to the environment.

Although the general plea of the book is a concern about the overall environ-

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ment of Southeast Asia, the tropical dipterocarp rainforest is the target of major concern. The author rightfully stresses its importance in water, soil, and germ plasm conservation, as he equates its destruction with that of a "sinking ark."

Nearly every page of text has a picture, graph, table, or line drawing that adds considerably to the attractiveness as well as the reader's understanding. If the book is to be faulted at all, it is in the quality of the black-and-white photographic reproductions. Lack of sufficient contrast in some photographs has greatly decreased resolution, but even here the reader will encounter no difficulty discerning what the author desired to teach.

The book is written about Malaysia and Southeast Asia, but it is a story of concern for all the Earth. Its readership should not be restricted to any one continent or parochial group of continents, but it should be read by all "thinking men."

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General Biology

A VIEW OF LIFE

by Salvador E. Luria, Stephen Jay Gould, and Sam Singer. 1981. The Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Co. (2727 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025). 806 p. \$24.95.

Most students will appreciate the personal comments about the authors in "About the Authors." From this and additional information in the preface, it is evident that these people have a commitment to teaching introductory biology.

Luria, *et al.*, address themselves to a question that all of us teaching an introductory course ask: "Why another textbook?" They provide the answer that in their book the information "is organized around a unifying theme, which regards the possession of an intrinsic program as the central property of organisms." The program, of course, is DNA.

Both a brief and a detailed Table of Contents are provided. Why? As in most biology textbooks, chapter summaries, study questions, reference for further reading, and a glossary are provided. Another feature termed "Coda"