

Communication Ecology of Arne Naess (1912-2009)

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“Self-realization is not a maximal realization of the coercive powers of the ego. The self in the kinds of philosophy I am alluding to is something expansive, and the environmental crisis may turn out to be of immense value for the further expansion of human consciousness.” Arne Naess (In Drengson and Devall 2008, p. 132)

Abstract

We explore communication ecology and how it shaped Arne Naess' development from child to mature scholar. As a nature-loving, cross-cultural, comparative philosopher, he explored cultures and nature together. His unified communication ecology reflected the places and cultural elements forming his character and professional approach. Both mirror the evolution of studying communication, cultures and languages with ecological methods used for comprehending the natural world. These methods focus on processes, relationships and whole systems, rather than reductionist analysis. Evolving communication and place-based learning systems are in living communities everywhere. There are cultures, language families, and dialects even in communities of nonhuman species. Naess studied world views and life philosophies as naturalists' study living species and beings in ecosystems. He explored classifying cultures, world views and religions with ecologically based methods. He called personal philosophies striving for ecological wisdom and harmony *ecosophies*. Communication ecology avoids the “one size fits all” study of the world; it facilitates the wisdom of diversity in cultural, linguistic, technological and economic analysis. This approach is pluralistic rather than monolithic.

Introduction

From his earliest major work, Naess used a *deep and comprehensive approach* for studying languages and communication. (The work is, *Interpretation and Preciseness: A Contribution to the Theory of Communication*, 1953. Now SWAN

Vol I in The Selected Works of Arne Naess, 2005.) He united disciplines to explore languages as part of diverse communication systems in the natural and human world. These systems are open ended, adaptive, creative and dynamic. They are constantly adjusting to changing conditions in unique communities and places. Communication between and within species involves meaningful variations of qualities (e.g. in sound, light, odor, heat, color, pattern, and texture,) with a wide range of frequencies, intensities and velocities. We now explore the communication ecology of languages with broad analytical and empirical methods, some pioneered by Naess. By studying whole systems, we appreciate the creative, place-based, knowledge skills of cultures woven into the other systems of the natural world. Diversity, complexity and creativity are important for environmental integrity, cultural richness, and personal freedom. Naess noted that when we know the ecological context, it helps us to understand one another without translation, even when from different cultures with unfamiliar languages. Knowing communication ecology helps us to resolve conflicts nonviolently. By having a sense for these whole systems, we are aware of the challenges to *precise* interpretation; this engenders positive cross-cultural and interspecies communication exchanges.

Naess loved diversity and appreciated the role of dialects in evolving systems of language families. He learned from empirical studies and by knowing many formal and vernacular languages (living and dead), that it is difficult to give *precise* (universal) definitions. There are many ways to feel, see, say and write things. He used a *descriptive* approach to study linguistic communication. He remarked in *The SWAN* (see the Appendix below for excerpts) that his view contrasted with analytic philosophers in England and elsewhere, who used a *prescriptive* approach, suggesting there is one right meaning and that a single language reflects reality more *precisely* than others. Their views were more insular; they did not study dialects and the cross-cultural, natural context of language families (such as Indo-European) that we study in communication ecology. Communication ecology enabled Naess to reach a mature, whole understanding of human life in the evolving, changing Earth. The culture that he grew up in accepted multiple dialects, perhaps because there was no Norse king as authority for proper Norsk. For several centuries the rulers were not Norwegians but foreigners. In the English speaking world there was the authority of the "King's English."

Personal Development: Culture and Place in Nature

Naess' personal, scholarly, and adventure experiences are rich, complex and deep. They reflect the multidimensional context of his places in Norway and elsewhere. He was fascinated with communication *and* with the natural world. He explored the world in calm, peaceful ways. He played in nature by himself much of the time. He was not antisocial, but the youngest of four children. His older brothers and sister were engaged in other activities. His father Ragnar died before he was a year old, and his mother Christine was stretched by social and familial obligations. The family lived in a large old house at the edge of Oslo near the forests. They visited the seashore in the summer and sometimes stayed in cabins close to the beach. His mother had a cabin on her side of the family in the mountain community of Ustaoset, four hours by train from Oslo.

Naess was a gifted linguist. He was aware of the many dialects spoken in Norway; he learned other languages. He was sensitive to the differences between spoken and written languages. Literary Norsk has narrative, storytelling forms closer to mythic, heroic, oral traditions. He was deeply attracted to the mountains, where his mother took the family. The cabin was in an extraordinary setting, dominated in the north by 40 kilometers of escarpment cliffs forming the south faces of *Mt. Halingskarvet*. To the south is an enormous alpine plateau called the *Hardanger-vidda*. It is difficult to describe or portray the impressive quality of these landscapes. Naess played in the forests near his home, and in the mountain meadows and tarns of the alpland by *Mt. Halingskarvet*. In summer he played in the fjords around Oslo. The place themes in his life and work are in this narrative. I will explore them along with the development of his mature, comprehensive personal *ecosophy*. He coined "ecosophy" from the ancient Greek "ecos" and "sophia" that combined mean *ecological wisdom* (Naess 1973). He called his life philosophy *Ecosophy T*.

The thematic motifs in Naess' life and work were continuously interwoven from childhood through maturity. Their harmonies grow more complex and rich with time. Naess was an exceptionally intelligent and emotionally sensitive person. From early life he was touched by tragedy, losing his father, and then his nanny Mina, who gave him unconditional love. (Mina was discharged by his mother. She thought Mina was spoiling him.) He spent

time alone in nature, where he felt joyfully at home. As a Norwegian he strongly identified with the land and its “free nature.” The Norse practice “*friluftsliv*” (life-in-the-free-air), being outdoors engaged in activities in free nature. (See Dahle 1994, and *Trumpeter* 21, 2) *Free nature* differs from North American *wilderness*, for vast areas of alpland in Norway are in the old farms, even though the land is unfenced and open. The air is free to walk and camp in, except where there are summer farm buildings (*setters*).

For generations, Norwegian rural communities have seasonally migrated like the Swiss. Norway is a country of extremes, with high mountains, deep fjords, alpine plateaus, extensive lakes, rivers and shores. From the shores south of the Oslo lowlands, to the extreme north above the Arctic Circle, it has incredible landscapes. In earlier times there was much isolation because of its rugged topography and severe winter weather. The land was settled when the last ice-age glaciers receded. It was inhabited by hunter-gatherers who followed herds of wild animals onto the mountain plateaus and down into the forested valleys. Because of its topographic complexity, even with a small population, it has vibrant, rich traditions of folk arts, local music, building styles, community self sufficiency and diversity of customs and dialects. It has extreme variations of weather from the mountain plateaus to the fjords. The Gulf Stream prevents the harbors from freezing in the winter, but inland the mountains and northern latitude give it extreme winter weather. In the far north Alta area in July it is the “land of the midnight Sun.” There are periods of 24 hour daylight. In winter there are periods of 24 hour night. On clear nights there can be amazing displays of Northern Lights.

Naess absorbed this rich culture and complex natural environment from early childhood. (Much of my description of Norwegian culture, history and place I learned from Naess and my relatives.) He was exceptionally curious and resourceful. In high school, he had a strong sense of himself, his history and passions. He was a devoted, skilled and bold mountaineer. He spent time in the mountains climbing and being with others more experienced than he. He grew up with a rich variety of artists, performers, writers and others, who regularly visited his family home. Oslo is culturally rich and well connected to Western Europe. Many languages are spoken there.

Naess studied classical music and piano and was a gifted pianist. He went to Vienna to study concert piano with a leading teacher. He went there to climb

the nearby mountains. He went there to discuss science and philosophy with leading scholars in the *Vienna Circle*, while writing his doctoral dissertation on scientific knowledge and the behavior of scientists. He studied what scientists wrote about their methods, he observed their actions, and conducted experiments himself. He did in-depth studies of science throughout his career. He understood modern physics and the work of Einstein. He wrote on these subjects in German and Norwegian. He published a two part history comparing Western and Eastern Philosophy that is only in Norsk.

In high school he read Spinoza in Latin and this led him to philosophy. He compared his sense of the Latin passages with translations of Spinoza by others into Norwegian, French, German and English. Spinoza's personal philosophy moved him. He felt it was comprehensive and mature. Spinoza helped him feel that "everything hangs together and makes sense." Spinoza, like Naess, spent much time in solitary reflection; he was a devoted scholar and artisan. In high school when asked what he wanted to be, Naess said confidently, "A Philosopher." He was an artisan of music, language, mountaineering and friluftsliv.

