Critics of environmentalism are still far from legion but they have at least become a presence. Wallace Kaufman's position among these critics is that of a "turned" environmentalist. Once an active environmentalist and environmental lobbyist, Kaufman now offers a "kiss and tell" exposé of the movement. His book offers enough new information to be of interest to seasoned critics, but it should be of greatest benefit to those who want a good overview of the environmentalist mind set.

Kaufman begins by covering familiar ground. He notes that although we may care a great deal about nature, nature does not give a fig about us. It is only by exerting control over nature that the several billion people currently living on this earth can possibly survive. He reviews a number of dire predictions about the environment, showing them to be overblown, without scientific foundation, and precursors of policy prescriptions with outrageously high cost/benefit ratios. Kaufman points out that previous false predictions of doom, such as those on population made by butterfly specialist Paul Ehrlich or by the Club of Rome, were forgotten without a scintilla of accountability for their prognosticators. The attitude of earlier conservationists, who believed in improving nature through scientific management, has been replaced by a hysterical antiscience rhetoric.

Kaufman then traces the environmental movement through Rousseau, Malthus, Wordsworth, and other romantic poets and pessimists. He portrays Henry David Thoreau as a major influence on 20th-century environmentalism in the United States and does a credible job of linking romanticism and socialism. Like many economists, he is astounded by a movement that seeks to reduce the quantity of goods and services provided to the peoples of the world. Such a movement, he correctly points out, must resort to redistribution to assuage those at the bottom of the economic ladder.

One of the more interesting sections of the book has to do with the environmental movement's penchant for deifying the earth and declaring certain primitive peoples (most notably, in the United States, the American Indian) to be keepers of the kingdom. Consider the famous "speech" attributed to Chief Seattle, which is usually spoken by an American Indian actor with a tear in his eye. It begins, "How can you buy or sell the sky? The land? The idea is strange to us. Every part of this earth is sacred to my people." These lines, and those that follow, are quoted by public television programs (not to mention Al Gore) so often that our children practically have them memorized. Yet they were never uttered by Chief Seattle. They were invented in 1971 by Professor Ted Perry for the ABC film "Home." In an attempt to put to rest the romantic notion of the noble savage, Kaufman cites the brutality of many primitive peoples as well as their general disregard for nature. Only people who have little to do with nature consider it benign.

Kaufman next reviews some of the misleading statistics and science that underpin many claims of the environmental movement. This material has been covered elsewhere to better effect (e.g., Ronald Bailey's *The True State of the Planet*), but Kaufman's overview is still useful.

There is also a brief review of the now massive "takings" literature. Kaufman feels that the takings issue has perhaps been most responsible for generating grassroots opposition to the environmental movement. Private property rights are deeply embedded in the American psyche, Kaufman believes, and clashes between environmentalists and private property owners are sure to increase.

One of the more interesting themes of the book is the discussion of the changing attitude among some scientists concerning natural states of equilibria. Kaufman sees nature more as a chaotic-dynamic process, making it silly to speak of a "balance of nature." Large populations of animals come and go with astonishing frequency. The face of the earth itself writhes and heaves unpredictably. All that happens without the interference of mankind.

I doubt that chaotic models will replace more traditional equilibrium models any time soon in science or in economics. However, one does not need to fall back on chaotic-dynamics to reach Kaufman's conclusion that our best course is to continue to adapt nature to our needs through the use of technology rather than passively to accept natural events. For Kaufman, as for Julian Simon and many others who have thought about these issues, the ultimate resource is the resourcefulness of human beings.

Kaufman has written a book that deserves a wide readership among people who desire to deepen their understanding of the environmental movement. Environmentalists, however, will despise its every page.

Ben W. Bolch
Rhodes College

An Essay on Rights
Hillel Steiner
Oxford: Blackwell, 1994, 305 pp.

It is a commonplace that the past few decades have witnessed an explosion of rights. "Human rights" seem to have multiplied endlessly. Each individual is asserted to have a right to welfare, a right to self-esteem, a right to health care, even, according to the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a right to "periodic holidays with pay." Unfortunately, these rights often conflict with the older human rights that classical liberals had fought for: the rights to life, liberty, and property (or the "pursuit of happiness"); the right to be secure in one's home and possessions; the right to be left alone to worship God or to find one's happiness as one sees fit. Such classical liberal "negative" rights do not conflict with each other, whereas "positive" rights to be provided with things produce many conflicts. If my "right to health care" conflicts with a doctor's "right to liberty," which one wins out? Will the doctor be forced to provide me with my health care? And to how much health care do I have a right, if the doctor also has the right to "periodic holidays