

Trumpeter (1993)

ISSN: 0832-6193

Why Animal Rights Advocates Should be Supporters of  
Deep Ecology and Vice Versa: Self-Organization in Lib-  
eral Modernity and Ecology

Mary de La Valette  
Gaia Institute

Mary de La Valette is the founder of the Gaia Institute which produces television for a small planet, P.O. Box 852, South Lynnfield, MA 01940.

The liberation movements we have seen in this century are part of an evolutionary process best understood as an expanding circle that started with human/civil rights and women's rights and that is growing to include animal rights and finally Earth rights.

Those of us working for animals, ecology and the environment could create a powerful force for change if we united to confront our common adversary, Industrial Society and its corporate-owned economists, politicians and scientists, who are leading us into ecological collapse. As our ecological crises deepen, it is clear that the individual catastrophes from ozone depletion to the disaster of agri-business are parts of the same problem. The realization is emerging that we, in Industrialized Society have badly misunderstood the way things are on Earth and that our technological efforts to solve our problems merely exacerbate and compound them.

The ongoing collapse of Industrial Society gives us an unprecedented opportunity to create change – to plan and build a moral, just and enlightened society. The Deep Ecology Movement is at the cutting edge of this change – a vision, perhaps most simply defined by Aldo Leopold who wrote '...we need a land ethic that changes the role of homo sapiens from conqueror of the earth community to plain member and citizen of it.' A revolutionary idea. World leaders, such as Vaclav Havel, have embraced these concepts. As Havel states '...we are not the pinnacle of evolution, we are merely a part of it.'

The living web of life that exists on this planet has evolved in an interdependent, interrelated fabric. Each living thing has evolved in collaboration with all other living things. Each is a part of a whole. Whether individuals within a species, species within an ecosystem, or bioregions within a continent, microcosm mirrors macrocosm. Biotic communities from ant hills to rainforests are living sentient collaborating systems, just as the cells and organs in a human body; just as the clouds, winds, storms and aircurrents are an atmospheric system of the planet. Destroy a part and the web starts to unravel. This is the framework within which the human species must create a sustainable society – not the current wisdom that Earth is a collection of 'natural resources' for our use. We are fortunate that there are native cultures that still exist on Earth that retain knowledge of how to live in a sustainable manner. They do not pollute. They do not overconsume. They do not overpopulate.

We, in contrast, live in an artificial, technological web, controlled by transnational corporations, whose goal is to create a world of consumers, to whom they will sell 'products'. These products, of course, are plants, animals and the Earth, itself, converted into inanimate things – rivers, drowned for hydropow-

er, that we may be sold electric toothbrushes. Wolves and minks turned it no coats. Bears and elephants turned into the price of a circus ticket. Rainforest communities burned to death that we may buy hamburgers.

The technological web is a tangled one to unweave. Factory farming; the excesses, fraud and abuses of allopathic medicine; bioengineering; nanotechnology; the chemical, oil and weapons industries are just some of its parts. It is an obsolete construct that must give way to the ecological revolution.

We are part of Earth. Earth is our home and perhaps we can relearn to love it, honor its systems that support our life and respect its other inhabitants. If we can expand our individual circles of compassion, understanding and love from immediate family to community – community that includes all that naturally lives there – trees, streams, insects, birds, other humans, we will create a great paradigm shift which will free us from the isolation of the consumer society to rediscovery of belonging to the Earth Community. Then we can understand and respect our true history – not that of the minor accomplishments of our species – but of the history of evolution, the cosmic dance, the grand *raison d'être*.

---

#### Citation Format

de La Valette, Mary (1993) Why Animal Rights Advocates Should be Supporters of Deep Ecology and Vice Versa: Self-Organization in Liberal Modernity and Ecology *Trumpeter*: 10, 3. <http://www.icaap.org/iuicode?6.10.3.16>

Document generated from IXML by ICAAP conversion macros.  
See the [ICAAP](#) web site or [software repository](#) for details