Naess' competence in contemporary languages facilitated his becoming proficient in older languages of scholarly importance for cross-cultural and historical studies. He loved symbolic languages and theoretical science. He loved mathematics and was attracted to arcane subjects. This was tempered by a demanding curiosity that led him to experiment and do empirical studies. He did not rely solely on texts for knowledge. He was fascinated by how people say things, not only with written texts. He learned to read and translate texts from Sanskrit, ancient Greek, and Classical Latin. These all have been used for advanced theoretical and philosophical studies. Thus, he had access to ancient and medieval texts, and he also knew major European languages and English.

He went on trips both to go mountain climbing and to pursue scholarly research. His studies and travels took him deep into the rich places of the texts he studied. His knowledge of language use, and *empirical semantics*, led him to appreciate the difficulty of *precise* translation. We get an idea of these difficulties if we translate a word from English to German, then German to French, then into Norwegian and back to English. Comparing the end result

with the original, we often find that the last translated meaning is not very appropriate. This is like the game played in grade school classrooms. The teacher whispers a sentence to the first student in a row. It is then whispered from one student to the next. It is said aloud when it gets to the last student in the room. It often has little to do with the original. There are also difficulties from disagreements in *interpretation* of religious and political texts about which people are passionate. When we examine our communication attempts in depth, we find that much of the time our language is vague. We each have unique ways of interpreting and understanding texts and everyday language. Naess was a skilled and gifted linguist, he did empirical studies of semantics that revealed this diversity and lack of precision.

Norway and Tvergastein

Norway has a complex and ancient history and is one of the oldest countries in Europe. It was first unified around 872 by Harald Fair Haired (formerly Harald Tangle Hair). The capital was Trondheim. Later, Norway was ruled by the Danes for 350 years, then in 1814 the Swedes took over until 1905. From 1905 on Norway was again ruled by Norwegians. The center of government under the foreign rulers shifted to Oslo, which was called Christiania. The first written Norwegian, besides the Viking Runes, is *Bokmal*. It was taken from written Danish and adapted to Norsk. During foreign rule, Norwegian culture flourished in the villages and rural areas. The districts developed and maintained unique dialects and subcultures. Some dialects are closer to Old Norse than that spoken in Oslo. There are now three ways to write Norwegian. Central authority has not imposed uniform spelling and pronunciation. Many dialects use words not used in the Oslo dialect. When you travel in rural areas on climbing trips, as Naess did, you hear subtle differences in vocabulary in the spoken dialects. Naess had similar experiences with other languages, as he traveled, because he visited city centers *and* rural areas on his far-flung trips.

Norway has old traditions of seasonal migration. Most farms have mountain farms called *setter*. In summer farmers take sheep, goats and cattle to the mountain plateaus. Norway's "cabin tradition" partly stems from this rural practice, as does *friluftsliv*. Going to a simple cabin takes you out of the city into the world of real nature. This changes your perspectives and helps you to be more whole. In this rich natural land, Naess formed a strong connection

with Mt. Halingskarvet, where in 1937 he had his mountain hut *Tvergastein* built. He tells in a book devoted to the mountain and hut about his love for this place and time spent there. [*Halingskarvet and Tvergastein: A Long Life with an Old Father (Det Gode Lande Livs Far 1999)*; for an English language article see “*An Example of Place: Tvergastein,*” *SWAN X*, 33, also reprinted in Drengson and Devall, 2008, *Ecology of Wisdom*, pp 45-65.] From an early age, he felt that this mountain was his old father that replaced the one he never knew. It has some of the oldest rock in Europe. “Tvergastein” means crossed stones and stone crosses. In plateau areas there are stone crosses that mark the lines between summer pastures. There are stone crosses that are used to mark the way for difficult conditions. There are rocks in this area that have crosses in their structure.

Naess considered changing his surname to Tvergastein, a practice used in rural Norway. If a person moves to a farm and becomes its farmer, he or she can take the farm’s name as a surname. The farms often have unique place names that can be on maps. There are other significant meanings for crosses and crossed stones in Christian, Norse and Viking traditions. The cross can mark a significant center, and many of the old farms were called “kingdoms,” for they were the center of a system of adaptation that reflected the whole of the culture in the single large farm that included waterfront, valley land, forests and mountain meadows. In recent cosmology, of which Naess was a student (one of his Masters degrees was in Astronomy), the universe is infinite and so each place is a center. Tvergastein is such a center which reflects and provides challenges to living well in one of most difficult places in Norway.

Tvergastein is a two hour uphill hike from the train station in Ustaoset. The cabin is on a rocky bench below the cliffs of the escarpment. There are house sized boulders between the hut and the faces. Close to the same bench is a small lake named Tvergastein-Tjørne (tarn) on the map. A thousand feet above the hut you see a smaller hut, perched on the edge of the overhanging face. This hut was built by Arne with help of climbing friends. He named it the *Eagle’s Nest*.

I visited Tvergastein in 1997 with my family. My wife Tory (short for Victoria) and three daughters were used to walking and camping in the mountains. We camped above the hut in our tent. We told Arne we wanted to go to the

summit of the mountain. In the morning he led us to the top of Mt. Halingskarvet, so we could see the view and visit the Eagle's Nest. The Nest had recently been restored after he had given it to the Geilo Climbing Club. He was concerned about our finding our way alone, since the mountains could get clouded over and socked in. He said we would probably not be able to see the Jontuheimen, and he was right. He insisted we rope Anna, our youngest who was 9, when we were climbing the rock. Our other two daughters Jane (12) and Alice (14) were more experienced.

As we ascended Arne told us about the different routes he had climbed on the mountain. He said he had never climbed it by the route we were on. High on the mountain he pointed to a place where they were going to build the Eagle's Nest, but one of his friends fell carrying material and was killed. They then decided to build the hut in its present location. When we got to the summit, we realized that this was not the kind of top that we were used to in our home mountains. The summit is a rocky plateau that stretches about 40 kilometers according to Arne. There were large and small rocks, patches of snow, sand and gravel. Arne said that in winter the whole area is covered with vast amounts of snow. Walking over and around the boulders was very challenging.

We eventually made it to the Eagle's Nest. We climbed down a ladder to the shelf on which it is built. The cabin takes up most of the ledge and is surrounded by rock walls. We went inside and the children thought the bunks built into the walls two high were neat, so they tried them out. We looked out of the window at an amazing abyss. Arne explained that he built the hut as the result of a dream. He dreamt of a place to stay after climbing the faces that gave you a feeling of awe when you looked out, a perfect place for an eagle to perch and soar from. It certainly affected me! I felt it in my stomach, when I looked into the thin air. The Tvergastein hut was a tiny dot far below. Arne told us that the mountain is part of his mythology that sired and nurtured his mountain spirit. He told us about skiing the chutes in the winter, when they are filled with snow. He said the Eagle's Nest was built during the Second World War, when the German Army occupied Norway. They did not ask permission to build it, since when they followed these demands, they almost never got an answer. They realized that it was best to proceed as if what they were doing was a normal course of events in Norway. He became friends with some of the Germans who were in Norway

during the war; he was sorry that they did not keep in touch after the war. Norway is a popular destination for German tourists, who go in bus loads to *Nordkapp*, the northern most point of land on the European Continent.

Formative Alps

The alpine plateau south of Mt. Halingskarvet is one of the most extensive in Western and Northern Europe. The *Hardangervidda* is crisscrossed with trails and dotted with cabins used by hikers, skiers, herders and hunters. It has the most extensive herds of wild Reindeer (caribou) in Europe, and many other species of wild animals, birds, trees and plants varying with the seasons. "Hardanger" is a name associated with a rich culture of arts and crafts such as "Hardanger embroidery," "Hardanger design and painting," and "Hardanger Fiddles and music". Naess often said you can have a rich culture without a large population and intensive technological development, which he thought was shown by the Folk Art Museum on Bigdøy Island near Oslo, which features displays from the districts and areas of Norway such as Hardanger and Setesdal. In the far north near Alta above the Arctic Circle, the reindeer are semi-domesticated by the Saami, whose tongue is an official language of Norway. In winter the area around Tvergastein is blessed with storms depositing deep snow, which feeds the many lakes and streams; it waters the plants and animals during the summer. It can be clear one moment, and then all of a sudden clouds and fog close in, and it is difficult to find your way. To the north are the *Jotunheimen* (home of the giants), the highest mountains in Norway. They are visible on a clear day from the summit of Mt. Halingskarvet. They are very rugged and covered with glaciers and snow year round. These fantastic landscapes are imbued with myths, legends, and stories that are in the memories of a people who have lived in them for thousands of years. When we walked in the mountains with locals, they told us about important landmarks that would help us to find our way, and also stories of legend and myth, usually connected with those places. These landscapes were Naess' home place and shaped who he was.

