

## 27 A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Ethics

RICHARD WATSON

Richard Watson is professor of philosophy at Washington University in St. Louis and the author of several works in philosophy. Here is his abstract:

Arne Naess, John Rodman, George Sessions, and others designated herein as ecosophers, propose an egalitarian anti-anthropocentric biocentrism as a basis for a new environmental ethic. I outline their "hands-off-nature" position and show it to be based on setting man apart. The ecosophic position is thus neither egalitarian nor fully biocentric. A fully egalitarian biocentric ethic would place no more restrictions on the behavior of human beings than on the behavior of any other animals. Uncontrolled human behavior might lead to the destruction of the environment and thus to the extinction of human beings. I thus conclude that human interest in survival is the best ground on which to argue for an ecological balance which is good both for human beings and for the whole biological community.

Anthropocentric is defined specifically as the position "that considers man as the central fact, or final aim, of the universe" and generally "conceiv[es] of everything in the universe in terms of human values."<sup>1</sup> In the literature of environmental ethics, anti-anthropocentric biocentrism is the position that human needs, goals, and desires should not be taken as privileged or overriding in considering the needs, desires, interests, and goals of all members of all biological species taken together, and in general that the Earth as a whole should not be interpreted or managed from a human standpoint. According to this position, birds, trees, and the land itself considered as the biosphere have a right to be and to live out their individual and species' potentials, and that members of the human species have no right to

disturb, perturb, or destroy the ecological balance of the planet.

An often quoted statement of this right of natural objects to continue to be as they are found to be occurs in John Rodman's "The Liberation of Nature?":

To affirm that "natural objects" have "rights" is symbolically to affirm that ALL NATURAL ENTITIES (INCLUDING HUMANS) HAVE INTRINSIC WORTH SIMPLY BY VIRTUE OF BEING AND BEING WHAT THEY ARE.<sup>2</sup>

In "On the Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic," Tom Regan follows an implication of this view by presenting a "preservation principle":

By the "preservation principle" I mean a principle of nondestruction, noninterference, and, generally, nonmeddling. By characterizing this in terms of a principle, moreover, I am emphasizing that preservation (letting-be) be regarded as a moral imperative.<sup>3</sup>

Support for this hands-off-nature approach is provided by George Sessions in his "Spinoza, Perennial Philosophy, and Deep Ecology," where, among other things, he describes how Aldo Leopold moved from a position considering humans as stewards or managers of nature to one considering humans as "plain members" of the total biotic community.<sup>4</sup> As Leopold himself puts it:

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.<sup>5</sup>

According to Sessions, Leopold reached this position in part as a result of his dawning

realization that ecologically integrated human activities of communities and unsuccessful attempts of animals in the view to conclude that complex that its understood."<sup>6</sup>

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realization that ecological communities are inter-  
nally integrated and highly complex. He saw how  
human activities have disrupted many ecological  
communities and was himself involved in some  
unsuccessful attempts to manage communities  
of animals in the wild. These failures led Leopold  
to conclude that "the biotic mechanism is so  
complex that its workings may never be fully  
understood."<sup>6</sup>

Like many other environmentalists, Sessions  
associates Leopold's position with Barry Com-  
moner's first law of ecology: "Everything is con-  
nected to everything else,"<sup>7</sup> according to which  
"any major man-made change in a natural system  
is likely to be *detrimental* to that system." This  
view, which considers all environmental managers  
who try to alter the environment to be suffering  
from scientific hubris, leads to an almost biblical  
statement of nescience. In this connection, Ses-  
sions quotes the ecologist Frank Egler as saying  
that "Nature is not only more complex than  
we think, but it is more complex than we can  
ever think." The attitude of humble acquiescence  
to the ways of nature which follows from this  
view, Sessions says, is summed up in Com-  
moner's third law, "Nature knows best."

