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The ethics of food and agriculture is confronted with enormous challenges. Scientific developments in the food sciences promise to be dramatic; the concept of life sciences, that comprises the integral connection between the biological sciences, the medical sciences and the agricultural sciences, got a broad start with the genetic revolution. In the mean time, society, i.e., consumers, producers, farmers, policymakers, etc, raised lots of intriguing questions about the implications and presuppositions of this revolution, taking into account not only scientific developments, but societal as well. If so many things with respect to food and our food diet will change, will our food still be safe? Will it be produced under animal friendly conditions of husbandry and what will our definition of animal welfare be under these conditions? Will food production be sustainable and environmentally healthy? Will production consider the interest of the worst off and the small farmers? How will globalisation and liberalization of markets influence local and regional food production and consumption patterns? How will all these developments influence the rural areas and what values and policies are ethically sound? All these questions raise fundamental and broad ethical issues and require enormous ethical theorizing to be approached fruitfully. Ethical reflection on criteria of animal welfare, sustainability, liveability of the rural areas, biotechnology, policies and all the interconnections is inevitable.

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Marcello Di Paola

Ethics and Politics of the Built Environment

Gardens of the Anthropocene



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Preface

Gardens get no respect. They are not the wild places deified by John Muir and other environmentalists. Nor are they works of art in the same league as Leonardo or Michelangelo. Sometimes gardens are trophies of the haute bourgeoisie. Usually they are just one of the accoutrements of modern middle-class life.

You will see gardens in a different way after reading this book. Di Paola takes you on a tour of gardens around the world and shows you the many different things that gardens can be. He also shows you what gardening can do for you.

This book is not only about gardens but also about gardening. Thoreau found the preservation of the world in wilderness. Di Paola finds it in gardening. Gardens have an important role to play in combating climate change, producing food, and protecting biodiversity. Gardening also builds character.

Stewardship is the proper attitude to take towards the garden. Taking responsibility in this way helps us to develop environmental virtues such as mindfulness, ingenuity, perseverance, and cheerfulness. These are virtues that we need in the Anthropocene, this new epoch in which humanity has become a powerful force shaping and dramatically affecting the very nature which gave rise to human life in the first place and continues to nourish it. Gardening presupposes stewardship and also enables it.

Gardens and gardening can be important elements for the morality and the politics of the Anthropocene. But as we try to address challenges like climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss, gardens also offer respite and many chances to add value to our lives, both as individuals and as collectives. Ultimately, our need to solve the problems we face must be linked with our need to live meaningful lives: Di Paola convincingly argues for the importance of gardens as a site for this linkage.

So read this book for enlightenment and with pleasure. Read it under a tree or in an armchair. Remember the pleasures that nature has given you, even in the familiar form of gardens. Think about the ways that these encounters have shaped you. Smile, and be grateful for the small gift of this book.

New York University
New York, NY, USA
August 30th, 2017

Dale W. Jamieson

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I would also like to thank my family for their love and understanding throughout the years. The little I know about gardening and plants I learned from my father and my brother, who converse with the land every day in exquisite language. Most of the other things I know I learned from my mother, who keeps us all together with undying generosity, perseverance, and dedication; and from my sister, who designs gardens and is my special link to youth. I thank my grandparents, who taught me by example how to gracefully approach the world with respect, curiosity, energy, and self-irony.

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