We drove through the Jotunheimen on our way to Bergen from Trondheim. We spent a night at one of the highest lodges and ski areas in Norway. There was a camp there for ski racers and some were from our part of Canada. While there, I imagined Naess staying in one of the high old cabins with the naturalist he told us about, who taught him many details about the

mountains. In the morning we drove over a high pass and stopped for a bite to eat before we drove down the other side of the mountains toward the head of Sognefjord. We came to a sign pointing to where Wittgenstein's cabin had been. The sign explained that Wittgenstein had a cabin built on a nearby site that he used as a getaway when living in England. The farmer whose land it was on moved it to another location, a common practice in Norway. Evidently Wittgenstein loved Norway and learned to speak the dialect of the people in this area.

Knowledge and Wisdom

Philosophy for Naess was a quest to answer deep questions about life, the nature of the world, and ultimate values. He searched for joyful wholeness in life. As a young philosopher, he enjoyed discussions with the *Vienna Circle*. He was overjoyed that these were not debates, but collegial efforts to understand each other through respectful exchanges. They sought to understand difficult problems and questions in the foundations of knowledge and science. From their discussions he thought that he could do value-free research, but after some effort he realized that this is not possible, for even logic has values. He recognized the shortcomings of the *positivism* that came out of the Circle. (See his debate with A. J. Ayer in *SWAN* VIII, 13.) A central theme in Circle discussions focused on the question, "What do you mean exactly by this or that word or statement?" They tried to be more precise to clarify meanings. They explored having a uniform language for all science. Some worked on universal symbols for global communication (Otto Neurath). Naess was fluent in spoken and written German, the language in which they conversed.

The Vienna Circle was one of the most influential discussion groups in the 20th Century West. It was organized in honor of Ernst Mach by Moritz Schlick. Schlick was a controversial professor who was assassinated in 1936. Other members of the Circle were: Rudolf Carnap, Frederick Weismann, Felix Kaufmann, Kurt Goedel, Herbert Feigl, Victor Kraft, Hans Hahn, E. Zilsel, and Von Juhos. Ludwig Wittgenstein knew Schlick and Weismann and some other Circle members. They admired his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* and discussed it in depth. At 24, Naess was the youngest member. When the Germans took control in 1939 many of the Circle members left Austria. Some went to the United States where they wrote on the unification of the sciences.

Wittgenstein and Naess had many common interests. They came from similar backgrounds in their respective cities and countries. They were from well educated upper class families. Both had huts they liked to stay in, in rural Norway. They were musically gifted, and passionate about math and philosophy. Both focused on communication and were sensitive to the *limits of language*. They were both trying to understand the relation between language, symbol systems and reality. When Naess was 24, Wittgenstein was 47. Both were to have profound influence on academic philosophy.

Limits of Language

When Wittgenstein published the *Tractatus* in 1922, his book was supported by Bertrand Russell. Russell saw it as an example of logical atomism, which he favored. Wittgenstein did not view the book in that way, but accepted Russell's introduction so it would be published. Wittgenstein was awarded a doctorate at Cambridge in 1929 and the *Tractatus* was accepted as his dissertation. In England he was first a student at Manchester in aeronautical engineering. He became exercised by problems in mathematics and worked on logic and read Gotlieb Frege. Russell and Whitehead worked on the foundations of mathematics. The German professor Frege was a pioneer in applying logic to math. Whitehead and Russell tried to demonstrate that all mathematics, from simple numbers and their operations, can be deduced from pure logic. Their major work that supposedly demonstrated this is *Principia Mathematica* (1927). (Naess read it with "great delight.") Wittgenstein was deeply engrossed in the philosophy of mathematics. He was tutored by Russell in 1912-1913. This deeply influenced his writing of the *Tractatus*. Wittgenstein and Russell were both pacifists. When World War One started in 1914, he volunteered as a noncombatant medic in the Austrian army. He worked on the manuscript during the war. When a prisoner of war he finished the manuscript and sent it to Russell, who helped to get it published in English.

Wittgenstein was a charismatic and passionate man of many talents. He was a gifted musician, house designer, an engineer who held patents in propeller design, a gardener, logician, mathematician, philosopher and grade school teacher. He inherited a vast fortune from his father in 1912 (the year Arne was born) and gave most of it away. He endowed an award for poetry and Rainer Maria Rilke was one of the recipients. He was a very frugal person

and considered joining a monastery. He loved Norway and had the cabin built there to find refuge from the confined halls of academia. His cabin was at the head of Sognefjord near the community of Skjolden, south of the Jotunheimen. Naess' hut is almost due south from this location over the high summit plateau of Mt. Halingskarvet.

Wittgenstein was from a wealthy Viennese family. He felt especially alienated from his country when Germany annexed Austria in 1939. He was an expatriate Austrian and a professor at Trinity College in Cambridge from 1930 on. He spent the second part of his academic life critiquing the reductionist views of the *Tractatus*. This critique was advanced in his *Blue* and *Brown Books* written earlier but published much later than the more famous and influential *Philosophical Investigation*, published 2 years after his death in 1953. In the *Tractatus* he writes of a perfect language which is to be one name for one object, an exercise in abstract reductionism. In the *Investigations* he approaches language as a "form of life." "To learn a language is to learn a form of life." He pursues questions about how we actually learn the words of our language, and how we teach children. He seemed to be working his way to a more empirical and naturalistic ecology of communication that Naess developed and embraced. Starting with his first major work in 1953 (*Interpretation and Preciseness*), and progressing over the next one half century, Naess continued developing his comprehensive approach to communication ecology, uniting the human and natural worlds, using interdisciplinary, global studies moving to unification and comprehensiveness rather than to reductionist analysis.

Other philosophers, besides Russell and Whitehead, who were important to the development of *analytic philosophy* in the English speaking world were G.E. Moore, J.L Austin, and Gilbert Ryle. They were influential in the rise of analytic philosophy, sometimes called ordinary language philosophy when associated with Wittgenstein's later work. Naess comments on this in the excerpts below. (For more on Wittgenstein see Naess' book *Four Modern Philosophers: Carnap, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Sartre* (1968), on the Vienna Naess studied in see Janick and Toulmin's *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (1996) both listed in the bibliography.)

Naess was a multilingual, descriptive, communication theorist and philosopher. He was too sophisticated about language and communication

diversity to accept the simplistic views current in England and the U.S. for a while. There was a strain of anti-empiricism in professional philosophy in the English speaking world. Philosophy was considered a purely conceptual study. All we need to do is examine language in a narrow circle of dialogue. We can imagine and make up our own paradigm cases. We do not have to do empirical studies of the actual use of a language and its dialects. Naess was always connected with larger global communication studies and the real world of nature in the shores, mountains and forests. He did not go down this dead end. He did not buy into the "social construction of nature" that was used by some Idealists in the egocentric predicament, that we are forever trapped in our own ideas. In the more recent version, the "ideas" become "stories," everything is a text. There is no natural world that is not a "social construction." (Naess commented on this in his paper "Avalanches as Social Constructions," in *Environmental Ethics* 22, 2000, reprinted in SWAN X, 53.)

Nature, Self and Foundations of Science

While doing graduate studies in Vienna, Naess underwent intensive psychoanalysis with Dr. Edvard Hitschmann, who was trained by Sigmund Freud. The analysis went on for fourteen months, six days a week, for an hour each appointment. This gave him deep knowledge of himself and compassion for people with emotional and psychological problems. Dr. Hitschmann wanted Naess to become a psychotherapist, for he thought Naess had a talent for working with people. He arranged for and Naess made rounds in the Psychiatric wards. However, he became a philosopher who studied the foundations and methodology of social sciences like psychology. (See his seminal paper "Self Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World," in the *Trumpeter* 4, 3 1987 and SWAN X, 45.)

When Naess went to Vienna to work on his Ph.D. he had completed a BA and two MAs at the University of Oslo. He finished his doctorate in 1936 when he went back to Oslo for his dissertation orals. In 1936-37 he worked on projects related to the development of empirical semantics and wrote articles for *Erkenntnis*, the journal started by the Vienna Circle, and for other publications. In 1938 he accepted a post doctoral research position at the University of California in Berkeley with Prof. E. C. Tolman. He learned first-hand to do experimental psychology. He then studied the scientists doing lab

research on learning theory using lab rats. He told me he felt sorry for the caged rats.

