



Ecotopia Emerging

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Fiction. This prequel to ECOTPIA is a multi-stranded novel that dramatizes the rise and triumph of a powerful American movement to preserve the earth as a safe, habitable environment. Its heroine is a brash and brilliant high school student who invents a better photovoltaic cell. People who also appear in ECOTPIA first join the story in this epic vision of the birth of a new nation.

Ecotopia Emerging Details

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Author : Ernest Callenbach

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From Reader Review Ecotopia Emerging for online ebook

Rachm says

Inspiring. Better than the previously-written sequel, because it feels much more 'real' and possible.

The most surprising part is how relevant most of the concerns written about here still are to the modern environmental movement, despite its datedness. The only major part missing is global warming, the science of which was only barely starting to become public around the publish date.

An important book to read for those concerned about where our planet is heading.

Indira says

Ecotopia was a good read especially if you are someone who cares about the environment and human rights. At times it read more like a newspaper than an actual novel. Overall, it was revealing in explaining the ways in which our system of consumption is doing harm to the environment. A great deal of the story line bears truth in what is going on today.

Michelle says

Thoughtful, imaginative sequel to Ecotopia, by Ernest Callenbach, this book offers a nicely woven story on how to change your world. Ecotopia, written in the 70s amidst a political storm of environmental change, is as Callenbach confesses in Emerging, a quick pop book written by an activist author. Emerging, on the other hand, pieces together events laid out in the original. It shows how the residents of the Northern West Coast got mad about current politics, and how they constructively dealt with it - beginning by confronting the master narrative we hear and abide everyday and changing it. A definite read for anyone hoping for a better future.

amy says

whew! This one was jam-packed with minutiae of the main characters' lives (of which there were about a dozen or so...?) which was a very time-consuming process of getting the overall message of ecologically-minded living. It was like reading a day in the life of your average Santa Cruzan. As a proponent of even the more revolutionary conservation ideas described as taking root in Bolinas would sound more exciting to me, but there wasn't much no more fictional intrigue/conflict than the process of getting a patent for the mysterious photo cell--and it took FOREVER (nearly 250 pages out of 326) for the big reveal of the forces increasing its performance. After that, the plot started to veer towards some heavier conflicts... I guess can try 'Ecotopia' (the story for which this was a prequel, because the conflicts (which are very real and present in our current lives under this administration) weren't even close to being resolved in the end. I'm very sad to know this was written in 1981 and we're still dealing with the same subsidies and lobby groups for industries actively destroying the planet.

Paco Nathan says

This is actually more of a favorite read, and more of a political template, than the original "sequel" Ecotopia.

The events leading up to secession of CA/OR/WA, with foundations for the political party which ring *oddly* similar to events in California more recently (federal vs. regional).

Great unschooling themes... with a narrative mostly told as a coming of age story for a teenage girl / scientific prodigy growing up in Bolinas and discovering a way to take down Big Oil.

Richard says

Partner book to his "Ecotopica". Better in some ways, but mostly more-of-the-same in too many ways. Daydream fulfillment to such an implausible extent that it gets tiresome. The problems of the time, as bad as they were, didn't signal the end of the world, much to many liberals' surprise.

The only detail I can clearly recall is that some fellow invents a solar cell that can be made in a backyard kiln but has astonishing efficiency; enough that petroleum can be dispensed with, and it can be made by neighborhood craftspeople, not in billion-dollar corporate-own fabrication plants. How *convenient!*

Dennis says

Just re-read this right after re-reading Ecotopia.

Oldie but a goody. Again, mostly for its prescience on what we do today that was considered radical in the book.

The 'big corporation' warfare bias got a bit too old, though.

Caroline Donaldson says

A great little read. This is a fictionalized history of the events leading up to the secession of Northern California, Oregon and Washington to form a steady-state, environmentalist nation of Ecotopia along the Pacific Coast of the United States. In 1975, Callenbach had published a utopian novel called Ecotopia about the events; EE is its prequel, published in 1981.

Discussed how a teenage girl finds an easy way to generate electricity cheaply from seawater in a solar cell. and how the baddies of corporate America try to stop her publicising it.

A bit simplistic but interesting nonetheless.

Ian Forsyth says

I wish we lived in Ecotopia.

It's important that books like this exist. You won't find many books that attempt to write a utopia that not only could exist, but that doesn't end in ruin. Yes, it's idealistic, yes it's got a late 70's hippie tinge at times, but having an ecologically, biologically based society over a profit-driven and hierarchical one just makes sense. It's not that radical of an idea really. Society at large just has too many myths of power and profit and progress to overcome. I'm from the Pacific Northwest, it's not Ecotopia, not yet, it'd take a lot of work to get there.

Like making a nature's bill of rights, raising the minimum wage to 15\$, promoting local sustainable agriculture that everyone can afford, demilitarizing, gas tax, advanced solar power technology, getting rid of corporation's rights as persons under the law, passing laws for employee owned business, getting universal education, healthcare, and welfare, providing jobs that don't just benefit profit but provide a meaningful way to engage in making a better society (or at the very least don't add to its degradation), addressing racism, sexism, classism, taxing the rich fairly until they join the rest of everyone in the middle and the poor rises to the middle, providing low income housing, banning chemical pollutants, decommissioning all nuclear power, stopping logging and relying on other industrial materials than lumber, getting rid of factory farming, promoting community building and interaction between neighbourhoods, making cities smaller, redesigning the suburbs, having a free non-advertising/corporate biased press, and likely having the PNW succeed nonviolently from the US to do all of this, or at the very least having full states' rights in Oregon, Washington, and Northern California (at a county and municipality level there) to enact laws that are contrary to the Federal government as well as making opt-outs on having tax money finance the military budget, or any other corporate scheme.

