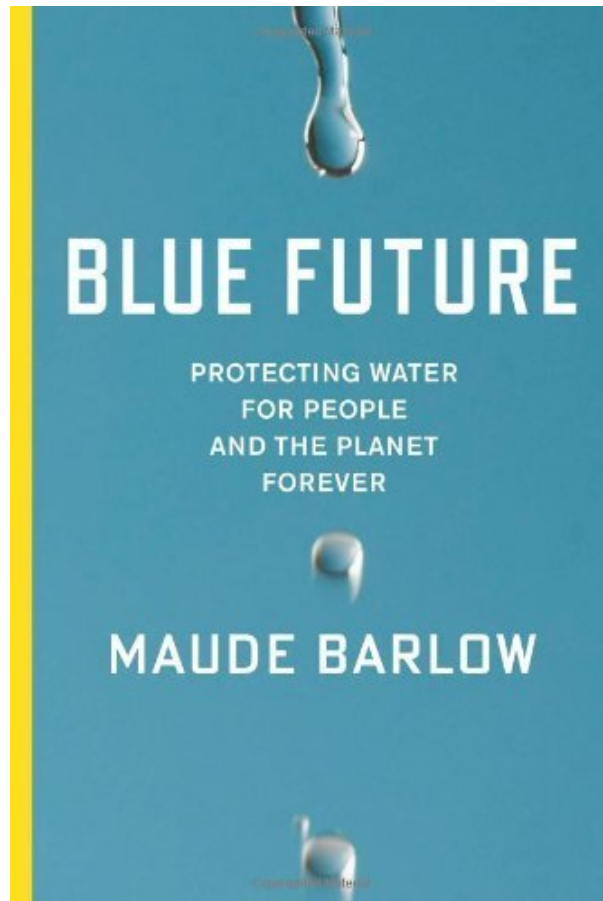
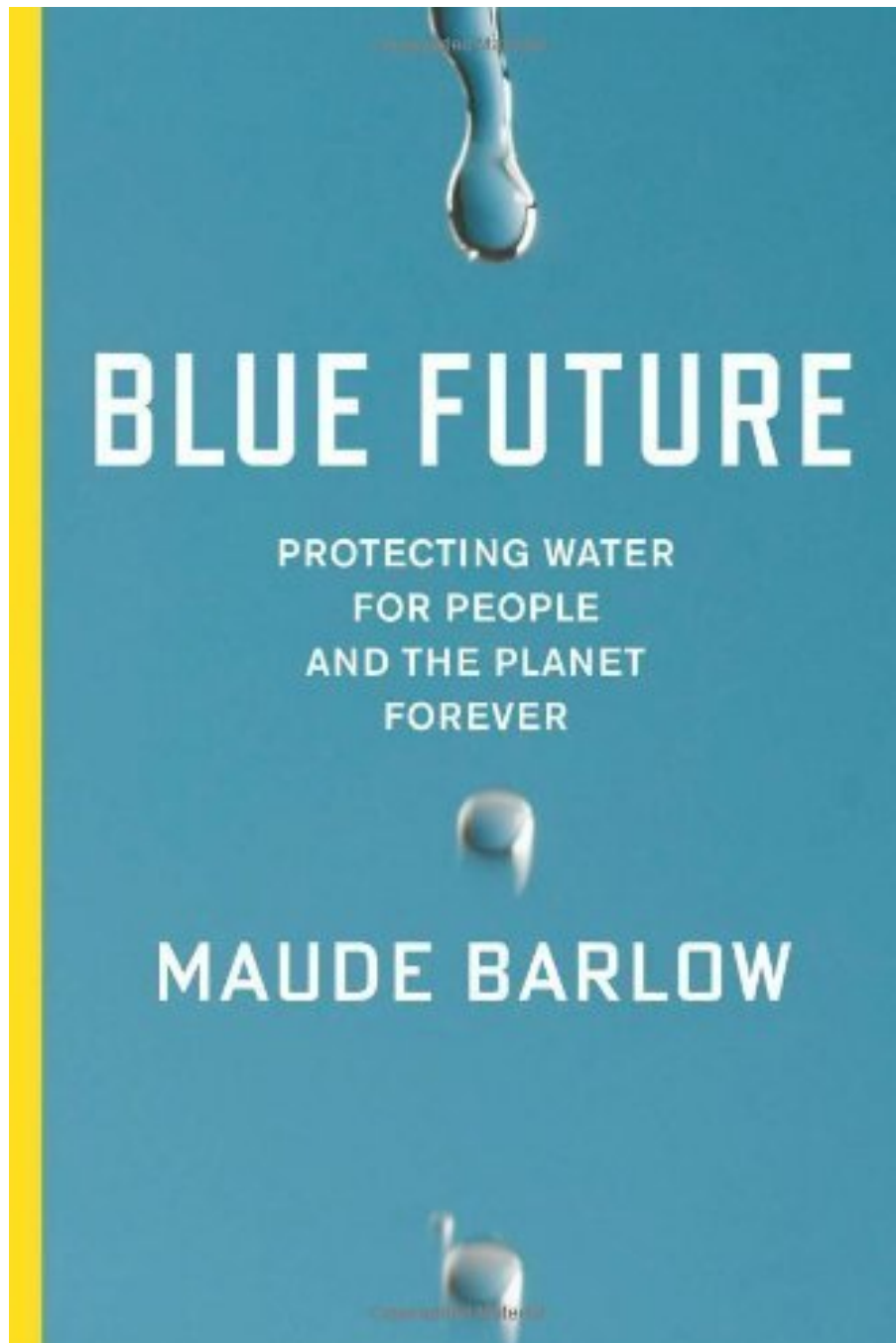