Naess had deep firsthand knowledge of nature, science, math and himself, and competence in spoken and literate traditions of many languages. He knew that specific languages are in larger systems of communication within the human and natural world. He knew that spoken languages are always changing just like the natural world. Giving a written definition for a word or concept *as fixed* is not possible. He compared living spoken languages to “ever moving rivers.” (See *SWAN I* Preface in the Appendix below.) He learned to deeply know his favorite places by interacting with and studying the rocks, flora and fauna in them. He learned at an early age that he could interact with these beings in interesting and personal ways. He learned to respect the integrity of our *spontaneous experiences* as deep and complex. We cannot adequately describe them in any language, spoken, written, philosophical, scientific, or poetic; not even in performance arts like song and dance. Our feelings and thoughts are rich and deep, when we are *fully open* to them; we could spend our lives reflecting on them, for they are inexhaustible. Our spontaneous experiences can be open to the *whole* world.

Naess was a naturalist and human ecologist of philosophy, social and physical sciences and other scholarly systems research. For him a philosophy of life must be grounded in nature through our own deep first-hand knowledge. Field naturalists use comprehensive and detailed approaches in nature studies. They want to know how animals and plants are interrelated, how they complement one another, how they change through time, how they adapt to the climates and habitats they live in, what their social systems are, and how they interact and communicate. Rachel Carson was a field naturalist, who deeply appreciated the complex ecological relationships in the seashores, on land, in lakes and rivers. Her writings, and especially *Silent Spring* (1964), inspired Naess to devote the last decades of his life to the *deep ecology movement*. His first paper on environmental topics was “Nature Ebbing Out” which was written in 1965 to protect *Innerdalen*, a mountainous area on the west coast of Norway. (Reprinted in *SWAN X*, 1.) He was already active in the peace and social justice movements. He was amazed that many in the scientific community did not embrace her warnings and advise us to follow different paths in agriculture, forestry and land use. This inspired him to write about the “scientific enterprise.” (*SWAN IV*)

His research in languages, logic, science and philosophy enabled him to appreciate the complexities of human and natural systems. By 1964 he respected the vernacular forms of wisdom and technique found around the world, in different cultures, with unique languages and technologies adapted to home places. On his expeditions, he discovered that people can understand one another despite differences, when they share ecological places and are engaged in common projects. He saw that languages are in complex families of evolving communication culture systems present throughout the natural world. (Bonner 1980) The natural world is the ultimate ground for all languages. We now know in more depth how subtle and complex communication is between members of the same species and even between species. Consider the studies of bees, termites, ants, ravens, crows, dolphins, whales, wolves, elk, apes and chimps, to mention species that indepth studies have shown the pervasive nature of communication in the natural world and in community evolution.

While a child, Naess was delighted to discover that he could communicate with the tiny organisms in the water when playing in the seashore in the summer. He found that when he was quiet and still, they would explore his body; when he was agitated and upset, they would hide. By experimenting, he found he could interact with other wild beings. He was fully aware of the larger evolutionary and continental forces shaping Norway as a place, and of its changing and temporary geography. The old myths are filled with such knowledge. In addition, he knew from up close, the forces shaping the landscapes of the mountain country. He remarked to me many times how short a time geologically Norway has existed and what a short time it could be expected to exist in the impressive landscapes that created it. He knew these from studying the work of others and also from his own observations over almost a century lifetime of experience from when a child.

As a mature scholar and planetary mountain wanderer, he appreciated and applied the cross-cultural, multidisciplinary, *ecological systems concepts* needed to understand and describe the rich complexities of the natural *and* human worlds, with all their astounding interrelationships and diversity. He attained global perspectives on cultures, worldviews and philosophies of life, related to unique places with place-based languages. His summary paper on the deep ecology movement was presented at a conference on the "Future of

Research" in Bucharest in 1972. It was published in *Inquiry* in 1973 and reprinted over and over and is now in *SWAN X*, 2. During this early time there were the Club of Rome publications such as the D. H. and R. L. Meadows' *Limits to Growth* (1972), E. F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* (1973), and Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature* (1971). The first Earth Day was in 1970. At the University of Victoria we started an undergraduate Environmental Studies Program in 1974. Later, and with similar aims and inspiration, there are the writings by Wes Jackson (1996) and the founding of the Land Institute; the work in India in local agriculture and technology with writings by Vandana Shiva (1993); and Helena Norberg-Hodge's (1991) writings and work in Ladak. In the three decades from 1970 to 2000 there were institutes, NGOs, government organizations and U.N. Commissions created to understand, protect and care for the environment.

In Naess' mature philosophy progress in these undertakings depends on nonviolent communication, being honest and open to understanding without judging others, including animal and plant companions. In school he tried to prevent other boys from fighting. He got between boys who were about to fight to ask them "why" questions. As a young man, he was impressed by the life and work of Gandhi (*SWAN VI*). He became committed to nonviolent communication and direct active resistance. In World War II the German Army occupied Norway for five years. He was in the underground resistance to the occupation. One advantage he and others had was that they understood German, but very few Germans understood Norwegian dialects. After the war he was appointed by the government to question those who tortured Norwegians to learn what happened to people who disappeared during the War. From the 1970s on he was a leader in nonviolent resistance to violence against humanity and nature.

In Naess' ecosophy a rich and rewarding life does not require material wealth or power over others and nature. It is found in using our natural abilities to realize deep joy in spontaneous experiences, in friendships and in community with others. Philosophy thrives in dialogue. When attacked for his views, like Gandhi he sought to understand the attacker's views. He clarified his own views to deepen and understand them better. He considered adversaries potential friends. He learned through communication studies that we should not be rigid about our abstract ideas and beliefs, since we often express them in vague and ambiguous ways. Precise translation

from one person to another can be very challenging. His studies of ordinary people's views found that they have extraordinary abilities and knowledge. He championed democracy, cultural diversity and global interdisciplinary studies of human life and nature. He investigated the kinds of democracy that can work in different settings. (SWAN IX, *Trumpeter* 21, 2, 2005)

Reflective Synopsis

In Naess' mature philosophy no doctrine or theory can be complete. We can have a *whole* approach to the world, which is a form of maturity (*Trumpeter* 9, 2). Attempts to capture this sense of wholeness result in fragmentary accounts. There are limitations to all languages, practical, theoretical and specialized. Symbol systems are partial and constitute *abstract structures* of thought that should not override the *concrete contents* of our whole experiences (SWAN X, 40). Our *spontaneous experience* cannot be encompassed in speech or text. Religious and philosophical texts are open ended, and cannot be given definitive, final interpretations. Preciseness and rigor depend on specific contexts and practices. The narrative home for our discourses, study and research are the personal stories we live in a culture and home place. His quest to know ultimate values and the nature of the world led him to articulate a *Gestalt Ontology* (Drengson and Quick 2007, SWAN X, 41). Our concrete experience is shaped, in part, by values we clearly support and feelings we have. Our spontaneous experience is naturally organized in *gestalts* that shift and change with our awareness, experience, culture, judgments and place.

Naess valued nonviolent communication and respected the integrity of individual experience. He paid careful attention to the context, places and facts of language in communication. We each have personal ways of understanding the language of our family and culture. When we question people about *their* understanding of basic concepts and words, we find considerable differences in connotation and denotation of important terms. Thus, mutual respect and democracy are vitally important, if each of us is to realize our potential. He stressed the importance in developed societies of articulating personal philosophies that are *ecosophies* aiming for ecological harmony and wise actions. Detailed and comprehensive studies of human and nonhuman communication systems lead us to appreciate the creative

powers in ourselves and other beings. Their living presence is spontaneously realized by us; it is not just a theory, nice words, or an idea.

Naess created “Gandhian boxing and tennis” to learn and practice nonviolent, noncompetitive life skills. His personal ecosophy included devotion to mountaineering, love of nature, social activism, cross cultural research, deep questioning, and life as a journey and adventure. He used field naturalist, ecological and multidisciplinary methods to study evolving communication systems. He supported the movements for peace, social justice and ecological responsibility. These themes are reflected in his *possibilism* (anything can happen), *pluralism* (every event has many descriptions and possible outcomes), *zeteticism* (be a lifetime seeker), and *healthy skepticism* (*Pyrrhonism*: seek the truth but don’t claim it.) He lived expansively, emphasizing positive feelings and respectful relationships. He had a high *quality of life* with low levels of material and energy consumption. His life style was “modest in means and rich in joyful ends.” His way of being in nature, as in climbing, kept his attention focused in the present, sensitive to the beings and things in the world around him. This is the way we walked in nature together. The last time we walked in the forest in 2005, he would stop and say “Listen to the music,” pointing to a nearby bubbling stream, or to the tree tops singing in the wind above us.

