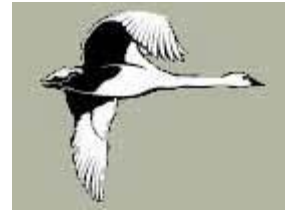


## The Trumpeter (2001)

### Leged, Deprived And Also College Students.

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In his paper, Stan Rowe makes a valiant effort to change the focus within environmentalism. In a friendly spirit he ends his paper proposing a new formulation of the so-called “deep ecology platform.” Such proposals are important and welcome. The article makes it relevant to reconsider different value-priorities compatible with support for the deep ecology movement, and with broader cultural trends.

A crucial term within the ecosophy of Stan Rowe which we do not find, for instance, in Ecosophy T, is “importance”: “Wherever our sense of greatest importance lies, there also will our ethics be. The attempt to build ethical concern for the ecosphere from the inside out, by add-ons starting with our own self importance and that of the human race, may soothe consciences for a little while, but it will be the kiss of death for wild nature.” Comparing relative importance Rowe notes: “What gives life to the cell? The living organ that is its surrounding environment. What gives life to the organ? The living organism within which it is embodied. What gives life to the organism? The surrounding living ecosystem and the global ecosphere.” In accordance with J.K. Feibleman Rowe announces “The *mechanism* of any level is found at lower levels (the parts), while the *purpose* of any level is found at levels above (the wholes).” This leads to a very radical formulation of the role of humans as I quoted above. It seems certainly to be a very different way of thinking, and feeling, from that of myself and presumably many others. But even on the basis of what I might call the importance of the importance approach, I think that we might add to his “proposed organized hierarchical systems-within-systems”—adding for example the Sun. In many cultures we find different kinds of Sun-worship which acknowledges the *importance* of the Sun for every aspect of human and non-human life.

The question whether something has inherent value is independent of its importance. A pitifully diseased man or rat has very little importance. Family relations are of less and less importance in terms of systems, but ethical norms of values have only a limited concern with importance. Ethics has more to do with *responsibilities and care*. And, of course, with duties, which are only indirectly tied to questions of system importance.

The usual platform formulation of the deep ecology movement has been criticized for neglecting the inherent value of individuals in favor of states of affairs or situations, for instance, the state of *flourishing* of life forms. My basic attitudes are such that I would change Point I and Point 2 so that the first affirms exclusively to the single living beings and the second to the state of well-being and flourishing of life. This is a change in the opposite direction of what Stan Rowe suggests. But many may feel more at home with changes in his direction, and I consider this compatible with being a supporter of the deep ecology movement, and more importantly, to contribute to the articulation of views in favor of reduction of destructive human influence.

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