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- Published on: 1656
- Binding: Hardcover

Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.  
if things were only that simple...

By stonehenge\_

I (mostly) agree with the review of Averroes - while I don't think the author overstates her case (water is an extremely important issue), she certainly has a very biased perspective. This would have been a nice read if it was more balanced and more realistic about the real challenge: financing the water infrastructure, which requires trillions (!) of USD worldwide and ultimately has to be paid by someone. She does mention the problem, but clearly lacks the necessary understanding of the harsh reality of infrastructure finance. Wishful thinking hasn't worked in the past and will not work in the future.

After having read the book I actually had a chance to attend a talk by the author - unfortunately, instead of honestly discussing the real issues (including also failed community/government management of water) she seemed to be more interested in vilifying the corporate world, coming up with one cliché after the other...

7 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Nice to read, but misleading

By Averroes

This book is well written, but it is ultimately misleading. The author is concerned about the widening gap between the rich and the poor and about environmental destruction - concerns that are widely shared, including by this reviewer. Few will disagree with some of the principles she advocates - "the human right to water", or "water as a common heritage".

But there are three problems with this book. The first is that the author overstates her case. She warns about "drought on an unprecedented scale, mass starvation and the migration of millions of water refugees". She ignores that 275,000 people gain access to drinking water every day, that the UN's Millennium Goal for access to drinking water has been met early, that refugees are mostly on the run because of wars and political persecution rather than water scarcity, and that the share of people living in poverty has consistently fallen globally according to the UN and the World Bank. The second problem is that she has a too narrow view of who the villains are - big corporations. The third problem is that she has an equally narrow view about who the heroes are - grass-roots organizations and civil society.

The book leaves no room for subtleties and the complexities of the real world of water, such as how to finance the much needed investments in water infrastructure and how to maintain it in good working order. Nor does it discuss how we can keep water affordable to the poor when most governments are highly indebted, aid is in scarce supply, and the effectiveness of aid is being challenged. In this book, there is no

room for the failure of many publicly managed water utilities in developing countries. Nor is there room to discuss why so many wells in rural Africa break down so quickly, or why so many latrines that were given as gifts by charities or governments are not used for their original purpose, but rather used as storage or living areas.

If you feel that the world is being plundered by big corporations, and if grass-roots organizations are your only heroes, then this book will be a good read for you. If you want to better understand how water, the environment, corporations, governments and society interact globally, you may better look for other books.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

A must-read book for any responsible citizen

By LaurentG

If you care about nature and democracy, this book is a must-read. Maude Barlow does an excellent job explaining how interconnected our actions are, and what it seems progress from an angle is pure devastation when looking at the big picture. The subject of the book is water and how modern society use it and abuse it, but the idea is bigger - the globalization experiment is based on deleting resources at an unsustainable pace. The author suggests democratic ways on how we should interact with nature and how to recognize when governments give in to the requests of powerful interests. The body of evidence is alarming. Decision makers at all levels of government should read this book if they are truly committed to their communities.

See all 8 customer reviews...

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