He stressed going beyond the minimum in meeting social and ecological responsibilities by doing *beautiful actions*, *by giving back more than we take* (SWAN X, 15 and Drengson and Devall, 2008, pp. 133 ff). The 8 platform principles of the deep ecology movement summarize the shared points of the grass roots, global movement, supported by people from a diversity of cultures, worldviews and religions. In talks and articles supporting the movement, he stressed helping people in societies in deep difficulties to relieve their suffering so they can lead decent lives. He thought most industrial nations are *over-developed*. We need to reenergize our local support systems, and not rely on life support materials from afar. He believed that *responsible scholars should be activists* in at least one of the three great movements. These are the motifs in his life and communication ecology. He called his whole view *Ecosophy T*. It was *experimentally* worked out at Tvergastein.

Unity of Personal and Professional Life

This account of Naess' life and work concentrates on his experiences and impressions important to his development as scholar, researcher, adventurer and mature whole person. He had a family and three children. He was married three times. Family and friends played a central role in his life. They went with him to the mountain hut and spent time there. The hut is above the tree line. It is one of the highest in Norway to have been occupied year round. Its windows look over a vast expanse of free nature, thousands of square kilometers of alpland. The hut is now owned by an NGO dedicated to furthering Naess' research aims and projects and doing research on his life.

He did not draw a sharp line between his professional and personal life. Both were part of his unified approach. His research and teaching reflected his passions. When in Oslo in an early stage of his professional life, he had a hut out of town near the cliffs of Kolsåss Mountain, where he could stay when climbing on a weekend. I climbed the mountain via the trail with a relative. When on top looking at the view, we heard climbers below us. Looking down the rock faces we saw three climbing parties. Naess wrote and did research at Tvergastein and in Oslo. He pursued climbing and nature interests in both places and when he travelled. He liked to play, have fun and enjoy life. He wrote in longhand for a set number of hours almost every day.

He and two of his wives raised three children, two boys and a girl. He was a surrogate father to his nephew named Arne Naess by his sister Kiki. "Young Arne" or "Arne Jr.," as he was called, became a major international figure in business and mountaineering circles. In 1985 "Young Arne" led the first Norwegian party to climb Mt Everest. He was married three times, once to Diana Ross with whom he had two children. "Young Arne" died mountain climbing in South Africa in 2004 when he was 66. By then he and Diana were divorced, but she sang at his Oslo funeral.

Members of Arne's family were engaged in social life and business, and some of his relatives were philanthropists. He believed in doing bread labor every day, such as sawing wood for the stove. He contributed a percentage of his income to organizations like Amnesty International. His brother Erling was very successful in shipping and contributed to many Norwegian projects, such as the Ski Museum at Holmenkollen, near the big ski jump overlooking Oslo, and to the large public aquarium in Bergen. His oldest brother Ragnar

studied chemistry and worked on a PhD in the U.S. He became a successful stock broker in New York.

When Naess was a full Professor at the University of Oslo in 1939, he was married to his first wife Else, who was also a mountaineer. Their two sons were Ragnar and Arild. Arild was killed falling off the train near Ustaoset. Arne was in the search party that retrieved his body. While a professor, Arne and Else divorced and he married Siri. They had a daughter called Lotte but named Charlotte. They divorced after many years. He met Kit-Fai when in Hong Kong in 1973 as a visiting professor. She completed her BA in philosophy and comparative literature at the University of Hong Kong in 1974. She went to Oslo to be with him in 1976. They married in 1990. She earned a Masters in Chinese at the University of Oslo in 1997. She worked with him for years and knows his collected works well.

When he retired in 1969, Naess had many professorial duties at the University of Oslo. He did administrative work, taught classes, worked with graduate students, did research and wrote for publication. He was responsible for designing the tests in logic and philosophy that all university students in Norway were required to take. He was a father, a mountaineer, adventurer and served on many committees at the University, in Norway and internationally. After finishing his Ph.D. at 24 in 1936, he was awarded a postdoctoral research appointment at the University of California Berkeley in 1938-39 with Psychology Professor Edward Chace Tolman. He and his associates were doing experimental research on learning theory using laboratory rats. Dr. Tolman was a leading experimental psychologist in the U.S. Arne loved California but returned to Norway in 1939 to be the head of the Philosophy Department at the University of Oslo. At 27 he was then the youngest full professor appointed to this high a position. In 1940 the German Army invaded and occupied Norway for the rest of the war.

Naess returned to North America, the U.S. and California many times during his life. He loved Death Valley, which is so different from Norway. Sometimes when in California, he stayed in Santa Cruz and gave lectures at the University of California there, where his friend Dr. Michael Soulé was on faculty. Soulé is a founder of *Conservation Biology*. One of Naess' essays is in the first anthology Soulé (1986) edited in this discipline.

Naess is a treasured figure in Norway. He received many awards from Norwegian organizations and the King: the Star of St. Olav in 2005, Norway's highest honor from King Harald V, and a Diploma and Medal in 1998 also from King Harald V for contributions to the Intelligence Agency XU during the German occupation; he received the Medal of the Presidency of the Italian Republic in 1998; the Nordic Prize from the Swedish Academy in 1996; the Mountain Tradition Award by the Red Cross in 1996; the Mahatma Gandhi Prize for Non-violent Peace in 1994; the Fridtjof Nansen Award for the promotion of science in 1983; as well as many other awards from European and international bodies. He was a Landsdowne Fellow at the University of Victoria in Canada in 1988. He did research in the early days of UNESCO in 1948 that contributed to its founding development. This research tried to bridge the gap between East and West during the cold war. In his travels, he visited major mountain ranges all over the world, such as the Swiss Alps, the Italian Alps, the Pyrenees, Sierra Nevada, Rockies, and others. He went to both poles. He visited and spoke on campuses all over the world, East and West. He led climbs in the Himalaya. He travelled to China, Japan, India, Nepal and other places in the East. He travelled all over Europe as well as in North and South America.

He wrote and published over 30 books in several languages, and more than 700 papers, about one half published and one half unpublished, we learned when working on *SWAN*. His writings and exploits inspired people to support preserving biodiversity and the deep ecology movement. *The Trumpeter* was inspired by his work. There were many other inspired efforts, festschrifts, conferences, and the creation of the Foundation for Deep Ecology (FDE) by Doug Tompkins. FDE supported many projects and initiatives furthering the deep values articulated by Naess. We had meetings and conferences in San Francisco, at the Naropa Institute for a week in 1989, and at Point Reyes Park for a week in 1998. Many of us worked to make his writings available in English, especially in North America. This was one reason I started the *Trumpeter*, in addition to love for nature and biodiversity. We wanted to publish a core of his books in English in contemporary scholarly versions. In 1994 I approached several academic publishers with a multivolume proposal; none were willing to do more than one book at a time. Working with FDE, and with input from Arne and Kit-Fai, we developed a manageable proposal that Springer in the Netherlands eventually published as the 10 volume *SWAN* set.

After much work and grant support from FDE, we produced *The Selected Works of Arne Naess*, 10 volumes of his works in English. It represents all the subjects in his writings, from earliest to latest, published and unpublished. The *Advisory Board* was Robert S. Cohen, Bill Devall, Alan Drengson, Ingemund Gullvag (now deceased), Per Ingvar Haukeland, Kit-Fai Naess, Nicolas Rescher, George Sessions, Michael Soulé, Douglas Tompkins, and Jon Wetleson. The project hired a production firm, editors, copy editors and designers. Harold Glasser was hired by FDE as editor to oversee the project. The set was published in 2005, with the official launch held in November of that year at the University of Oslo. The set is sold boxed for about \$1800 US. The most accessible and affordable single volume of his work in English is *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess* edited by Bill Devall and myself, published in 2008 by Counterpoint Press in Emeryville, California. All *Trumpeter* issues are free online and are a rich source of his writings, with discussions by others on the subjects he explored.

Naess had a wonderful sense of humor. He liked to challenge people to box and arm wrestle. At the SWAN launch in 2005 he arm wrestled men and women dignitaries. He was modest and willing to do humble work. When he was at the University of Victoria as a distinguished visiting Professor in 1988, he came to observe an Aikido class I was teaching. I told him it was consistent with Gandhian nonviolence. He got to the class early. My assistant asked if he was there for the course. He said "yes." My assistant gave him a broom and told him to sweep the floor. When I arrived he was diligently sweeping the floor while everyone else was watching. My assistant asked me, "Is that Arne Naess?" He realized that this was the distinguished guest visiting our campus. I said "Yes." He looked distressed and said, "I told him to sweep the floor, thinking he was one of our students." I said, "That's fine, he likes to help." Arne finished sweeping and sat down. We started the class by bowing and then we had a 90 minute class. After the class when we were alone Naess said, "Very Gandhian," about Aikido philosophy and our practice.

