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Book Review: The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology

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The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology

Alan Drengson and Yuichi Inoue (eds.)

North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California, 1995.

The *Deep Ecology Movement* edited by Alan Drengson and Yuichi Inoue is a definitive collection of previously published essays on the deep ecology movement. This anthology contains a number of classic deep works including Arne Naess's 1973 paper on "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary," Alan Drengson's 1980 article entitled "Shifting Paradigms: From the Technocrat to the Planetary Person," John Rodman's "Four Forms of Ecological Consciousness Reconsidered" and various essays from the 1985 book *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* edited by Bill Devall and George Sessions. It also includes interesting work by Gary Snyder, Freya Mathews, Warwick Fox, David Rothenberg and Dolores LaChapelle. In his essay entitled "Re-Inhabitation", Gary Snyder discusses the connections and disconnections that exist within and between various human and natural realms. He argues that industrial societies have become alienated from the land, and that they need to reestablish their relationship to the Earth. Essentially, they need to develop a sense of place and a strong commitment to a particular ecoregion.

On a different note, Mathews provides a rather interesting interpretation of Naess' notion of self-identification. She "constructs an analysis to solve the seeming incompatibility between identification with the 'ecocosm' (identification with the widest possible whole - the cosmic self) and conservation of individual life-forms, local ecosystems, and biosphere, thereby introducing a deeper dimension to conservation by means of the identification thesis." Warwick Fox also focuses on this form of self-identification. However, Fox expresses his vision of self-identification in the context of the strengths and weaknesses of what he terms transpersonal ecology. This brand of ecology is based on three wide identification processes: the personal, the ontological and the cosmological. Out of all the authors mentioned, David Rothenberg appears to be the deep ecology daredevil. He proposes his own version of deep ecology's platform principles which differ in some respects from those offered by Naess. Rothenberg is to be commended for providing an alternative platform, and for indirectly opening up the discussion on the platform principles of the deep ecology movement.

On a more spiritual note, Dolores LaChapelle provides some rather unique insights on deep ecological rituals. She examines the meanings of rituals, and argues that they can serve as activities to help foster a sacredness between humanity and the natural world.

Clearly, the authors have significantly different deep orientations. For example, Andrew McLaughlin has been influenced by social progressive thought. Gary Snyder, Bill Devall and Alan Drengson lean towards Eastern and Montane philosophical ecocopies. Pat Fleming, Joanna Macy and Dolores LaChapelle have woven spiritual ecology into their work. Michael Zimmerman's and Patsy Hallen's knowledge of ecofeminism has shaped their respective deep viewpoints. However, while the authors' orientations differ, they are first and foremost supporters of the deep ecology movement. They all strongly express their concern for the well-being of the Earth's interrelated natural systems. They all feel for the Earth and its many beings, explore the possibilities of an expanded human consciousness, and argue for stronger ecosophic bonds between humanity and the natural world. But most importantly, the authors share a sense of urgency over the fate of the Earth. They believe that in order to avoid ecocide and achieve ecospheric egalitarianism, there needs to be fundamental social, cultural and political change within technocratic, expansionist and industrial societies.

This is a wonderful book. Anyone who is not familiar with the deep ecology movement, and wishes to gain a better understanding of the subject, will find this book of great interest. This anthology provides a fairly complete package of readings on the movement, and it therefore would also appeal to those who would otherwise have to obtain an entire library of publications. Finally, for those who are interested in reading some other intriguing deep ecology material, I strongly recommend the 1994 publication entitled *An Ecophilosopher's Dictionary: Basic Concepts for Ecocentric Exploration* (Lightstar Press) by Alan Drengson. It is an invaluable dictionary for deep ecology supporters.

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