

Green Morality: Mankind's Role in Environmental Responsibility

By Edward Flattau. 2010. *The Way Things Are Publications*. Hard cover, 279 pages, \$29.95, ISBN 9780982141922

In *Green Morality*, Edward Flattau has written a scathing treatise against our economic, social, and moral choices that contribute to widespread environmental destruction. Flattau has issued a rousing call for humanity to meet its moral obligation of sustainability. Flattau's newest book uses countless examples to document that we are woefully short of meeting our moral imperative. As renowned 40-year syndicated environmental columnist, Flattau has ample examples to demonstrate our environmental mishaps and destruction. Expounding on instances of corporate and political green-washing, Flattau's polemic on leaders who make unsustainable decisions for economic gain exposes the urgent need for a realignment of our values, policies, and lifestyles.

Flattau takes a global perspective on our environmental problems focusing on both western lifestyles of consumption and waste coupled with the environmental impacts of population growth. He delicately weaves together interrelated issues such as women's rights, private property, corporate responsibility (or lack thereof), and political finance to illustrate how such seemingly disparate issues affect the health of human and environmental communities. Yet for all the negative environmental behaviors, Flattau does not ignore acts of courage by politicians and citizens that have succeeded in protecting environmental resources. Michael Bloomberg, New York City mayor, is noted for his willingness to outline 'specific and attainable' objectives to make New York City the "first environmentally sustainable metropolis." Other, less well known figures, are lauded by Flattau including Joe Mehrkens. Mehrkens was a U.S. Forest Service employee so dismayed by the agency's management of our national forests that he quit his job to join an environmental organization critical of his former employer.

Green Morality offers countless examples of environmental destruction. However, at times Flattau's presentation of individual incidents or behaviors makes for choppy reading. For example, Chapter Nine 'All Things Equal' begins discussing environmental elitism and ends with a polemic on how a cost benefit analysis used by the Bush administration to set air pollution standards was unfair to senior citizens. Additionally, a narrow use of biological information to denounce human behavior is short-sighted, at best. For example, Flattau

laments our treatment of senior citizens; equating nursing homes with abandonment. Lions, he contends, never send their elderly 'out to pasture' and therefore exhibit more compassion than some humans. However, after displacing or killing a pride's male, the new alpha male will also kill all baby cubs not his own. It is a slippery road to compare the actions of animals to the actions of humans, especially when the purpose of the book is to examine morality. Lastly, while some of the book has appropriate citations, too many statements lack the necessary references to make valid arguments.

Flattau's book advances a critical topic for the 21st century; environmental moral responsibility. Everyone, from environmental professionals to policy makers and everyday citizens, should have the information presented in *Green Morality* and the opportunity to discuss its implications. However, the disjointed nature of the book may prompt instructors to pull excerpts for classroom discussion rather than utilize the text in full. Flattau's manifesto creates a bleak picture of our past actions, but let us hope that through works such as *Green Morality*, our future behaviors can meet our moral obligation to the environment and each other.

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Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: a Year of Food Life

By Barbara Kingsolver, with Steven L. Hopp, and Camille Kingsolver. 2007. *Harper Collins*, New York. 370 pp., cloth, \$26.95, ISBN 978-0-06-085255-9.

Only Barbara Kingsolver could make a one-year family locovore experience into a readable and compelling adventure. Just as any major conversion in behavior begins in the mind, their decision to depend almost entirely on the home garden, farmers market, and other local sources was based on long-held concerns about the health and safety of what is supplied by the global food industry. With some conventional wisdom gleaned from grandparents and experience growing up in a rural area, the first author combines resources from the library and the web with common sense and a strong commitment to reduce their reliance on outside food. The goal was to achieve an independence from the multinational corporations by raising food and developing a local network of sources for things they could not produce on their small farm in the foothills of Virginia.

What ensues is a year-long quest for a balanced and healthy diet based on the vegetables and fruits, the eggs and poultry, and the wild species gathered on their farm or purchased nearby that could be coaxed into an imaginative and nutritious series of meals. It was no small task to overcome the longing for some prepared foods, the bananas that represented corporate greed and exploitation of farm labor in another country, and the guilt at not giving up coffee ... at least this last luxury was Fair Trade© and organic. But true to their ideals, the family persevered and discovered a new frontier that resembled in many ways what their ancestors had enjoyed for decades before the age of fast food. They also found joy and pride in growing food for their own needs and sharing with others, and they did not lose weight as some have in this conversion.

