

Environmental Virtue Ethics for the Anthropocene in Barbara Kingsolver's Animal Dreams

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Abstract : Human intervention in Earth's macro system has ushered in the age of the Anthropocene, prompting introspection among humans, the action agent. This epoch demands a reawakening of human conscience and inner motivation to mitigate the irreversible trend so as to shape the trajectory of the Anthropocene. Environmental virtue ethics claims that the fundamental cause of environmental crisis lies in humans themselves. Rather than focusing more on what humans should do, environmental virtue ethics seeks to specify environmental virtues to appeal to what kind of person a human should be. Renowned Pulitzer Prize-winning author Barbara Kingsolver illustrates her contentions about environmental ethics through the narrative of Codi and her sister Hallie's environmental choices and actions in *Animal Dreams* (1990). This study adopts a textual analysis approach of the character traits exhibited by Codi and Hallie that are constitutive of making them environmentally virtuous, exploring how emotions and inner motivations drive actions. This paper is informed by Ronald Sandler's (2007) virtues of sustainability, virtues of communion with nature, and virtues of environmental stewardship and activism. It aims to examine how Codi and Hallie's character traits are built around these virtues. Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of internalizing principles and cultivating virtues for the environment and humans' flourishing in the Anthropocene. As a tentative practice in applying environmental virtue ethics to examine environmental virtues for the Anthropocene, this study reveals Kingsolver's endeavor of setting environmental virtue exemplars from fictional characters to inspire humans' long-term and stable contribution to a better future.

Keywords : anthropocene, environmental ethics, environmental virtues, virtue ethics

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