The position is presented at length by G.  
Tyler Miller, in another quotation cited by  
Sessions:

One of the purposes of this Book [*Replenish the  
Earth*] is to show the bankruptcy of the term  
"spaceship earth."... This is an upside-down  
view of reality and is yet another manifestation of  
our arrogance toward nature.... Our task is not  
to learn how to pilot spaceship earth. It is not to  
learn how—as Teilhard de Chardin would have  
it—"to seize the tiller of the world": Our task is  
to give up our fantasies of omnipotence. In  
other words, *we must stop trying to steer* [my  
italics]. The solution to our present dilemma  
does not lie in attempting to extend our technical  
and managerial skills into every sphere of exist-  
ence. Thus, *from a human standpoint our envi-  
ronmental crisis is the result of our arrogance  
towards nature* [Miller's italics]. Somehow we  
must tune our senses again to the beat of exist-  
ence, sensing in nature fundamental rhythms we  
can trust even though we may never fully under-  
stand them. We must learn anew that it is we  
who belong to earth and not the earth to us.

Thus rediscovery of our finitude is fundamental  
to any genuinely human future.<sup>8</sup>

Sessions, at least, is not naive about some of  
the problems that arise from these pronounce-  
ments. He says that if an environmental ethic is  
to be derived from ecological principles and con-  
cepts, this raises

the old problem of attempting to derive moral  
principles and imperatives from supposedly empir-  
ical fact (the "is-ought problem"). The attempt to  
justify ecosystem ethics on conventional utilitarian  
or "rights and obligations" grounds presents for-  
midable obstacles. And, so far, little headway has  
been made in finding other acceptable grounds  
for an ecosystem ethics other than a growing intu-  
itive ecological awareness that *it is right*.<sup>9</sup>

The anti-anthropocentric biocentrists have sought  
a metaphysical foundation for a holistic environ-  
mental ethic in Spinoza. The clearest statement  
of this appears in Arne Naess's "Spinoza and Ecol-  
ogy." Naess expands from Spinoza in sixteen  
points, several of which are crucial to my discus-  
sion of anti-anthropocentric biocentrism:

1. The nature conceived by field ecologists is  
not the passive, dead, value-neutral nature of  
mechanistic science, but akin to the *Deus sive  
Natura* of Spinoza. All-inclusive, creative (as  
*natura naturans*), infinitely diverse, and alive in  
the broad sense of pan-psychism, but also mani-  
festing a structure, the so-called laws of nature.  
There are always causes to be found, but  
extremely complex and difficult to unearth.  
Nature with a capital N is intuitively conceived  
as perfect in a sense that Spinoza and out-door  
ecologists have more or less in common: it is  
not narrowly moral, utilitarian, or aesthetic per-  
fection. Nature is perfect "in itself."

*Perfection* can only mean completeness of  
some sort when applied in general, and not to  
specifically human achievements....

2.... The two aspects of Nature, those of  
extension and thought (better: non-extension),  
are both complete aspects of one single reality,  
and *perfection characterizes both*....

3.... As an *absolutely* all-embracing reality,  
Nature has no purpose, aim, or goal....

4. There is no established moral world-order.  
Human justice is not a law of nature. There are,



Sessions goes on to deplore "the demise of pantheism and the desacralization of Nature." He then makes a statement highly typical of anti-anthropomorphic biocentrists:

Part of the genius of Bacon and Descartes was to realize, contrary to the conservatism of the Church authorities, that a new science was needed to consummate the goal of Judeo-Christian-Platonic-Aristotelian domination of nature. The Enlightenment retained the Christian idea of man's perpetual progress (now defined as increasing scientific-technological control and mastery over nature), thus setting the stage for, and passing its unbridled optimism on to, its twentieth-century successors, Marxism and American pragmatism. The flood-gates had been opened. The Pythagorean theory of the cosmos and the whole idea of a meaningful perennial philosophy were swept away in a deluge of secularism, the fragmentation of knowledge, pronouncements that God was dead and the universe and life of man meaningless, industrialization, the quest for material happiness, and the consequent destruction of the environment. The emphasis was no longer upon either *God* or *Nature*, but *Man*.

Sessions by no means advocates or thinks possible a simple return to pre-Socratic religion or pantheism. But what, on the basis of ecological principles and concepts, is the underlying motif or guiding ideal today for "a correct understanding of God/Nature"? According to Naess, the proper position is an *ecosophy* defined as "a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium." Thus, while deploring the Greek contribution to the present desacralization of nature, these ecosophers do acknowledge the Stoic and Epicurean contributions to the philosophy of balance, harmony, and equilibrium. They present a holistic vision of the Earth circling in dynamic ecological equilibrium as the preferred and proper contemplative object of right-thinking environmental man.

