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DIY ECOTOPIA

In 1975 Ernst Callenbach, an author and environmentalist, published *Ecotopia*, a now famous ecological utopia set in the Pacific Northwest. While there is much to admire in Callenbach's book, there is also much that looks outdated. For example, Callenbach could not imagine an ethnically and racially diverse ecotopia, and he gave no consideration to questions of indigenous sovereignty. Callenbach also did not anticipate global climate change, a reality that you must consider in any definition of sustainability that you imagine.

Your task in this assignment is to sketch your own Ecotopia, or ecological utopia, in 5 pages, double spaced, in 12-point font. Remember that a "utopia" is a good place, a place indeed so perfect that in truth it probably is no place at all—a fiction. Your ecological utopia will stress issues of sustainability in the era of climate change, and it will incorporate social, cultural, and economic factors into its definition of the sustainable. In other words, social justice has to be fundamental to any sustainable design.

Below are some questions to consider as you sketch your DIY Ecotopia. Your writing can take the form of a set of questions and answers, if that is the easiest way to make clear the structure of your imaginary world. No research is required for this project—it is a strenuous imaginative exercise.

- What is the basis for the economy? Does any group of persons NOT participate in the economy?
- How is the government arranged? Is it a democracy, an anarchist collective, a matriarchy, a neo-tribal set of autonomous communities?
- What level of technology exists?
- Is there religious practice? If so, how does it work?
- What kind of educational system exists?
- Is gender an important category?
- What is the status of non-human life?
- What is the source of energy?
- Are ethnic or racial differences recognized or cultivated? If so, how and why?
- How do persons or groups resolve conflict? Are there courts? Prisons?
- Are there limits to growth? Population control, closed borders, etcetera?