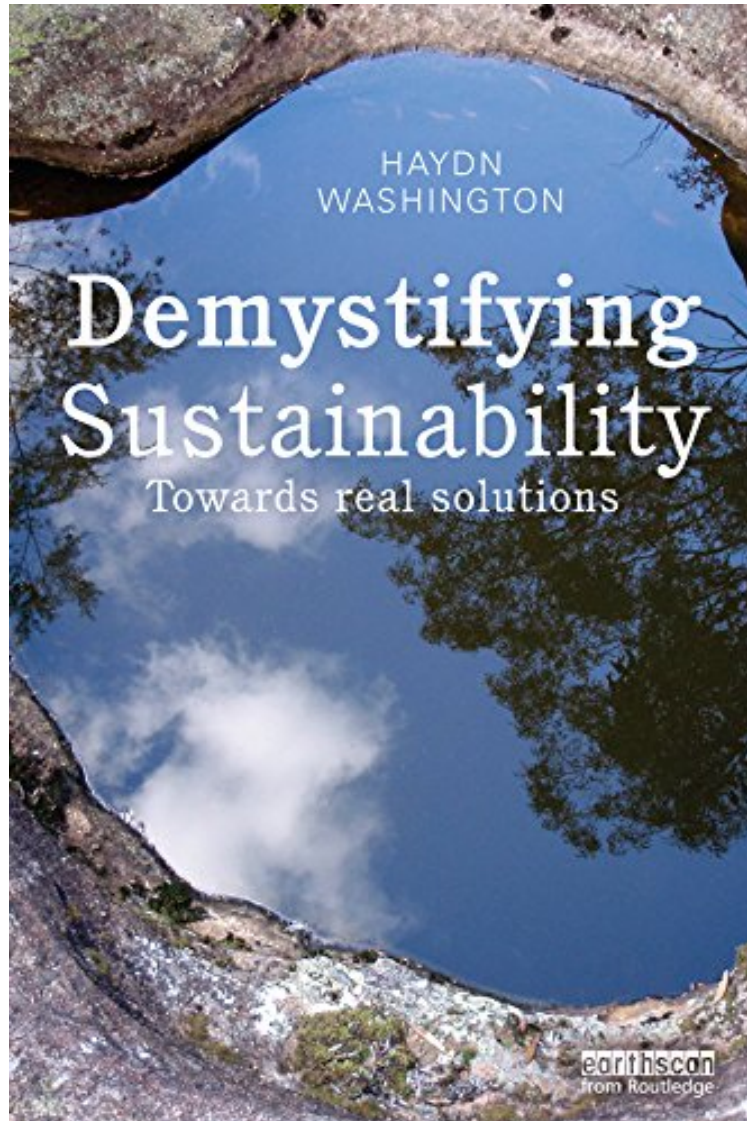


(Get free) Demystifying Sustainability: Towards Real Solutions

## Demystifying Sustainability: Towards Real Solutions

*Haydn Washington*

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**Haydn Washington : Demystifying Sustainability: Towards Real Solutions** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Demystifying Sustainability: Towards Real Solutions:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Required readingBy Robert Eric LeeAs Paul and Anne Ehrlich of Stanford University note: this book should be required reading for all high school students. And high school graduates who want the straight dope should read it too, as well as professors at Schools of Sustainability (and their students). It is that important a topic as unsustainable means civilization ending. Washington is a little weaker on science than I had expected. He associates science with 'Modernism' (p. 12), which it is and that is not a good thing from Nature's POV as science/technology has been very much an enabler of growth/planetary destruction over the past two hundred years.

Early science has been necessarily reductionistic, seeing things through various conceptual microscopes. The knowledge and understanding generated by microscopists may suggest a view of Nature as 'nothing more than matter-in-motion', but such knowledge is the necessary precondition for science to develop a 'better view' through the macroscope which may be our only hope for living on this planet without destroying its life-support system given that the technological genie has been let out of the bottle. That science has been made ill use of is obvious, but it should be equally obvious that ecological systems science (as macroscope) offers understanding of our trajectory and how to change it to avoid 'hitting the wall', avoiding 'existential threats', or to put it straight up, getting through the coming bottleneck and sidestepping human extinction. Washington, despite his obvious wide reading, seems unacquainted with H.T. Odum's system science. In sections where he should have been writing at length about 'emergy', 'transformity', 'emergy yield ratio', and how trade needs to be based on 'emdollars', there is zero mention. I infer he has not read 'Environment, Power, and Society', 'Environmental Accounting', or 'A Prosperous Way Down'. This is an omission that accounts for his being oversold on alternative energy. It is a bit like discussing astrophysics without mention of Kepler or Newton. Still, not a fatal oversight. Readers should consider, however, that Odum's science is foundational and leads to a 'better view'. Washington's view is not wrong, just could be more conceptually robust. To merely mention points of agreement would involve many pages, so to continue with another point of difference, the only sentence in the book (p. 207) that made me do a facepalm was, 'The only way to reach sustainability is activism', meaning political activism. In the next paragraph he mentions Berry's list of three things contemporary history demonstrates: '1) The devastation of the Earth; 2) The incompetence of religion and cultural traditions to deal with this devastation; 3) The rise of a new ecological vision of the Universe.' (The Great Work 1999) Okay, I'll go with 1) and 3), but to 2) add politics. Religion promises 'salvation'; politics promises 'solutions'. Enough said. We all have issues with denial. Even Washington, despite a chapter on the subject [goo.gl/7GaKuW]. Is there an alternative to politics and religion (as-usual) as social control system? A possible alternative could be drawn from the teachings of Zhen [zhenhost.net] while keeping the Kogi example [goo.gl/KirNBM] in mind. "I have played many roles sometimes with the majority, but more often attempting to shock the scientific establishment into a better view." — Howard T. Odum

