



The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology

Barry Commoner

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From Chapter One:

This book . . . begins with the ecosphere, the setting in which civilization has done its great—and terrible—deeds. Then it moves to a description of some of the damage we have done to the ecosphere—to the air, the water, the soil. However, by now such horror stories of environmental destruction are familiar, even tiresome. Much less clear is what we need to learn from them, and so I have chosen less to shed tears for our past mistakes than to try to understand them. Most of this book is an effort to discover which human acts have broken the circle of life, and why. I trace the environmental crisis from its overt manifestations in the ecosphere to the ecological stresses which they reflect, to the faults in productive technology—and in its scientific background—that generate these stresses, and finally to the economic, social, and political forces which have driven us down this self-destructive course. All this in the hope—and expectation—that once we understand the origins of the environmental crisis, we can begin to manage the huge undertaking of surviving it.



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