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Green Ethics and Philosophy: An A-to-Z Guide; and Green Issues and Debates: An A-to-Z Guide

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Author

Anderson, Byron

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Peer reviewed

Review: Green Ethics and Philosophy: An A-to-Z Guide

Julie Newman (General Editor)

Green Issues and Debates: An A-to-Z Guide

Howard S. Schiffman (General Editor)

Reviewed by Byron Anderson

DeKalb, Illinois, USA

Newman, Julie (Ed.). *Green Ethics and Philosophy: An A-to-Z Guide*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2011. xxvi, 474pp. ISBN: 9781412996877, US \$110, cloth; 9781412974608, US \$138, ebook.

Schiffman, Howard S. (Ed.). *Green Issues and Debates: An A-to-Z Guide*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2011. xxvi, 539pp. ISBN: 9781412996945, US \$110 cloth; 9781412975728, US \$138, ebook.

These two complementary reference books cover a wide array of environmental ethics, philosophy, issues and debates present in the first decade of the twenty-first century. They are part of a twelve volume series entitled, *Green Society: Toward a Sustainable Future*, a set that together serves as a comprehensive encyclopedia for the environment. The two volumes reviewed here provide an informative overview of each topic, including in many cases counterpoint arguments. *Green Ethics and Philosophy*, volume 8 of the set, contains 146 articles, and *Green Issues and Debates*, volume 12, contains 113 articles. Article length varies from approximately two to six pages per article. Volume 12 is composed of "The articles listed within each of the preceding 11 volumes..." (p. xi). As such, there is an overlap of thirteen titles between volume 8 and volume 12. Curiously, the overlapped articles have similar titles but different authors and the length of these articles in volume 12 are longer.

Inclusion of certain topics is also curious, for example, "Healthcare Delivery," and "Health Insurance Reform." While important, the text lacks any explanation as to how healthcare or health insurance relates to the environment. Other non-environmental topics, such as, "Precautionary Principle," does link the subject to the environment, namely, the ways in which policymakers delay needed action effecting the environment until they have more scientific certainty. Few topics seemed to have been missed, though not found in the subject index is, for example, "Carbon Sinks", reservoirs that store carbon-containing compounds. Other aspects of carbon are covered, however. Also, while certain key pieces of legislation are included, such as, the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Weeks Act and Antiquities Act are not indexed. It is possible that the missed topics were dealt with in some way in one of the other volumes in the series, but they would have fit well in one of these two volumes. One notable distinction between the two volumes is that *Green Ethics and Philosophy* has biographical entries, thirty one in all, and *Green Issues and Debates* has no biographies.

In general, articles are well-written and meant for a general audience. Some articles stand out, for example, the "Business Ethics, Shades of Green" entry in *Green Ethics and Philosophy*. Each article has a "See Also" reference that suggests related topics found in the book and a brief bibliography that is generally current. However, a few articles were not up-to-date, for example, the most recent bibliographical reference for "Biocentrism" in *Green Ethics and Philosophy* was 2003. It would seem that much has happened in that field since then. The bibliographic websites appear to have been checked mostly in latter 2010 and of those checked all were accessible. Articles are signed and include academics, institutional researchers, and independent scholars with name only but without any affiliation.

There are a number of general environmental encyclopedias currently available. More than a dozen are in print, for example, *Worldmark Encyclopedia of U.S. and Canadian and Environmental Issues* (Gale, 2012) and *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* (Macmillan, 2009). Most environmental encyclopedias, like these, are single volume, though a recent series, *Berkshire Encyclopedia of Sustainability*, vols. 1-10, is being issued (vols. 1-3 currently available). It can be difficult to distinguish between these, but it should be pointed out that *Green Issues and Debates* and *Green Ethics and Philosophy* volumes provide expansive coverage overall and good explanations with each article.

Articles are alphabetically arranged. In addition, a Readers Guide arranges the articles in broad categories, for example, "Consumption Ethics and Philosophy (Public/Private)." Each volume provides complementary information, including an overall chronology, a glossary, a resource guide of books, articles and websites, and an annotated appendix of related websites. The subject index is thorough. These two volumes would prove their worth in any library reference collection. If costs prohibit purchase of the entire series, each volume is \$110; the two volumes reviewed here could still provide a great deal of reference assistance. Highly recommended.

Byron Anderson <beau804@yahoo.com>, retired from Northern Illinois University Libraries, DeKalb, IL 60115, USA.

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