In pursuing a statement of anti-anthropomorphic biocentrism, then, I have exposed five principles of the movement:

1. The needs, desires, interests, and goals of humans are not privileged.
2. The human species should not change the ecology of the planet.

3. The world ecological system is too complex for human beings ever to understand.
4. The ultimate goal, good, and joy of humankind is contemplative understanding of Nature.
5. Nature is a holistic system of parts (of which man is merely one among many equals) all of which are internally interrelated in dynamic, harmonious, ecological equilibrium.

The moral imperative derived from this "ecosophy" is that human beings do not have the right to, and should not, alter the equilibrium.

## II

I do not intend to challenge the controversial naturalistic assumption that some such environmental ethic can be derived from ecological principles and concepts. Whatever the logical problems of deriving value from fact, it is not (and probably never has been) a practical problem for large numbers of people who base their moral convictions on factual premises.

Nevertheless, it must be obvious to most careful readers that the general position characterized in section I suffers from serious internal contradictions. I think they are so serious that the position must be abandoned. In what follows I detail the problems that arise in the system, and then offer an alternative to the call for developing a new ecosophic ethic.

To go immediately to the heart of the matter, I take anti-anthropocentrism more seriously than do any of the ecosophers I have quoted or read. If man is a part of nature, if he is a "plain citizen," if he is just one nonprivileged member of a "biospherical egalitarianism," then the human species should be treated in no way different from any other species. However, the entire tone of the position outlined in section I is to set man apart from nature and above all other living species. Naess says that nonhuman animals should be "cared for in part for their own good." Sessions says that humans should curb their technological enthusiasms to preserve ecological equilibrium. Rodman says flatly that man should let nature be.

Now, the posing of man against nature in any way is anthropocentric. Man is a part of nature.

Human ways—human culture—and human actions are as natural as are the ways in which any other species of animals behaves. But if we view the state of nature or Nature as being natural, undisturbed, and unperturbed only when human beings are *not* present, or only when human beings are curbing their natural behavior, then we are assuming that human beings are apart from, separate from, different from, removed from, or above nature. It is obvious that the ecosystem described above is based on this position of setting man apart from or above nature. (Do I mean even “sordid” and “perverted” human behavior? Yes, that is natural, too.)

To avoid this separation of man from nature, this special treatment of human beings as other than nature, we must stress that man’s works (yes, including H-bombs and gas chambers) are as natural as those of bower birds and beavers.

But civilized man wreaks havoc on the environment. We disrupt the ecology of the planet, cause the extinction of myriad other species of living things, and even alter the climate of the Earth. Should we not attempt to curb our behavior to avoid these results? Indeed we should as a matter of prudence if we want to preserve our habitat and guarantee the survival of our species. But this is anthropocentric thinking.

Only if we are thinking anthropocentrically will we set the human species apart as *the* species that is to be thwarted in its natural behavior. Anti-anthropocentric biocentrists suggest that other species are to be allowed to manifest themselves naturally. They are to be allowed to live out their evolutionary potential in interaction with one another. But man is different. Man is *too* powerful, *too* destructive of the environment and other species, *too* successful in reproducing, and so on. What a phenomenon is man! Man is so wonderfully bad that he is not to be allowed to live out his evolutionary potential in egalitarian interaction with all other species.

Why not? The only reason is anthropocentric. We are not treating man as a plain member of the biotic community. We are not treating the human species as an equal among other species. We think of man as being better than other animals, or worse, as the case may be, because man is so powerful.

One reason we think this is that we think in terms of an anthropocentric moral community. All other species are viewed as morally neutral; their behavior is neither good nor bad. But we evaluate human behavior morally. And this sets man apart. If we are to treat man as a part of nature on egalitarian terms with other species, then man’s behavior must be treated as morally neutral, too. It is absurd, of course, to suggest the opposite alternative, that we evaluate the behavior of nonhuman animals morally.

Bluntly, if we think there is nothing morally wrong with one species taking over the habitat of another and eventually causing the extinction of the dispossessed species—as has happened millions of times in the history of the Earth—then we should not think that there is anything morally or ecosophically wrong with the human species dispossessing and causing the extinction of other species.

