



THE TRUMPETER

Voices From the Canadian EcoNet Work

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Greetings! The time seems ripe to begin a Canadian econetwork and newsletter. To my knowledge there is no such network or newsletter, but the number of Canadians involved in research related to environmental matters is sufficient to warrant both. This newsletter is a first step in that direction. It is being sent to you as persons vitally interested in environmental ethics, environmental philosophy and policy and related environmental issues. The hope is that we can form a network of scholars, government and business persons dedicated to sharing information and knowledge about these matters.

Newsletters and networks can be organized in different ways. I propose that we start with an informal network and newsletter. These contacts will lead to further discussions, meetings and exchanges that go beyond the newsletter. This newsletter will help to facilitate exchanges between subscribers regarding conference announcements, information about books and research, queries and replies. Poetry is welcome, as is black and white artwork. Contributors will not be paid for contributions, but will have an opportunity to engage an audience with interests similar to their own. What are your views about an econetwork and newsletter?

The title and masthead for this newsletter were chosen because human trumpeters have often been heralds, and also because the trumpeter swan has one of the most memorable calls

in the bird kingdom, and moreover because the trumpeter swan has come back from near-extinction. The words "Canadian Econetwork" in the subtitle distinguish us from other nation groups, and emphasize our primary focus of interest.

A good place to begin our discussions is with some basic concepts. Here goes. By "environmentalism" is understood political concern and action aimed at ameliorating or eliminating various environmental problems. Environmentalism can take many forms and runs from, a shallow ecology approach that aims to preserve or safeguard environmental quality for human benefit alone, to a deep ecology approach that aims to de-anthropocentrize our understanding of and appreciation for nature. The terms "shallow and deep ecology" were introduced by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in "The Shallow and the Deep Long-Range Ecology Movement," Inquiry 16, Summer 1973. Naess identified deep ecology with a social and political movement that has long range goals based on a philosophy that finds intrinsic values in nature, i.e. values which are in many cases quite independent of human interests. The deep ecologist tries to understand our inter-relationships with nature at ever deeper levels. E.g., quoting Naess: "We ask which society, which education, which form of religion is beneficial for all life on the planet as a whole." (In 10 Directions, sum/fall 1982) Hence,

a deep ecologist might analyse the conceptual or psychological factors that anthropomorphize nature, or that lead us to treat other species merely as resources. A deep ecologist might be led to do research that borders on the religious or mystical. The shallow ecologist is also interested in preserving environmental quality, ecological reserves and acquiring knowledge, but approaches these issues with human interests as uppermost. The shallow ecologist tends to view humans as the highest achievement of evolution, as the most intelligent Earth beings, as the only persons with intrinsic worth capable of self-awareness, rationality and the like. The deep ecologists' approach in contrast is ecocentric, not anthropocentric.

"Ecology" in the narrow sense refers to the biological science of ecology. However, ecological paradigms and principles are being developed and applied in almost all disciplines, and these paradigms have to do with the way we approach understanding the relationships and inter-connections within and between living beings which give to each its special place and identity. Human ecology, e.g., must certainly take account of the role of our subjective lives and spiritual needs, as well as our biological ones, in terms of their ecological effects. Ecology in this sense is not a reductionist undertaking, but a movement toward a more whole (or holistic) vision and understanding of world processes. Deep ecology seeks to look into all levels of existence.

Finally, Naess also coined the word "ecosophy," which comes from the roots "ecos" meaning place or household, and "sophia" meaning wisdom. When put together the word "ecosophy" means Earth household wisdom. Ecosophy is both a deep understanding of our unity with other beings and living processes, and a capacity for ecologically wise action. Presumably all of us want to participate in and realize ecosophy. To this end we need to be receptive to the many voices of the econet, even those which we may think are lowly forms of life, since from a non-anthropocentric, ecocentric perspective there are no higher or lower forms, all are co-dependent.

Some other newsletters that might be of interest to you: Ecophilosophy published by George Sessions, Sierra College, Rocklin, Calif. 95677; The Deep Ecologist published by John Martin, 10 Alamein Ave., Warracknabeal, Victoria 3393, Australia; and the Pacific and Yukon Environmental News, for information write Neil Swart, Box 132, Nanaimo, B. C. V9R 5K4.

A new anthology by Prentice-Hall entitled Ethics and the Environment, edited by D. Scherer and T. Attig, is \$14.00 and contains 236 pages with references. This collection of 20 articles is by authors who write from a variety of perspectives. Some articles deal with defining an environmental ethic, and others with specific issues such as land use, cost-benefit analysis, and individual vs. collective choice. A basically sound collection, it presents a sample of the kind of papers now being published in this area.

Another book worth noting is Jeremy Rifkin's Algeny. "Algeny" means the biogenetic engineering of new life forms. Rifkin thinks that algeny is going to change radically our conceptions of evolution, nature and human life. He writes that algeny is one of the most important issues facing us, and demands far more debate than it has so far received. Rifkin discusses the implications of algeny and alternatives to the philosophy that underlie it.

With respect to The Trumpeter please write to register your support. Initially, three issues a year will be published in Fall, Winter and Spring. Future issues will be longer. I have financed this issue, and hope that future issues can be financed from a subscription charge of \$4.00. Contributions (announcements, short notices, brief reviews, etc.) for the next issue, due in January 84, should reach me no later than Dec. 1, 83.

Subscribe to The Trumpeter by writing to me: Alan R. Drengson, c/o LightStar, 1138 Richardson St., Victoria, B. C. V8V 3C8. I look forward to hearing from you.