What is sustainability? Much has been said about the terms 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' over the last few decades, but they have become buried under academic jargon. This book is one of the first that aims to demystify sustainability so that the layperson can understand the key issues, questions and values involved. Accessible and engaging, the book examines the 'old' sustainability of the past and looks to the future, considering how economic, ecological and social sustainability should be defined if we are to solve the entwined environmental, economic and social crises. It considers if meaningful sustainability is the same as a 'sustainable development' based on endless growth, examining the difficult but central issues of overpopulation and overconsumption that drive unsustainability. The book also explores the central role played by society's worldview and ethics, along with humanity's most dangerous characteristic — denial. Finally, it looks to the future, discussing the 'appropriate' technology needed for sustainability, and suggesting nine key solutions. This book provides a much-needed comprehensive discussion of what sustainability means for students, policy makers and all those interested in a sustainable future.

Essential reading for contextualising the social science of 'sustainability'. Spore Magazine 'Sustainability' may be the most important word in our language, and also the most misused. This brilliant, deep, accurate, well-referenced book should do wonders to rectify that. It should be required reading for every high-school student, CEO, and politician. Paul and Anne Ehrlich, Stanford University, USA Demystifying Sustainability bids the modern world to abandon magical thinking. It provides just what the world needs most in its time of gathering crisis — a viable, alternative way-of-being that both celebrates the full spectrum of human potential and accurately represents the biophysical realities within which the human animal must function. William Rees, University of British Columbia, Canada Haydn Washington brings wide reading and experience, plus a sharp mind and sharp knife, to cut away the obfuscation and denial that mystify the discussion of sustainability. The book is accessible without any "dumbing-down", and does not evade the difficult questions of overpopulation, overconsumption, deification of growth, and overconfidence in the ability of technology to substitute for morality. Highly recommended. Herman Daly, University of Maryland, USA Washington boils down the 300 definitions of sustainability to distill the potent essence of the term, and then applies it to point us in the direction of a better future. Erik Assadourian, Worldwatch Institute, USA We want a future that is not only sustainable, but also desirable — a future that allows a prosperous and equitable economy embedded in a harmonious society that remains within planetary ecological boundaries. Our current 'growth at all costs' system and its trajectory are neither sustainable nor desirable. Haydn Washington has provided a powerful demystification of sustainability and a guide to the future we really want. Robert Costanza, Australian National University, Australia It is hard to have a serious discussion about a subject as important as sustainability when we don't even agree on what it means. Harder still if we don't even know that we

don't agree on its meaning. Haydn Washington understands this difficulty only too well and his book succeeds grandly in demystifying sustainability. Peter A. Victor, York University, Canada This book does not beat around the bush. It does not talk in circles. It does not pretend that sustainability is so difficult to grasp that it cannot be achieved. Nor does it pretend that it can be achieved by following business-as-usual trajectory. It does name problems by their name. It does ask difficult but necessary questions. It does propose real solutions. This book is a must read for everybody, in both so-called developed and developing countries, from students to policy-makers. Helen Kopnina, The Hague University of Applied Science, The Netherlands 'Sustainability' must not remain merely an undefined buzzword of our time. The human predicament requires widespread understanding that humanity is in serious trouble because we have overshot this finite planet's sustainable human carrying capacity. Only by immediately outgrowing the 'endless growth' myth can we avert a fatally calamitous future for our species. William Catton, Washington State University, USA Sustainability and spirituality are the double helix of our future wellbeing. Rekindling a sense of wonder in our natural environment is essential for the quality of life of our increasingly urbanized society. This book lives up to the promise of its title and goes a long way towards demystifying sustainability for a broad audience. Julian Crawford, International Society of Sustainability Professionals, USA Haydn Washington has nicely deconstructed the dominant economic paradigm that is driving us toward global collapse. Alternatives are clearly explained through a tool kit of out-of-the box thinking that could save us from ourselves. I recommend it to all who care about a quality future for life on Earth. Colin L. Soskolne, University of Alberta, Canada About the Author Haydn Washington is an environmental scientist and writer of 40 years' experience. He is a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of New South Wales, Australia.