We must demand the impossible if we are to be realistic enough as the Ecotopians insist to have a chance of surviving. And to have our dignity as intelligent, social beings who working together could come to such a world, even if it occurs slowly, laboriously, and with great concentrated effort on the behalf of many. many groups and individuals seeking groups. For we wish to belong more than anything, and this American alienation and ennui, this age of uncertainty and anxiety, I think comes for the most part from not belonging to these visionary common-sense ideas which seem so impossible to surmount.

Lauren Bergh says

I had to keep looking back to see when this book was published! A wonderful commentary on the energy crisis of the 1980s and completely applicable to today. A story of energy moguls trying to secure their control on the American economy and a bright student who cracks the code to photovoltaic cells... and beats corporations to releasing the product into public domain. Definitely a must-read for the eco-conscious looking for something positive to think about.

GeGi says

This book has flaws and faults, sure, and it's definitely a produce of the era it was written, but the message at the heart of it is still incredibly relevant.

Let's talk about the two most obvious issues first:

- 1) The prose is certainly not narrative-friendly. I could probably only name a few of the many people mentioned and give defining details about even less. The writing is dense and information-packed; it talks about science and politics and situations, and the people are simply another tool with which to convey those subjects.
- 2) The entire premise and resolve are idealistic and unrealistic in present times. It's obvious to a modern reader why things would never happen the way they do in the book, but when the book was written we hadn't yet had quite so many real-life examples of just how far the government and armed forces, much less the large corporations, are willing to go to maintain control of a domestic situation.

The first issue is one that I run into to varying degrees with certain types of books from that era. It's a problem for some readers, but for others it's not as much of an issue. It's a matter of personal taste, really. I don't mind so much; sometimes I'm in the mood for it, and sometimes I'm not and take a break from it. It's easy to do with a book like this, especially with *Ecotopia Emerging*, where the author is exploring how something like Ecotopia might happen rather than a story about individual people. There are individual peoples' stories contained within, but the book itself is a story about Ecotopia's birth as a whole, and the people are simply a narrative device to that end.

The second issue isn't really an issue if one simply remembers when the book was written and thinks of it in terms of historical perspective and an exploration of optimism and ideology.

Now on to the heart of the book:

The country hasn't exactly gone the route predicted as our future in *Ecotopia Emerging*, but in some ways it feels like we've just managed to get there by a more insidious and less visible route. The problems the book talks about are still problems; we're still not a sustainable, healthy, environmentally responsible, harmful-chemical-free nation. Even when I was a little kid, I felt pretty bleak thinking about the long-term future, because it seemed like everything was heading in a pretty bad direction. I still wish we could take ideas presented in books like this and turn some of them into reality (and some of the other ideas we've already discovered/invented new and better options that sadly aren't always being used yet, either).

I enjoy reading books like this because they remind me that I'm not alone in thinking there's a better way to run things, and that lots of people have had lots of good ideas and explored them in fiction. Remembering that can help me hope that someday they won't just be fiction anymore, even if it hasn't happened yet.

Ecotopia Emerging isn't ground-breaking or riveting. It's not an impressive or defining work of fiction. It's not even an example of particularly good writing. But none of that is terribly important compared to the ideas and hope it contains. Yes, it can come off as preachy or agenda-pushing, but it's an agenda that, with translation into current times, would actually make the world pretty damn awesome, so I don't exactly have a problem with that. If you can get past the issues of the writing and the society in which it was written, at the center of it is a dream that I hope we can all share some day, where true sustainability and a healthy environment are more important than business and wealth for the few at the expense of the many and of the future of everyone.

Hannah says

dnf

J says

70s environmentalism wish-fulfillment in all of its decentralized, self-reliant, righteous and crunchy glory. It's much less entertaining than Ecotopia due to all-around boring writing and a plot that skips around far too often. But Callenbach's enthusiasm is infectious, the characters are generally likable and the book gets my west coast jingoism going. Modern environmentalism as a movement could use more of this old-school environmentalism, especially the DIY and local action mindset. Cascadia über alles!

Jimin says

Ecotopia is the name of that country. The US didn't want to dependant of ecotopia so they did everything such as millitary way to Ecotopia but they faild. After 20 years, William Western visited to Ecotopia by frist american. This is book's story is like his experience while he is staying in Ecotopia. After his work in Ecotopia, he decided to not go back to America but stay and keep his friendship and love. Also, he said that we should try to immitate that mind of Ecotopia for our future.

I would recommend this book. If anyone who had worried about century before, they would really like this book. While i read this book, i felt like run away from alot of mechanical things.
I really like this book and i would recommend this book.

Jill says

This book is an interesting mix of foresight and hindsight, reading this almost 30 years after it was written. Having been born after it was written, I don't have a good sense of how much of this is true, and how much was speculation. Things certainly aren't as grim as they predicted - yet. But it could get that way, just as it could get better in ways they predicted as well. I doubt that the northwest will secede from the rest of the nation, but if it does, I'm glad I live here. :) The nicest part was that the book really didn't seem all that dated, besides the fact that the internet is a HUGE technology jump that would have totally changed this novel, judging by how it was used in the last election.

I thought it was amusing that they reference the other Ecotopia book in this one as part of the plot. I haven't read it yet, but it's next on the list. Should be interesting.

The only thing that annoyed me was that there's a part where the Ecotopians float down the Willamette river from Eugene to Portland, and they supposedly go "mere feet from the golden dome of the state capitol" in Salem. First, there's a gold MAN, not a dome, and second, the closest stream is on Willamette U's campus, which is at least a city block away, not a few feet. I suppose other people from the towns around here will

have their own corrections to make, and perhaps things were different in ye olde Salem towne way back in the 80's.