In 1969 Naess retired early from his university position to "live and not just function." He urged academics to be involved in social activism. For the rest of his life, he devoted himself to being in nature and to social causes, such as peace, social justice and the deep ecology movement. He was a full professor

and head of philosophy at the University when he retired. The Center for Development and the Environment (SUM), part of the University of Oslo, was organized in his honor in 1990. He was a fellow there until his death in 2009. He was the subject of many documentaries and interviewed by all the media many times. A documentary made about him by Bullfrog Films is called *Stones' Philosopher*.

The next sections explain Naess' global approach to studying worldviews and social movements. The Appendix has excerpts from *SWAN*. The bibliography provides references for further study. (See his paper on "Reflections on Total Views" reprinted in Drengson and Devall 2008.)

Naess' Global Analysis of Worldviews and Political Movements

The concepts, distinctions and typology explained here are part of Naess' global approach to the study and classification of worldviews, cultures and social-political movements.

Four Level Typology

This chart is a simplified version of Naess' Apron Diagram (*SWAN X*, 9). It has four levels of questioning and articulation for developing *norms* and *hypotheses*, *platform principles*, *policies*, and *actions* in an *ecosophy*. People might know what their ultimate values and beliefs about the world are, as in a *philosophy of life* within a culture and worldview. When we support a social movement, we know its general aims and principles, that we support based on our religion or philosophy. We write and act to support policies at state and local levels, consistent with our ultimate *norms and hypotheses* about the world. Sometimes we are not clear about our ultimate values and beliefs, and yet we want to support a particular movement. We are more focused in our purposes, if we articulate our life philosophy. If it aims for ecological harmony, it is an *ecosophy*. There are a large number of *ecosophies*, languages and cultures in the world. Naess was a celebrant of diversity. He wrote that cultural anthropology is one of *many ways* to study diversity. The arrows indicate direction of *Questioning* and *Articulation*.

Cross Cultural Typology: 4 Levels of Questioning and Articulation		
Level 1	Life Philosophies, Ultimate premises of norms and hypotheses	Taoism, Christianity, Ecosophy T, etc.

Level 2	Movement Platform Principles For example, the DEM 8 points	Peace Movement, Deep Ecology Movement, Social Justice Movement, etc.
Level 3	Policies	PO ₁ , PO ₂ , PO ₃ , etc.
Level 4	Practical Actions	PA ₁ , PA ₂ , PA ₃ , etc.

The Global movements for peace, social justice and ecological responsibility are supported by people with *diverse ultimate philosophies and local practices*. These movements have platform principles that are on level #2 in the chart, when we spell them out. By deep *questioning* we clarify our ultimate values and views about the nature of the world. From these ultimate premises, we *articulate* their implications to decide what movements we support, what policies, and what actions we will take. The chart typology is used to compare movements, worldviews and their implications in principles, policies and actions. We become concerned about the aims of a movement, for we are concerned about solving a problem we perceive, perhaps at the local level, such as air pollution. Reflection on the problem leads us to think of local actions and policies that would help to solve it. We then consider the aims of movements to see which might help to resolve the problem working with others. We consider those organizations whose aims and principles are consistent with our own ultimate values and beliefs about the world, in our philosophy of life.

The long-range deep ecology movement is an international, grass-roots political movement with many local variations and applications. There are broad points of general agreement nationally and internationally. There are many different social-political movements. Some are local, some regional, some national, and some include the whole Earth in values and aims. Naess, and supporters of the deep ecology movement, value, appreciate, and try to have a sense for the diversity of cultures and languages in the world. We know that people come from a wide variety of backgrounds with different views about the world and ultimate values. Some countries officially recognize *multiculturalism*. Supporters of the deep ecology movement think each person can have a complete or whole view comprising four levels of articulation and application in language and action.

The deep ecology movement is an international grass roots movement that is supported by people from nations and cultures around the world with a diversity of worldviews and religions. Supporters agree that the Earth is

being damaged and that we need to act. The principles of international movements should not imperil individual and cultural diversity. A major aim of the social justice movement is to honor and respect all kinds of diversity, racial, religious, cultural, philosophical, and individual. We can accomplish more through mutual respect, cooperation and peace. The deep ecology movement respects the values of other beings and treasures biological and other forms of diversity in human *and* nonhuman communities.

Platform Principles of Social-Political Movements

Naess proposed the eight principles as a *working platform* for the *deep ecology movement*. Based on empirical research, including polling and questionnaires, he found that these principles have wide support in the international ecology movement. They are more refined than slogans, but have a similar use. They are inclusive and flexible in interpretation. They are supported by people with diverse ecosophies, religions, worldviews and cultures. Interpretation of the principles varies from place to place, and person to person, depending on their ecosophies, cultures, worldviews and religions. This contrasts with the “one size fits all” philosophy of industrial and economic development pervasive in North America and much of the world.

The version of the deep ecology movement platform principles below is Naess’ most recent. It is from Arne Naess, 2002, *Life’s Philosophy*, pp 108-109. The first published version of the platform was in George Sessions’ *Ecophilosophy* newsletter in 1984. He and Arne wrote the platform when on a hike in Death Valley. It was then in *The Trumpeter* in 1985. This earlier version was discussed by Stan Rowe and Naess in *The Trumpeter* 1996, 13, 1, now online at the *Trumpeter* website and at www.ecospherics.net. Naess and others did empirical research on people’s views related to these principles (SWAN X, 18). Many organizations use a version of them, whether or not they refer to the “deep ecology movement;” for example, see the different versions of the *Earth Charter* on the web.

Deep Ecology Movement Platform Principles

1. All living beings have intrinsic value.
2. The richness and diversity of life has intrinsic value.

3. Except to satisfy vital needs, humankind does not have the right to reduce this diversity and this richness.
4. It would be better for human beings if there were fewer of them, and much better for other living creatures.
5. Today the extent and nature of human interference in the various ecosystems is not sustainable, and the lack of sustainability is rising.
6. Decisive improvement requires considerable change: social, economic, technological, and ideological.
7. An ideological change would essentially entail seeking a better *quality of life* rather than a raised standard of living.
8. Those who accept the aforementioned points are responsible for trying to contribute directly or indirectly to the realization of the necessary changes.

Articulating Ecosophies to Support the Deep Movement: Ecosophy T as Example

Many supporters of the Deep Ecology Movement have articulated personal ecosophies similar to Naess's. They were inspired by his original account of *ecosophy*:

"By an ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of *sofia* (or) wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements *and* hypotheses concerning the states of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction. The details of an ecosophy will show many variations due to significant differences concerning not only the "facts" of pollution, resources, population, etc., but also value priorities." (Naess, 1973, pp. 99-100)

Elaborating on this in a later work he wrote:

"Etymologically, the word "ecosophy" combines *oikos* and *sophia*, "household" and "wisdom." As in "ecology," "eco-" has an appreciably broader meaning than the immediate family, household, and community. "Earth household" is closer the mark. So an ecosophy becomes a *philosophical world-view or system inspired by the conditions of life in the ecosphere*. It should

then be able to serve as an individual's philosophical grounding for an acceptance of the principles or platform of deep ecology as outlined ..." (Naess, 1990, pp. 36-37)

"We study ecophilosophy, but to approach practical situations involving ourselves, we aim to develop our own ecosophies. In this book I introduce one ecosophy, arbitrarily called *Ecosophy T*. You are not expected to agree with all of its values and paths of derivation, but to learn the means for developing your own systems or guides, say, Ecosophies X, Y, or Z. Saying "your own" does not imply that the ecosophy is in any way an original creation by yourself. It is enough that it is a kind of total view which you feel at home with, "where you philosophically belong." Along with one's own life, it is always changing." (Naess, 1990, p. 37)

In these passages, Naess distinguished between ultimate philosophies or worldviews, platform principles that unite people with different ultimate views, policies applied in specific locations and national jurisdictions, and practical actions taken locally by individuals. The three dimensional *Apron Diagram* (in *SWAN X*, 9) illustrates these levels, as in the chart above.

Naess articulated his ultimate ground for supporting the Deep Ecology Movement (and Gandhian nonviolent direct action) in *Ecosophy T*. "T" can also refer to *Tvergastein*, and is the first letter of the Norwegian word "*Tolkning*," meaning *interpretation*, a key concept in his philosophy of communication and empirical semantics (*SWAN I* and *VII*). Naess insisted that Ecosophy T was his personal philosophy. *He did not intend it be universalized, but only to serve as an example of one way to spell out a comprehensive view.*

His ecosophy has the ultimate norm "*Self-realization!*" He interpreted this in Gandhian and Spinozan ways, bringing together East and West. He included *practices of extending his care*. He systematically articulated his ecosophy by stating his *ultimate value norms* and his *hypotheses about the nature of world*. He organized these in chains of derivation. Here is an example from *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* (also see *SWAN X*):

Formulation of the most basic norms (N) and hypotheses (H)

N1: Self-realization!

