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Comfortably Unaware

Dr. Richard A. Oppenlander
Langdon Street Press (2011)
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Reviewed by Kam Aures for Rebecca's Reads (08/11)

If there were ever a book that would convince one to adopt a vegan lifestyle, then “Comfortably Unaware” would definitely be it. Dr. Richard Oppenlander’s book explores the connection between global depletion and our food choices. His presentation of the research surrounding this topic is quite convincing and eye-opening.

In the Introduction, Oppenlander tells us that “Comfortably Unaware reveals facts and provides fresh perspectives by exploring how food choices affect our land, water, air, pollution, biodiversity, true sustainability, and our personal health.” (p.xiv) He then goes on to explore each of these topics in detail. The facts presented are truly shocking.

The resources used to provide small amounts of animal product are staggering. For instance, he states that while it takes 10-20 gallons of water to produce 1 pound of vegetables, it takes over 5,000 gallons of water to produce that same weight of meat. (p.12) That is an incredibly huge difference.

Not only land animals are included in this either, the book also addresses seafood. “... For every one pound of shrimp sold and consumed, more than twenty pounds of other sea creatures are caught and killed in the process. Innocent victims include fish that has no commercial value, juvenile fish, turtles, seabirds, and marine mammals, such as the dolphin.” (p.51)

If you find these facts to be quite disturbing then you definitely need to read Dr. Richard Oppenlander’s “Comfortably Unaware” as what I shared in this review is just the tip of the iceberg. Oppenlander’s book is well-researched and organized. His presentation is certainly not sugar coated and the book is a very hard hitting work. I know that I for one will definitely be putting more thought into my food choices as a result of reading this book. I am no longer comfortably unaware.

