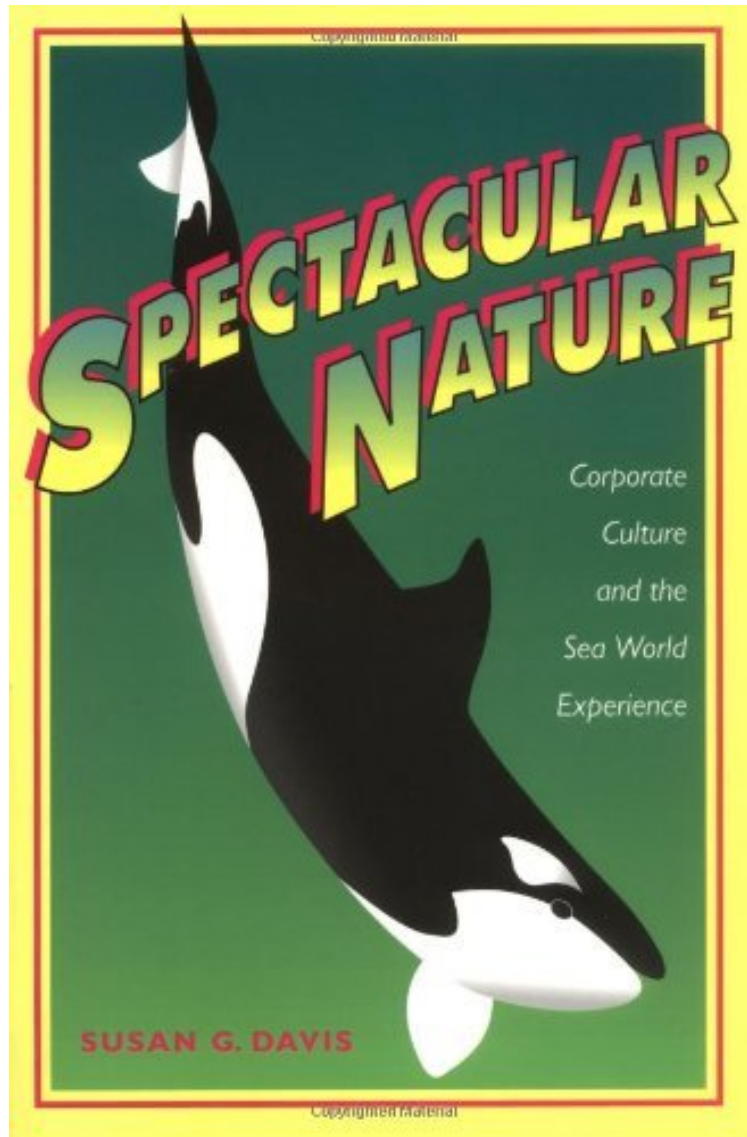


(Free download) Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience

Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience

Susan G. Davis

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Susan G. Davis : Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Capitalist Side of SeaworldBy JessiThis book explains how everything at Seaworld is at Seaworld to make Seaworld money. The author explores the history of Seaworld and it's

