

Environmental Virtue Ethics for the Anthropocene in Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer*

Lan Xu *

PhD Student, Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Zainor Izat Zainal

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Seri Kembangan, Malaysia

Veeramohan a/I Veeraputhran

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Seri Kembangan, Malaysia

Abstract

Human intervention on earth's macrosystem has ushered 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. 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 Lusa and Nannie's environmental choices and actions in *Prodigal Summer* (2000). This study employs textual analysis to investigate the emotions and actions of characters that constitute their environmental virtues, exploring how emotions and inner motivations drive actions. This paper is informed by Ronald Sandler's (2007) specifications of openness and simplicity. Additionally, practical wisdom originated by Aristotle (1999) is employed to examine how these virtues have practical significance. Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of internalizing principles and cultivating virtues. 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.