Man’s nature, his role, his forte, his glory and ambition has been to propagate and thrive at the expense of many other species and to the disruption—or, neutrally, to the change—of the planet’s ecology. I do not want to engage in speculation about the religion of preliterate peoples, or in debates about the interpretation of documented non-Judeo-Christian-Platonic-Aristotelian religions. I am skeptical, however, of the panegyrics about pantheism and harmonious integration with sacred Nature. But these speculations do not matter. The fact is that for about 50,000 years human beings (*Homo sapiens*) have been advancing like wildfire (to use an inflammatory metaphor) to occupy more and more of the planet. A peak of low-energy technology was reached about 35,000 years ago at which time man wiped out many species of large animals. About 10,000 years ago man domesticated plants and animals and started changing the face of the Earth with grazing, farming, deforestation, and desertification. About 200 years ago man started burning fossil fuels with results that will probably change the climate of the planet (at least temporarily) and that have already resulted in the extinction of many species of living things that perhaps might otherwise have survived. In 1945 man entered an atomic age and we now have the ability to desertify large portions of the

Earth and perhaps of the higher forms of life. Human beings are a part of Earth’s ecology. Their extinction is part of their destiny. If they are not to be, it is not because of their behavior but because of the way things have been done. The human species can be said to have a revolutionary potential that will be the end result. It is not a part of nature.

This is not a part of nature. It is a part of nature. It is if he uses his brain to think about why we should curb our destructive of other species as well as human species as well.

I hope it is human. We are smart. But our ethic or religion or our intuitive belief that there is something only for other people to do as a whole, exhibit the same. I say got us in such a way that the ecosystem is so different that many ecosophers are never understand its what is right for us. This issue of man’s right according to the position outlined by D. Large numbers of species are wrong about what is before, e.g., at the time extinct. Perhaps wiping out the way things go. Our material is lost, but perhaps that ever existed came out of soup, and could again genetic material was like the Islands or Australia, even the niches. Even on our knowledge about evolution have little ground to work on. The extinction of life on Earth.

is that we think in moral community, is morally neutral; is neither good nor bad. But we are morally equal. And this sets man as a part of the community with other species, to be treated as morally equal. It is our course, to suggest that we evaluate the species morally.

It is nothing morally wrong to wipe out the habitat of a species, if the extinction has happened naturally. It is nothing morally wrong to wipe out the human species, if the extinction of

man is his forte, his glory and his right to live and thrive at the expense of the land and to the disruption of the planet—of the plan to engage in the interpretation of pre-literate pre-Platonic-Aristotelian, however, of man and harmonious nature. But these speculations are that for about 100,000 years (*Homo sapiens*) have used an inflammatory and more of the technology was used at which time of large animals. Domesticated plants are changing the face of the deforestation, and 10,000 years ago man started to hunt that will probably result (at least temporarily) in the extinction of living things that survived. In 1945 and we now have 200 million portions of the

Earth and perhaps to cause the extinction of most of the higher forms of life.

Human beings do alter things. They cause the extinction of many species, and they change the Earth's ecology. This is what humans do. This is their destiny. If they destroy many other species and themselves in the process, they do no more than has been done by many another species. The human species should be allowed—if any species can be said to have a right—to live out its evolutionary potential, to its own destruction if that is the end result. It is nature's way.

This is not a popular view. But most alternative anti-anthropocentric biocentric arguments for preserving nature are self-contradictory. Man is a part of nature. The only way man will survive is if he uses his brains to save himself. One reason why we should curb human behavior that is destructive of other species and the environment is because in the end it is destructive of the human species as well.

I hope it is human nature to survive because we are smart. But those who appeal for a new ethic or religion or ecosophy based on an intuitive belief that they know what is right not only for other people, but also for the planet as a whole, exhibit the hubris that they themselves say got us in such a mess in the first place. If the ecosphere is so complicated that we may never understand its workings, how is it that so many ecosophers are so sure that they know what is right for us to do now? Beyond the issue of man's right to do whatever he can according to the power-makes-right ecosophic ethic outlined by Naess, we may simply be wrong about what is "good" for the planet. Large numbers of species have been wiped out before, e.g., at the time the dinosaurs became extinct. Perhaps wiping out and renewal is just the way things go. Of course, a lot of genetic material is lost, but presumably all the species that ever existed came out of the same primordial soup, and could again. In situations where genetic material was limited, as in the Galapagos Islands or Australia, evolutionary radiation filled the niches. Even on the basis of our present knowledge about evolution and ecology, we have little ground to worry about the proliferation of life on Earth even if man manages to

wipe out most of the species now living. Such a clearing out might be just the thing to allow for variety and diversity. And why is it that we harp about genetic banks today anyway? For one thing, we are worried that disease might wipe out our domesticated grain crops. Then where would *man* be?