cultural and economical affect on San Diego and also the tiny nuances that help make it a commercial success. It explores how everything from the extravagant orca shows to the way the bushes are placed products strategically tested consumerism. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Nice read By Rachel H. Good book to read the truth about SeaWorld and other marine parks. Gives lots of facts and insights into the world of a corporate marine park. 14 of 19 people found the following review helpful. its decent reading, but uncaptivating By A Customer Susan G. Davis's *Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience* examines Sea World from "economic, local historical, spatial, and experimental perspectives, as well as the point of view of its management and at least some of its customers. Her thesis encompasses the representation of nature and the environment by private corporations; Davis states that Sea World represents new private institutional uses for nature mainly as a product for mass consumption. Davis's primary objective is to discover a connection between public meanings, mass entertainment, and private enterprise as she tries to "understand the theme park form and its appeal to its customers, as well as critical questions about Sea World's cultural meanings and effects." *Spectacular Nature* makes one think more critically about their theme park experiences, specifically the place of the amusement park in society and American culture. It does this by proposing a question of intent: Is the theme park strictly here as a business enterprise with the purpose of making profit, or does it seek to be an environmental activist and educational philanthropist. Davis argues that Sea World is a combination of all three worlds; "it styles itself an urban public resource, a site of animal rehabilitation, marine conservation, research, and education." She argues that large corporations are responsible for shaping our culture by producing the locales of America's families. It is a bit disappointing when Davis reaffirms the fact that American culture is based on commercial centers funded by big corporations. One would think that there is more to our great hegemonic nation besides theme parks, movie theatres surrounded by an extremely commercial environment, shopping malls, and minors singing awful pop music. In Orange County, Davis notes that Disney has a tremendous influence and is planning on building a themed community to help demonstrate the redefining of social space. Not only are theme parks culturally relevant in our society, but also Sea World and other parks like it are replacing forest trails and lakesides as means of appreciating nature. Apparently some people believe that going to an environment with confined animals affirms their identity as caring, sensitive, and educated individuals that is possibly reinforced by the Sea World announcer saying "you show you care just by being here." She makes the point that nature has become an object for consumption and empathy. Unlike most money grubbing theme parks, Davis clarifies that Sea World at least offers educational programs to poor and unfortunate children. Although a field trip to Sea World isn't as educational as a trip to the tide pools, it provides excellent hands on experience for the hundreds of thousands of students from first grade to college. Davis states that the educational enrichment experience is slightly tainted by the Kodak moment with the children feeding and petting all the various wildlife. She also explains that despite all the parks educational efforts its first priority is to provide its parent corporation, Anheiser-Busch with a "fair rate of return." Another issue raised in *Spectacular Nature* is the matter of animal captivity. Of course animal rights activists want the animals in the wild ocean where they can swim freely without the constraints of their swimming pools. They also think that performing tricks and wearing props is demeaning towards the animals. Sea World has changed the whale acts and eliminated the props to make them seem more natural. Sea World wishes everyone to know that their animal performers are happy and cheerful, and if they weren't, there would not be a show. Shamu is Sea World's representative and Davis explains that the killer whale serves as a "mediator for the audience, Anheiser-Busch, and the larger corporate world. One of the most troubling factors of *Spectacular Nature* is that opens your eyes to the dominance of corporate America in shaping our lives and culture. There is no getting away from it because major corporations such as Proctor Gamble and Anheiser-Busch distribute almost everything we consume. Even when we want to get away from suburbia and indulge in nature's majesty we either have to drive for hours or go to a zoo. I live in Orange County and I'm not pleased with Disney's continuous expansion because I fear one day my community will be a corporate stretch of neighborhoods. Davis doesn't intend to make us despise corporations she makes us more aware of their force in our culture.

This is the story of Sea World, a theme park where the wonders of nature are performed, marketed, and sold. With its trademark star, Shamu the killer whale; as well as performing dolphins, pettable sting rays, and reproductions of pristine natural worlds; the park represents a careful coordination of shows, dioramas, rides, and concessions built around the theme of ocean life. Susan Davis analyzes the Sea World experience and the forces that produce it: the theme park industry; Southern California tourism; the privatization of urban space; and the increasing integration of advertising, entertainment, and education. The result is an engaging exploration of the role played by images of nature and animals in contemporary commercial culture, and a precise account of how Sea World and its parent corporation, Anheuser-Busch, succeed. Davis argues that Sea World builds its vision of nature around customers' worries and concerns about the environment, family relations, and education. While Davis shows the many ways that Sea World monitors its audience and manipulates animals and landscapes to manufacture pleasure, she also explains the contradictions facing the enterprise in its campaign for a positive public identity. Shifting popular attitudes, animal rights activists, and environmental laws all pose practical and public relations challenges to the theme park. Davis

confronts the park's vast operations with impressive insight and originality, revealing Sea World as both an industrial product and a phenomenon typical of contemporary American culture. Spectacular Nature opens an intriguing field of inquiry: the role of commercial entertainment in shaping public understandings of the environment and environmental problems.