



The Wild and the Wicked: On Nature and Human Nature (MIT Press)

By Benjamin Hale

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Most of us think that in order to be environmentalists, we have to love nature. Essentially, we should be tree huggers -- embracing majestic redwoods, mighty oaks, graceful birches, etc. We ought to eat granola, drive hybrids, cook tofu, and write our appointments in Sierra Club calendars. Nature's splendor, in other words, justifies our protection of it. But, asks Benjamin Hale in this provocative book, what about tsunamis, earthquakes, cancer, bird flu, killer asteroids? They are nature, too. For years, environmentalists have insisted that nature is fundamentally good. In *The Wild and the Wicked*, Benjamin Hale adopts the opposite position -- that much of the time nature can be bad -- in order to show that even if nature is cruel, we still need to be environmentally conscientious. Hale argues that environmentalists needn't feel compelled to defend the value of nature, or even to adopt the attitudes of tree-hugging nature lovers. We can acknowledge nature's indifference and periodic hostility. Deftly weaving anecdote and philosophy, he shows that we don't need to love nature to be green. What really ought to be driving our environmentalism is our humanity, not nature's value. Hale argues that our unique burden as human beings is that we can act for reasons, good or bad. He claims that we should be environmentalists because environmentalism is right, because we humans have the capacity to be better than nature. As humans, we fail to live up to our moral potential if we act as brutally as nature. Hale argues that despite nature's indifference to the plight of humanity, humanity cannot be indifferent to the plight of nature.

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Editorial Review

Review

A fun, funny, and accessible trip through Benjamin Hale's philosophical argument for being green -- even though Nature itself is amoral. The duty-based position he favors is sketched out through a series of fascinating and inventive cases -- both real and fictional. You may never buy eggs the same way again.

(Emma Marris, author of *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World*)

So you drive a hybrid and eat local food? If you think you know your climate change ethics, this book will make you think again.

(Mark Lynas, Visiting Fellow, Cornell Alliance for Science; author of *The God Species: Saving the Planet in the Age of Humans*)

In this engrossing, smart, personal, and at turns wickedly funny book, Ben Hale has given us a vision of an environmentalism of the head, rather than the heart, eschewing the sappy sentimentality that is all too pervasive in environmental scholarship. Hale takes the next big step -- likely several steps -- away from the naive caricature of 'anthropocentrism' in environmental ethics, toward an account that has us embrace our unique qualities of being human. The challenge before us is striking: justify your reasons, act for good reason, and together we may create a lasting green citizenship.

(Andrew Light, University Professor of Philosophy and Public Policy, George Mason University; former Senior Climate Change Adviser, US Department of State)

About the Author

Benjamin Hale is Associate Professor of Environmental Studies and Philosophy at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mitchell Diaz:

Book is to be different for every grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. As we know that book is very important usually. The book *The Wild and the Wicked: On Nature and Human Nature* (MIT Press) ended up being making you to know about other information and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The e-book *The Wild and the Wicked: On Nature and Human Nature* (MIT Press) is not only giving you a lot more new information but also to become your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your own personal spend time to read your e-book. Try to make relationship together with the book *The Wild and the Wicked: On Nature and Human Nature* (MIT Press). You never truly feel lose out for everything when you read some books.

Jackie Caldwell:

Why? Because this *The Wild and the Wicked: On Nature and Human Nature* (MIT Press) is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap this but latter it will zap you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who else write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this ever again or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book possess such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I had been you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

Sharon Hite:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try point that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love *The Wild and the Wicked: On Nature and Human Nature* (MIT Press), you can enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout people. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Rebecca Beal:

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