Another obvious anthropocentric element in ecosophic thinking is the predilection for ecological communities of great internal variety and complexity. But the barren limestone plateaus that surround the Mediterranean now are just as much in ecological balance as were the forests that grew there before man cut them down. And "dead" Lake Erie is just as much in ecological balance with the life on the land that surrounds it as it was in pre-Columbian times. The notion of a climax situation in ecology is a human invention, based on anthropocentric ideas of variety, completion, wholeness, and balance. A preference for equilibrium rather than change, for forests over deserts, for complexity and variety over simplicity and monoculture, all of these are matters of human economics and aesthetics. What *would* it be, after all, to think like a mountain as Aldo Leopold is said to have recommended? It would be anthropocentric because mountains do not think, but also because mountains are imagined to be thinking about which human interests in their preservation or development they prefer. The anthropocentrism of ecosophers is most obvious in their pronouncements about what is normal and natural. Perhaps it is not natural to remain in equilibrium, to be in ecological balance.

As far as that goes, most of the universe is apparently dead—or at least inanimate—anyway. And as far as we know, the movement of things is toward entropy. By simplifying things, man is on the side of the universe.

And as for making a mess of things, destroying things, disrupting and breaking down things, the best information we have about the origin of the universe is that it is the result of an explosion. If we are going to derive an ethic from our knowledge of nature, is it wrong to suggest that high-technology man might be doing the right thing? Naess does try to meet this objection with his tenth principle:

10 There is nothing in human nature or essence, according to Spinoza, which can *only* manifest or express itself through injury to others. That is, the striving for expression of one's nature does not inevitably imply an attitude of hostile domination over other beings, human or non-human. Violence, in the sense of violent activity, is not the same as violence as injury to others.<sup>14</sup>

But "injury" is a human moral concept. There is no injury to others in neutral nature. Naess and Spinoza are still bound by Judeo-Christian-Platonic-Aristotelian notions of human goodness. But to call for curbing man is like trying to make vegetarians of pet cats.

I have often been puzzled about why so many environmental philosophers insist on harking to Spinoza as a ground for environmental ethics. It is perfectly plain as Curley and Lloyd point out that Spinoza's moral views are humanistic. They show how difficult it is to reconcile Spinoza's sense of freedom as the recognition of necessity with any notion of autonomy of self that is required to make moral imperatives or morality itself meaningful. That is, to recognize and accept what one is determined to do—even if this recognition and acceptance were not itself determined—is not the same as choosing between two equally possible (undetermined) courses of action. Moral action depends on free choice among undetermined alternatives.

### III

There are anthropocentric foundations in most environmental and ecosophical literature. In particular, most ecosophers say outright or openly imply that human individuals and the human species would be better off if we were required to live in ecological balance with nature. Few ecosophers really think that man is just one part of nature among others. Man is privileged—or cursed—at least by having a moral sensibility that as far as we can tell no other entities have. But it is pretty clear (as I argue in "Self-Consciousness and the Rights of Nonhuman Animals and Nature") that on this planet at least only human beings are (so far) full members of a moral community. We ought to be kinder to nonhuman animals, but I do not think that this is because they have

any intrinsic rights. As far as that goes, human beings have no intrinsic rights either (as Naess and Spinoza agree). We have to earn our rights as cooperating citizens in a moral community.

Because, unlike many ecosophers, I do not believe that we can return to religion, or that given what we know about the world today we can believe in pantheism or panpsychism, I think it is a mistake to strive for a new environmental ethic based on religious or mystical grounds. And I trust that I have demonstrated both how difficult it is to be fully biocentric, and also how the results of anti-anthropocentric biocentrism go far beyond the limits that ecosophers have drawn. Ecosophers obviously want to avoid the direct implications of treating the human species in the egalitarian and hands-off way they say other species should be treated. It is nice that human survival is compatible with the preservation of a rich planetary ecology, but I think it is a mistake to try to cover up the fact that human survival and the good life for man is some part of what we are interested in. There is very good reason for thinking ecologically, and for encouraging human beings to act in such a way as to preserve a rich and balanced planetary ecology: human survival depends on it.