H1: The higher the Self-realization attained by anyone, the broader and deeper the identification with others.

H2: The higher the level of Self-realization attained by anyone, the more its further increase depends upon the Self-realization of others.

H3: Complete Self-realization of anyone depends on that of all.

N2: Self-realization for all living beings! (Naess 1990 p. 197)

Later in this chapter he wrote:

Norms and hypotheses originating in ecology

H4: Diversity of life increases Self-realization potentials.

N3: Diversity of Life!

H5: Complexity of life increases Self-realization potentials.

N4: Complexity!

H6: Life resources of the Earth are limited.

H7: Symbiosis maximizes Self-realization potentials under conditions of limited resources.

N5: Symbiosis!

The exclamation point signifies that a statement or word is a *value norm*. Our norms entail that *we ought to do something*. If our ultimate norm is "Self-realization!" we should strive to realize ourselves and help others to realize themselves. If the norm is "Diversity!" we should honor and support diversity on every level (biological, cultural, personal, etc.) however we can. Interweaving norms and hypotheses Naess systematically outlined the details of his ecosophy. Ecosophies are ways of life *we are actively engaged in daily*.

Naess's ecosophy was influenced by Gandhi's teachings on Self-realization and nonviolence. It was enriched by the Mahayana Buddhist distinction between the small (lower case) "s" ego self and the more complete (capital) "S" Self of Buddha nature. (SWAN VIII and IX) It was influenced by Spinoza's nonhierarchical view of all beings, and his account of active and passive emotions (SWAN VI). Active emotions, like love and compassion, expand our sense of self awareness. Passive emotions, like hatred and jealousy, decrease our capacity and make us feel smaller. We can be as large as our *active love*. Emotions are activities and engagements we undertake. Active positive emotions increase our power and enjoyment in life.

Naess thought that our sense of identification can be extended *through care*, to include a more complete ecological Self. We do this by giving full attention to the things and beings in our surroundings. Ecosophy T reflects love for the natural world exemplified in *friluftsliv* (free-air-life), outdoor activities in free nature. His life at Tvergastein was friluftsliv. In Oslo his friluftsliv was skiing on trails and walking in the city forest of thousands of hectares. He was delighted to find even small places of free nature in big cities like Oslo and San Francisco. He thought many Western societies are overdeveloped, and that children need to play in free nature to fully develop. (*Trumpeter* 21, 2 pp 48-50)

Each time I visited Naess in Norway, and when he visited us here, we spent time in nature and in the house. In both places, he explained his personal policies and the actions following from them; how they were examples of his support for the principles of the deep ecology movement. He further explained how and why he supported these principles based on his personal philosophy of life *Ecosophy T*. In both the city in Norway, in the woods, and at Tvergastein, he showed what his policies were and how they related with care to his surroundings. When we went to cut wood in the nearby forest in Oslo, how we walked through the forest when not on the trail, how we shared the work, hearing the wind in the trees, and sawing wood. When we did similar things at Tvergastein, he showed or told us similar points related to the policies and actions that followed from *Ecosophy T*.

Tvergastein was a fine place to exemplify these policies and the actions following from them, since it is such an austere and simple place in terms of just surviving. Everything at the hut was carried up on our backs or it was brought up in summer by horse, if it was material to build the hut. Higher on the mountain the material was carried on a person's back since horses can't go above the hut. Arne had a small desk to write on in both the city and in the hut. His desk looked out over the Hardangervidda at Tvergastein. Next to the desk were shelves filled with books carried up in back packs.

In both town and at Tvergastein Naess showed us how he carefully saved, conserved and sparingly used fuel, water, food and other material. When we were walking to the hut, he came out long before we got to the place, since he wanted to point out the delicate plants he wanted us not to step on. Life at

Tvergastein was oriented around careful use, respect for all living beings there, and joy in companionship of physical activity basic to humans, walking and climbing. The scenery was impressive and inspiring; it made you feel like you were very small and yet significant, since you were in such beauty. Drinking, eating, sleeping, walking, just these simple acts of survival reinforced the joy that can be had from living fully in each moment, feeling respect and love for your companions, the water, the snow, the flowers, plants, the rocks even, all of these were a great joy to behold.

When we returned from our long day of climbing and descending the Mountain, Kit-Fai cooked us a simple meal of noodles and vegetables on a camping stove. It was some of the best soup I've ever eaten! We had had a great adventure, seen some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in the world, and come down safely to enjoy a friendly and welcoming community with others. While we were there Arne's daughter Lotte and her husband and child arrived the next morning before we left to hike back to the train station with Kit-Fai. He was from a farm in Telemark, over the plateau from the farm where my ancestors lived in Setesdal. We were going to return to revisit the farms in upper Satesdal after we left Tvergastein by way of Oslo and Alta.

Conclusion: Motifs in Naess' Life and Work

1. Strong identification with and love for the mountains with increasing equanimity from having Mt. Halingskarvet as his old reliable father and Tvergastein and his hut as Place; (Drengson and Devall 2008, Section I, and SWAN X 33)
2. Great joy from connecting with all living beings, tiny organisms in the fjords and mountain meadows, realizing "everything hangs together," (SWAN X, 14), living modestly with great joy and high feelings of well being as explained in *Life's Philosophy* (Naess 2002 p. 179) using this formula for well being: T equals G^2 divided by the sum of physical suffering L_1 plus mental suffering L_2 . (T is level of well being; G stands for the flame, glow or fervor we feel.) The formula of well being is thus: $T = G^2 / L_1 + L_2$
3. Strong feelings of deep connections with art and music through performance and perception with a loving appreciation for symbolic

representation of sound and ideas, using musical, mathematical, and logical notations; (SWAN I and III)

4. Deep passion for competence in multidimensional forms of communication in human and nonhuman systems, with sensitivity to the challenges of translation and interpretation, especially of texts; Descriptive linguistics and empirical studies of texts, conversation, and local dialects; (SWAN I and X)

5. Deep commitment to nonviolent communication with active support for the peace, social justice and ecology movements; (SWAN IX and X)

6. Lifetime work toward a mature, whole and complete view (*Ecosophy T*) that brought his experience and knowledge into a comprehensive, positive approach that is life affirming (Spinoza), open ended, and not hung up on dogmatic creeds (Pyrrhonian skepticism); (SWAN II, V and VI, and Drenghon and Devall, 2008 Section 4)

7. Deep respect for the complexity, richness and wisdom in our whole spontaneous experience, with respect for local traditions, personal philosophies, cultural diversity, diverse languages and dialects; (SWAN I and X)

8. Commitment to lifelong learning through journeying in all dimensions of the natural and human worlds; reflected by his founding the interdisciplinary, international journal *Inquiry* in 1957, in field studies, empirical semantics, in studies of the foundations of science, and in historical and cross-cultural comparisons of worldviews and personal philosophies East and West. (SWAN III, IV, VIII, IX)

Naess was devoted to developing ecological approaches to understanding ultimate value and nature of the world systems. This is why the collection of his most recent work is entitled *The Deep Ecology of Wisdom*, (SWAN X). He treasured the Earth's biological, cultural, and worldview diversity as having *Cosmic* significance (*Trumpeter* 21, 1 pp. 49-52). He was not a one-size fits all monoculturalist or sectarian. Wisdom is found all through nature. All beings even rocks have deep stories to tell. Wisdom is manifest in the great diversity

of local practices, cultures, languages, mythologies, philosophies and religions.

For his work and related reflections by others, see the online *Trumpeter* series Vol. 21, 1 and 2, 2005; Vol. 22, 1 plus *Festschrift*, and 22, 2, 2006. The Appendix below has excerpts from *SWAN* to give readers a sense of its detail and scope. The bibliography that follows has literature for further study.

Appendix: Excerpts from *SWAN*

The first passages are from Naess' *Preface* for *SWAN* Volume I that focuses on language, interpretation, and communication. The second excerpts are from his general *Introduction* to *SWAN*. Both were drafted when he was around 90. He reflected on his life's work from its early focus on communication to his later work on the deep ecology movement. He tells how his philosophy developed, as a unified result of his studies, passions and experiences. He discussed key insights in his life and work.

These passages from Naess' SWAN I Preface and his general SWAN Introduction complement discussions in this essay. The bibliography offers books and articles for in depth study of his life and work. The SWAN 10 volume set is the most complete and uptodate collection of his work in English.

