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Peer reviewed

Review: The Earthscan Reader in Environmental Values

By Linda Kalof and Terre Satterfield (Eds.)

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Linda Kalof and Terre Satterfield (Eds). *The Earthscan Reader in Environmental Values*. London; Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2005. xix, 334 pp. ISBN: 1-84407-167-7 (paper); 1-84407-166-9 (cloth) UK£22.95,US\$39.95; UK£80.00, US\$150.00. Elemental chlorine-free paper.

Value is a hotly contested term among environmentalists. *The Earthscan Reader in Environmental Values* attempts to tackle the gargantuan task of assigning economic value to nature. The book is part of *The Earthscan Readers*, a series of books that bring together a core collection of key articles on environmental topics. This reader contains eighteen paper reprints, sixteen journal articles and two book chapters that originally appeared between 1984 and 2002. The contributors were selected based on expertise in their respective fields.

The editors, both academics, establish three goals for the book: lay groundwork for understanding contingent valuation practices, provide an overview of current economic approaches, and place a value on ecosystem services. The papers were, for the most part, originally written for their respective constituency and not for the layperson. Some of the articles may require some disciplinary knowledge to fully comprehend.

The book divides environmental values into four thematic parts, each with a separate introduction. First, economic themes focus on the discipline's move beyond traditional barriers to "incorporate political theory, moral philosophy, institutional economics, social psychology and socialism" (p. 56). This is due, in part, to a willingness of economists to debate the rights of future generations, treatment of the poor, and other "nontraditional" economics topics. Second, philosophical and ethical themes question our moral obligation to the environment that initially rose in the 1960s over concern about species extinction and population growth. Third, anthropology and sociology themes explore socio-cultural links with environmental values, including "social sources of values (religion, gender and geography), and general environmental beliefs (such as scared beliefs about how the world works and endorsement of an ecological worldview)" (p. 153). Finally, judgment and decision making themes explore the experiments designed to measure the value individuals attach to environmental goods and services and "analyses the kinds of decisions individuals reach by democratic political

processes rather than by market technology" (p. 273).

Attempts to value the world's ecosystems in monetary units are viewed by many as fruitless. Yet, for political reasons, there can be constructive use in measuring the value of public environmental goods and using surveys to extract an individual's willingness to pay for public goods. The book goes a long way in explaining the issues and tracking current developments and methodologies used in assigning economic values to nature. Recommended for academic collections and individuals interested in environmental valuation practices.

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