### NOTES

1. *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Cleveland, Ohio: William Collins and World Publishing Co., 1976), p. 59.
2. John Rodman, "The Liberation of Nature?" *Inquiry* 20 (1977): 108 (quoted with emphasis in capitals by George Sessions in *Ecophilosophy III*, p. 5a).
3. Tom Regan, "The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic," *Environmental Ethics* 3 (1981): 31–32.
4. George Sessions, "Spinoza, Perennial Philosophy, and Deep Ecology," unpublished, p. 15.
5. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 240 (quoted by George Sessions in "Spinoza, Perennial Philosophy, and Deep Ecology," unpublished, p. 15).
6. *Ibid.*
7. Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), p. 33 (quoted by George Sessions in "Panpsychism versus Modern Materialism:

- Some Implications of the Ecological Crisis" unpublished, p. 15.
8. G. Tyler Miller, "The Ecological Crisis," *Wadsworth Review of the Environment* 1 (1971): 44–45.
  9. George Sessions, "The Ecological Crisis: A Review of the Ecological Crisis," unpublished, pp. 44–45.
  10. Arne Naess, "The Ecological Crisis," in *Ecology and Human Development*, ed. by Arne Naess and Dag H. Hessen, ed., (London: Routledge, 1973), pp. 419–21.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is *anthropocentrism*? How does it relate to the ecological crisis?
2. Carefully compare and contrast the views of the two authors in the Sessions. Which do you find more convincing?

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- Some Implications for an Ecological Ethics," unpublished, p. 35).
8. G. Tyler Miller, *Replenish the Earth* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 53 (quoted by George Sessions in "Shallow and Deep Ecology: A Review of the Philosophical Literature," unpublished, pp. 44–45).
  9. George Sessions, "Shallow and Deep Ecology: A Review of the Philosophical Literature," unpublished, p. 16.
  10. Arne Naess, "Spinoza and Ecology," in Sigfried Hessing, ed., *Speculum Spinozanum 1677–1977* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 419–21.
  11. George Sessions, "Spinoza and Jeffers on Man and Nature," *Inquiry* 20 (1977): 494–95.
  12. Aldous Huxley, *Perennial Philosophy* (New York: Harper's, 1945), pp. 159–60 (quoted by George Sessions in "Shallow and Deep Ecology: A Review of the Philosophical Literature," unpublished, p. 47).
  13. Michael Zimmerman, "Technological Change and the End of Philosophy," unpublished, no page given (quoted by George Sessions in "Spinoza and Jeffers on Man and Nature," *Inquiry* 20 (1977): 489).
  14. Arne Naess, "Spinoza and Ecology," in Sigfried Hessing, ed., *Speculum Spinozanum 1677–1977* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, p. 421).

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is *anthropocentrism* according to Watson? How does it differ from *biocentrism*?
2. Carefully compare Watson's criticism with the articles by Taylor, Leopold, Callicott, Naess, and Sessions. Which of these writers does he attack most directly? Do any escape his critique? Are his critical objections sound?
3. Is Watson's version of environmental anthropocentrism plausible? Explain your answer.

## 28 Social Ecology Versus Deep Ecology

MURRAY BOOKCHIN

Murray Bookchin has been a leading anarchist and utopian political theorist, especially regarding the philosophy of nature. He is the cofounder and director emeritus of the Institute for Social Ecology. His many books include *Toward an Ecological Society*, *The Ecology of Freedom*, and *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*.

Social ecology, which Bookchin develops in this essay, is an egalitarian system that has its roots in Marxist and anarchistic thought, though he disagrees with both at crucial points. Against Marx, Bookchin rejects economic determinism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. He rejects anarchist analysis that identifies the modern nation-state as the primary cause of social domination. Bookchin's primary attack is on social domination, and he shows how it is connected to ecology. In *The Ecology of Freedom*, he writes:

The cultural, traditional and psychological systems of obedience and command are not merely the economic and political systems to which the terms *class* and *State* most appropriately refer. Accordingly, hierarchy and domination could easily continue to exist in a "classless" or "Stateless" society. I refer to the domination of the young by the old, of women by men, of one ethnic group by another, of "masses" by bureaucrats who profess to speak of "higher social interests," of countryside by town, and in a more subtle psychological sense, of body by mind, of spirit by a shallow instrumental rationality.

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