



Introduction to Political Science

Ecotopia Reading Schedule

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Answer each of the following questions in your notebook. Be prepared to answer these questions during class, either in the form of a quiz or in the form of participation. If you do not think about these questions and your answers, you will not get the information out of *Ecotopia* that you should. Enjoy!

Ecotopia

Ernest Callenbach, 1975

Day 1:

- 1 Weston's Next Assignment: Ecotopia
- 3 William Weston on His Journey to Ecotopia
- 6 Crossing the Ecotopian Border
- 11 The Streets of Ecotopia's Capital
- 18 Food, Sewage, and "Stable States"
- 26 Carless Living in Ecotopia's New Towns
- 37 The Unsporting Life of Ecotopia
- 42 Ecotopian Television and its Wares
- 47 The Ecotopian Economy: Fruit of Crisis

Questions:

1. What were Weston's preconceived feelings about Ecotopia? Was this unique to Weston, or was it common in the United States? Comment on the effects of the media in the United States in light of your answer.
2. What geographical benefits did Ecotopia have with regard to secession?
3. Why did Callenbach choose those three states instead of some other subset of America? (An interesting extension to this question is Joel Garreau's 1981 book, *The Nine Nations of North America*: E38 .G37)
4. What are "Stable States"? What does the Assistant Minister mean by "if we add in all the costs"? Is this socialism or capitalism?
5. Why did Callenbach ensure that scientists received no money from either state or private enterprises?
6. One of the core values in urban planning today (well, it's actually being deprecated), is segregation of uses; that is, single-family residences are clustered together, businesses are clustered together, and industry is completely separate

from residential zones. Ecotopia does not do this. They mix residential and commercial zones together. What is the ultimate effect of this mixture?

7. How do the Ecotopians get around their loss of powerful automobiles, of all automobiles, in fact?
8. Do the Ecotopian cities represent a loss of progress? How are you defining progress?
9. Why are individual sports more important in Ecotopia than team sports (with one exception)? How does the healthy Ecotopian lifestyle affect the American propensity towards obesity?
10. What is cooperative criticism? Why does it rarely (if ever) happen in America? Why did Callenbach give this trait to the Ecotopians?
11. What was the effect of the 20-hour workweek on the Ecotopians? What would it be in America? Interestingly enough, those theoretical effects were used against the movement to institute a 40-hour workweek in America.
12. Why were price controls necessary in Ecotopia? Would the president be able to implement price controls in America today?
13. What is the difference between the Ecotopian and the American views on Welfare? What about on society in general?

Day 2:

- 60 In Ecotopia's Big Woods
- 66 Decline Without Fall? The Ecotopian Population Challenge
- 77 Savagery Restored: Ecotopia's Dark Side
- 83 Their Plastics and Ours
- 91 Women in Power: Politicians, Sex, and Law in Ecotopia
- 97 Worker's Control, Taxes, and Jobs in Ecotopia
- 107 Race in Ecotopia: Apartheid or Equality?
- 111 Energy from Sun and Sea
- 119 Communications in Ecotopia: Press, Television, and Publishing

Questions:

1. How valid was Marissa's point about the squeamishness of Americans over war? Has warfare fundamentally changed as a result of generals being able to kill from a thousand miles away with the push of a button?
2. The radioactive pollution alert raises an interesting point: Should nations that pollute the air of a neighbor be forced to pay for it?
3. Are the war games fun? Why do we not have them? Does that say anything about today's United States?
4. How does the Ecotopian view of plastics compare with the American view?

5. Do women have distinct interests not met by American politicians? Do they view the world fundamentally different from men? If so, why do women tend to vote for male candidates in America?
6. Is “Ecology in One Country” possible?
7. Why the different emphases in the criminal system? Which makes more sense? What are your assumptions about the purpose of the criminal justice system (a.k.a. the corrections system; a.k.a. the penal system)?
8. Since Bill Gates getting a \$50 speeding ticket is much less injured by the fine than an unemployed McDonalds’ worker, even though the speeding affected the neighborhood equally, does that mean that the millionaire is less punished by the transgression? What does this say about fairness in the American legal system?
9. Should all drugs be legalized?
10. Since polluting firms can always pass along the cost of the fines to their consumers, how did Callenbach solve the problem of polluting industries? How effective would it be in America? How does the purity of the Ecotopian waterways affect the people?
11. Is the Ecotopian economy capitalist? Is the American? Which economic system offers more by way of welfare to corporations?
12. Also comment on the Welfare system in Ecotopia. Why do Ecotopians not just live off the guaranteed income provided by the government?
13. Is Ecotopia racist? Why did I ask that question?
14. What are the effects of a few corporations owning all of the media in the United States? Is this result sufficiently bad to follow the Ecotopian example and prohibit a corporation from owning more than one media outlet in a given region?
15. One of the publishing strengths in Ecotopia (at least according to Callenbach) is the ability of almost anyone to publish. How did that affect Ecotopia? Do we have anything akin to that now? How does it affect us? What are the checks on publishing garbage in Ecotopia? ...in today’s United States? Should there be checks?
16. Could the entire American press actually hide the Ecotopian invasion (and defeat)?

Day 3:

126	Ecotopian Education's Surprises
133	Living in Plastic Tubing
139	Separation of Functions: Research and Teaching in Ecotopia
145	Ecotopian Music, Dance, Other Arts
154	Hospitals and Healthcare: The Ecotopian Way
163	Ecotopia: Challenge or Illusion?
172	Work and Play among the Ecotopians
181	Editor's Epilogue

Questions:

1. Are the schools good or bad? How does the government ensure that there is at least a minimal level of achievement of the students?
2. Why would Americans be unable to live in such tubing houses? Tie this in to the philosophy of Edmund Burke.
3. Should the two main functions of scientists be separated? Explain. How does this reflect certain members of the Tennessee legislature who state quite vociferously that the purpose of the University is to teach the students?
4. How democratic *should* universities be? Compare and contrast the Berkeley example given in the book with the effects (or non-effects) of the student "Green Referendum" a couple years ago when a clear majority of those UTK students voting voted for an increase student fees by \$4.00 to increase the amount of 'green power' the university uses in relation to other sources.
5. Should there be a separation between amateur and professional in science?
6. How do Ecotopian hospitals differ in fundamental function from American? Which is more appropriate to the purpose of hospitals? Wait, what *is* the purpose of hospitals?
7. What keeps physicians from leaving Ecotopia? What lessons can we take away from this?
8. Describe the Ecotopian form of socialized medicine. Could the United States implement such a thing?
9. Explain the meeting with President Allwen with respect to the social contract.
10. Utopianism has been a recurrent theme of this semester. What is the primary (if not sole) purpose of utopian literature? How does this work measure up as a piece of utopian literature?
11. Is Ecotopia something to work towards?