

Conference Name: Kuala Lumpur – International Conference on Social Science & Humanities, 05-06 May 2026
Conference Dates: 05-May- 2026 to 06-May- 2026
Conference Venue: Hotel Capitol, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Appears in: PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences (ISSN 2454-5899)
Publication year: 2026

Lan & Zainal, 2026

Volume 2026, pp. 418-419

DOI- <https://doi.org/10.20319/icssh.2026.418419>

This paper can be cited as Lan, X. & Zainal, Z.I. (2026). *Environmental Virtue Ethics for the Anthropocene in Barbara Kingsolver's Flight Behavior*. Kuala Lumpur – International Conference on Social Science & Humanities, 05-06 May 2026. *Proceedings of Social Science and Humanities Research Association (SSHRA)*, 2026, 418-419

ENVIRONMENTAL VIRTUE ETHICS FOR THE ANTHROPOCENE IN BARBARA KINGSOLVER'S FLIGHT BEHAVIOR

Xu Lan

*Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*
gs64220@student.upm.edu.my

Zainor Izat Zainal

*Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia*
zainor@upm.edu.my

Abstract

The Anthropocene prompts introspection of human roles, demanding a reawakening of environmental responsibility and humans' internal motivation to influence the future of the earth. In environmental virtue ethics, human beings are regarded as the source of environmental crisis. Through textual analysis, this paper focuses on emotions and actions exhibited by Dellarobia Turnbow, the protagonist in Barbara Kingsolver's Flight Behavior (2012). Being a Pulitzer Prize-winning author of 2023, Kingsolver expresses her ethical advocacy through the portrayal of

Dellarobia. To examine how Dellarobia becomes an environmentally virtuous person, this study employs Ronald Sandler's (2007) responsive and productive virtue ethics, which are openness and courage. The study reveals that Dellarobia cultivates openness by positively responding to her emotions towards the environment and allowing emotions as a form of judgement of value. Moreover, she cultivates courage by confronting the uncertainty of the future and making efforts to take actions while knowing her limitations. Thus, this study underscores the significance of internalizing principles and cultivating virtues both for the environment and humans' flourishing in the Anthropocene. As a tentative application of environmental virtue ethics for the Anthropocene, this study reveals Kingsolver's endeavor of setting fictional characters as environmental virtue exemplars to inspire humans' active and constant contribution to a promising future.

Keywords:

Anthropocene, Barbara Kingsolver, Environmental Virtues, Environmental Virtue Ethics