Preface to: *Interpretation and Preciseness (SWAN I) Pages lxix-lxxi*

"To write and rewrite this big work was a formidable duty, a five-year heavy march after the Second World War. It was performed to convince the world of analytical philosophy what it takes to interpret a text if you are an empiricist and a human being absorbed in the unsurveyable manifold of diverse cultural realities.

We all interpret texts every day. We sometimes feel that our interpretation of a text lacks preciseness. What is required to unfold the world of different interpretations, all of which are plausible enough to warrant consideration? What are the main traits of this manifold, and is it ever possible to reach a so-called correct interpretation? What does *correctness* mean here?...

The analytic philosophers seemed to be caught in the superstition that reality has a fixed core, a nucleus. Applied to language, this is conceived as *the* logic of language, a deep grammar, a universal structure, or whatever. The streams of experience of interpretation and preciseness were not taken seriously. To show that this was the case demanded examples....

I think philosophers who recognize that their views about a philosophical subject have an empirical aspect or component should not shy away from doing empirical research, if that would be of some help. Research is necessary on a large scale because "language" is much more unruly than widely accepted within the milieu of analytic philosophy. I write *language* in quotation marks because the distinction between language and speech is relevant: both the actual performance of speech acts and the hypothetical rules governing them are in a constant riverlike movement....

The general social and political result of neglecting empirical investigations of the use of words and expressions seems clear: unawareness, sometimes deliberate, of the function of slogans and slogan-type thinking. Terms like *democracy, freedom, truth, justice, exploitation, and national interests* occur in important documents, in announcements, in social and political propaganda, and in general discourse in all societies, whether democratic or not. I proposed that empirical investigations, especially what in *Interpretation and Preciseness* is called *occurrence analysis*, should be institutionalized and regularly carried out."...

From *General Introduction to SWAN, page numbers as in Vol I, lxiii-lxvi*

..."My interest in philosophy began with Spinoza's *Ethics*, which as a seventeen-year-old I was fortunate to read in Latin. I appreciated Spinoza's grand vision and trusted him implicitly as a person. I accepted that human beings could, and should, have a general outlook with the grandeur of Spinoza's, but I recognized that our individual views on this grand scale will not be identical. Through the years I have realized that there is a splendid variety of interpretations of Spinoza (*SWAN VI*). His texts are exceptionally rich. As the years have gone on, I have focused on how he leads us to realize we can increase our freedom and sense of connection with the world through strengthening and intensifying our *positive* emotions. For example, loving

and caring for our place and others leads to an expansive sense of being part of a much larger world. Emphasizing hatred and anger, on the other hand, makes us feel smaller and isolated from the world. Spinoza, as I interpret him, would put this by saying that “We are as large as our love.” Increasing our freedom as human beings leads us toward life in communities colored by friendship, sharing joy and sorrow....

My doctoral thesis in philosophy of science was an effort to remind us that in science the content of a theory is not independent of research behavior—the activities of observing, confirming, disconfirming, and so on, and that these are set within a deep context of place, history, and culture. Later, as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California at Berkeley, I studied the behavior of experimental psychologists doing animal research.

In 1934 and 1935 I did my graduate studies in Vienna and while there became a member of the famous Schlick seminar, the main discussion group of the Vienna Circle. Their quest for clarity and cordial cooperation in pursuit of knowledge led me to appreciate that “What do I mean?” is an open question. I concluded that we never intend to express anything extremely definite, even in mathematics or symbolic logic. I saw the importance of using empirical methods to find out how we actually use certain expressions and sentences. I developed and applied a wide variety of such methods, which became part of the core for the empirical semantics that runs through my work. [I continued to do this type of research into the 1990s, my last project being one in which I questioned experts and policy makers about their ideas of values intrinsic to the natural world (in *SWAN X*, 18).]

In one of my earlier studies, I reviewed about 700 articles from philosophers concerning their use of the word *truth*. For the most part, I found these unconvincing and soon started on empirical studies of the use of *truth* among ordinary nonprofessional people and schoolchildren (in *SWAN VIII*). Many philosophers seemed to assume that ordinary people hold very naive views about these deep matters. I found through research that, on the contrary, the views articulated by these “ordinary” people were every bit as sophisticated as those held by professional philosophers. This reinforced my conviction that, generally, we greatly underestimate ourselves. Much academic philosophy was narrowly focused and abstract....

My empirical and historical research led me to realize that there are no certainties and that there is a great diversity in our spontaneous experience as well as endless ways to describe and appreciate the complexities and values of the world. Thus, I realized that I am one of those lifetime seekers that the ancient Greeks called a *zetetic* (in *SWAN VIII and IX*). From my research on skepticism, and the foundations of science and logic, it became clear to me that pluralism (every event has many descriptions and possible outcomes), possibilism (anything can happen), and a healthy skepticism (always seeking the truth but never claiming it) make up the most consistent approach to respecting the perspectives and experiences of others, human and nonhuman.

From my empirical studies of semantics, and from my knowledge of several languages, I came to appreciate the complexity of communication. Being committed to Gandhian nonviolent communication, I saw the importance of avoiding dogmatism and fanaticism. One of the most important discoveries coming from this research, leading to the publication of my major book on *Interpretation and Preciseness (SWAN I)*, was the insight that we cannot avoid values in any field of endeavor or research. There are no value-free inquiries or theories. Even if we refuse to express our values, this is itself an expression and choice of values. We must, therefore, be clear about our value choices and try to make them explicit. The choices we make, as Spinoza pointed out, shape the quality of our lives, and values emphasizing positive emotions or feelings are expansive and lead to our growth. We must become ever more aware of our choices and the values involved. Even pure logic assumes certain norms. Empirical research can shed light on these matters....

Since childhood I have experienced an intense joy in being together with animals and plants and in contemplating the immense evolutionary development of life on Earth over millions of years. From an early age I also developed an intense love for mountains and for being in them. Much of my creative philosophical work was done at Tvergastein, my mountain hut in Norway (in *SWAN X*). My devotion to outdoor life is in the Norwegian tradition called *friluftsliv* (literally, free-air-life). In many respects, I approached philosophical and cross-cultural studies as if I were a field ecologist or naturalist. It was against this background that my work from the 1960s onward focused with close attention on cultural diversity, biodiversity, sustainability, and the deep ecology movement.

My work since the Second World War has been increasingly within movements such as those furthering social justice, peace, and ecological responsibility. During the war, I engaged in anti-Nazi activism, and from that time also in pro-militant Gandhianism, a nonviolence that is not pacifist in the usual sense but insists that if it is a bloody fight for justice against injustice, we seek "the center of the conflict" and, if necessary, cooperate with people who use arms. During the Cold War, I participated in the "third side," against both communism and extreme anticommunism, for example, as the scientific leader of a UNESCO project bringing Marxist and anti-Marxist politicians and political science researchers together in an unbiased discussion of the essence of *democracy* and *freedom*. Some of the relevant publications are included in *SWAN VIII* and *IX*." ...

End of Naess Excerpts

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Note: This essay grew out of my work as Associate Editor for the 10 volume SWAN Set of Arne Naess' writings in English. Bill Devall and I were on the editorial committee with several others who oversaw the project. After it was published in 2005, Bill and I continued to work on Naess' writings, consulting with Arne and Kit-Fai Naess. We made more of his work available in four issues of *The Trumpeter* online plus *Festschrift* (cited above). We edited an anthology of his work entitled *Ecology of Wisdom* published by Counterpoint in 2008. Bill and Arne contributed to the recent anthology I co-edited with Duncan Taylor, *Wild Foresting* published by New Society in January 2009. This paper was the basis for my presentation at the Symposium on Naess and the Deep Ecology Movement organized by Margarita Garcia Notario for the Society for Human Ecology meetings held in Bellingham at Western Washington University in September 2008. It was at these meetings that I last saw Bill. He went back to California and had surgery for an existing heart condition in February 2009. He did not recover and died in June 2009. Arne died at 96 a few weeks shy of his 97th birthday in January 2009. The three of us had a long and challenging scholarship journey together, since the SWAN collection is 3650 pages. We began working on the project in 1994. Bill and I co-edited about 1300 more published pages of Arne's work since SWAN. I grieve Bill and Arne's passing, but I feel their spirits in the forests and mountains we walked in together. Bill and I talked regularly by phone and corresponded via email. Since 2005 I kept in touch with Arne mostly through Kit-Fai's email and regular mail. The last time I saw them both was at the SWAN launch held at the University of Oslo in November 2005. See *The Trumpeter* 22.1 2006 for an account and pictures of the SWAN launch gathering.