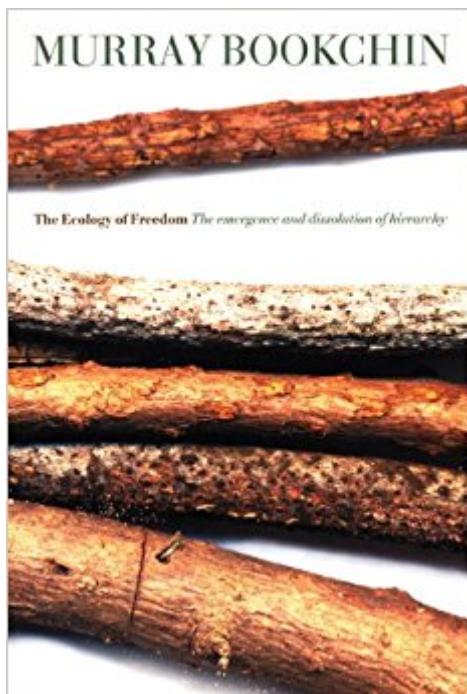


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The Ecology Of Freedom: The Emergence And Dissolution Of Hierarchy



Synopsis

The very notion of the domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human. With this succinct formulation, Murray Bookchin launches his most ambitious work, *The Ecology of Freedom*. An engaging and extremely readable book of breathtaking scope, its inspired synthesis of ecology, anthropology and political theory traces our conflicting legacies of hierarchy and freedom from the first emergence of human culture to today's globalized capitalism, constantly pointing the way to a sane, sustainable ecological future. Murray Bookchin, cofounder of the Institute for Social Ecology, has been an active voice in the ecology and anarchist movements for more than 40 years. The author of numerous books and articles, he lives in Burlington, Vermont. In Oakland, California on March 24, 2015 a fire destroyed the AK Press warehouse along with several other businesses. Please consider visiting the AK Press website to learn more about the fundraiser to help them and their neighbors.

Book Information

Paperback: 480 pages

Publisher: AK Press (July 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1904859267

ISBN-13: 978-1904859260

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.1 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #107,573 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Anarchism #141 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Civics & Citizenship #208 in Books > Science & Math > Environment > Environmentalism

Customer Reviews

Combining radical political theory with anthropology and nature studies, "The Ecology of Freedom" is a profound exploration of the social causes behind our ecological crisis. Importantly, Bookchin argues for social activism rather than New Age mysticism as the answer to environmental problems. According to Bookchin and other social ecologists like Cindy Milstein and Brian Tokar, the domination of the planet is a mere reflection of the domination of humans caused by social systems like gerontocracy, patriarchy, capitalism, and the state. His solution: the building of a directly

democratic, anti-authoritarian, participatory, egalitarian, green society. While critics of Bookchin's work may dislike the fact that he oftentimes prioritizes things like permaculture and appropriate technology over wilderness and wildlife, I nevertheless believe that his writings have enormous social value and I am deeply grateful for his ideas and legacy. Though I no doubt understand the urgency of preserving forest ecosystems and protecting endangered species, I also really empathize with Bookchin's ecotopian vision of sustainable cities. In truth, I feel that the urban ecology/forest ecology binary is a false one that should be challenged. While defending the rainforest is obviously important, fighting environmental racism is also imperative. Though I cherish the spotted owl, I also cherish working-class communities of color and equally value their struggles to access organic food, clean air, and safe drinking water. As such, I fully agree with the social ecologist libertarian municipalist position that social justice issues are environmental issues and vice versa. Murray Bookchin, who last year passed away, will be sorely missed by the many progressive activists whose lives have been enriched by his brilliant books. That said, I hope that AK Press continues to publish more of his important work.

Bookchin's 'The Ecology of Freedom,' is a masterpiece pure and (not at all) simple. If you are interested in the real roots of the ecological and social crises we as a planet are submerged in, than this is a book whose ideas you will want to read and debate. Combine this work with his other pivotal works and the invaluable commentary provided by Bookchin's long time colleague and companion Janet Biehl and you have what is very likely the most important and comprehensive body of radical social theory since Marx -- fortunately with none of Marx's blindspots, shortsightedness, or problems. A real treasure and filled with fascinating and challenging ideas.

While on a trip to the ER, I handed this book to a friend to hold onto. She looked through it and said it sounded like a book for old men. She couldn't have been more wrong. If you only read one Bookchin work, make it this one. It is a complex theory (though written in a very understandable way) about how freedom and hierarchy evolved into what they are and aren't today. It is an ecological (different than environmental) look at the natural world and what we call civilization. Controversial? Perhaps, but why? That is the most important question. The Church, capitalism, war, farming, protest, the environment -- it is all covered here, and it is done in a way that will have you debating it with yourself and others for quite some time. Like Noam Chomsky's books, this will change the way you look at the world.

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