Starting with the first shoots of wild asparagus gathered from the fields, working through the early greens and cherries as the first fruits to appear, to the mid-summer onrush of zucchini and tomatoes, and on to the joy of fall harvest and the food festivals of the season, this is a celebration of local food and indigenous knowledge. But the locovore of today also surfs the web for details on how to produce these local foods, where to find ideas on creative ways to produce, prepare, and preserve them, and how to combine the age-old wisdom of food and culture with the latest on nutritional research. Eating foods in season was a basic principle of the adventure, as well as canning, freezing, drying, and storing what would be needed through the hungry time of winter.

Rich in technical detail, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* also reflects a year of thoughtful scholarship that brought experiential learning and immersion in the context of the food-producing farm to a new level. From botanical detail that reflects the author's background in biology to research on the mating habits of turkeys that have long lost their natural instincts to reproduce, the book is a treasure trove of ideas for the home gardener, whatever degree of self-reliance she or he intends to achieve.

For this reviewer there was an initial disappointment that this Barbara Kingsolver book was not going to provide the mishaps of the missionary adventure in Zaire (*Poisonwood Bible*), any historical depth and exciting connections to Frida Kalo, Diego Rivera, and Leon Trotsky (*The Lacuna*), or the heart-rending personal stories of the poor and oppressed (*The Bean Trees* and other early novels). What was found was an in-depth and thoughtful vision of organic farming and local food systems, made real by one family's example and the articulate writing of Ms. Kingsolver. This would be an excellent book for a course in organic farming, in applied ecology, or in anthropology. Based on contemporary and real-world experiences in the U.S. food system, it provides an alternative to the Fast-Food Nation that we have become. When one reads that the current generation of children in this country will be the first

in our history to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents, that there is an epidemic of obesity, and that even our schools are purveyors of addictive high-sugar drinks, candy snacks and fried foods, it is vital that we seek alternatives. Barbara Kingsolver provides us with viable options, told in a clear and often amusing way, putting a very human dimension into the local food we could eat. The book is highly recommended for its content and readability ... some who take this adventure will never eat the same again.

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Canine and Feline Behavior and Training

By Linda P. Case, copyright 2010, Delmar, Cengage Learning, paperback; 332 pages, approximate cost \$85, ISBN-13: 978-1-4283-1053-7, ISBN-10: 1-4283-1053-3

This is an excellent book. I say that both as a person who teaches Intro to Animal Science at a university and as a person who has 4 dogs and 3 cats at home. The book is well-written, easy to read, and is authored by a highly qualified university instructor who provides ample references at the end of each chapter and sidebar. In addition to being in a logical format with a comprehensive Table of Contents and Index, this book provides sidebars and pictures to illustrate points. It is enjoyable to read, and I plan to recommend it to my students and also to my animal-loving friends and colleagues.

This book will be useful to college instructors, instructors of advanced high school students, dog and cat behavior specialists and trainers, and any people with a general interest in dog and cat behavior. Readers who do not have a background in Animal Science or a medical profession may need to spend some time looking up words that are not in the glossary, such as sebaceous glands, interdigital glottis, premolar, mitochondrial DNA, perineal region, etc. The level is fine for college students, but may be a little advanced for high school students.

Most books are species-specific, but millions of people have both dogs and cats in the same household. It is important to know the natural behavior of each species, but it is also refreshing to read this book and appreciate the interactions between these two species whose ancestors did not socialize together.

The book is divided into three sections. The reader first learns about the history of domestication of dogs and cats and how the relationship between these animals and humans is rooted in natural behavior. By understanding this, the reader can then progress to the section that describes how dogs learn, how cats learn, and how our interactions with these animals will impact their behavior. The author describes how to interact with dogs and cats in a way

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that will result in favorable animal behavior (good manners).

The final section of the book covers some behavioral problems that dog and cat owners may encounter. By this point, the reader understands the natural behavior and can understand what leads to "bad behavior" in dogs and cats. The author's solutions to behavioral problems are scientifically based, thoroughly explained, and can be practiced by pet owners everywhere. The solutions utilize positive interactions with the pet that successfully result in behavioral changes, and the book constantly emphasizes that old-fashioned punishment is not needed and is not appropriate.

The only slightly negative comment I have about this book is that the sidebars are inserted in the middle of the text and are in the same font. I found this to be a little bit disruptive, and would prefer to have the sidebars truly along the side or in separate boxes that are clearly defined. (The sidebars do have a slightly yellowed background, but I did not notice

that in the dim reading light I was under for the first few chapters.) I will say that the sidebars are very interesting and add important information in a fun way.

The author's ample knowledge, clear and smooth writing style, and gift for explaining concepts make this an excellent book to be used in a classroom or to be read at home. The author of this book teaches dog and cat behavior at the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine, and she has written other books about dog behavior and cat behavior. I highly recommend this book to people who teach animal behavior and to others who are interested in a practical approach to dog and cat behavior.

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