

Trumpeter (1996)

ISSN: 0832-6193

Editorial: Terminology of the Deep Ecology Movement

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Trumpeter

As editor of *The Trumpeter* I receive many letters and articles every week. Some submitted essays that have original and important content are not in publishable form for this journal because they do not use the Deep Ecology Movement terminology to which we adhere. We use Arne Naess' work as the basis for drawing the main distinctions and explaining the central vocabulary of the movement. This linguistic nexus is part of an ongoing dialogue that is slowly evolving through Naess' and others' efforts. For a number of reasons, there are some central mistakes made by authors commenting on the Deep Ecology Movement both in *Trumpeter* submissions and in papers which appear elsewhere.

One principle error is failing to distinguish between deep ecology as a *philosophy of life* articulating ultimate premises about values and the world (what Naess calls *ecosophies*), and the platform principles of a world wide grass roots political and social movement to prevent environmental destruction and to preserve and restore the ecological functions which sustain biological and cultural diversity. In his early articulations, Naess describes, through his apron diagram, four levels of discourse that can take place within a culture and cross culturally. They are: 1. *Ultimate philosophies*; 2. *platform principles* of movements (social justice, peace, environmental, etc. — whose followers are drawn to such movements in part for reasons of common cross cultural perceptions consistent with those based on their own ultimate philosophy or religion); 3. *policy formulations* that outline general goals and guidelines for practices (which could spell out health and environmental standards); and 4. *practical actions* which support the policies, platforms and ultimate values of practitioners-agents (for example, ecological resistance and recycling). It is easy to confuse these different levels of discourse. Authors should be careful to note them. The Deep Ecology Movement has been described primarily in terms of the much circulated platform principles (as they appear below).

A person might work mostly on the level of practical activism without much deep reflection and questioning. If they begin to engage in deep and persistent questioning about values and ends, they will be led to reflect on ultimate values and meanings of life and relationships. Many will find their own ultimate philosophy is based on a traditional religion such as Buddhism or Christianity. Today many movements are cross cultural. Many levels of society are represented in them as they speak to broad principles and aims (platform statements) that diverse groups or persons can support. Regardless of diverse human religions, social and political groups often support broad global aims and values about social justice, world peace, and environmental integrity (see for example various U.N. declarations). If we had to achieve one world view for everyone before we could realize these noble objectives, we would be in an even worse situation.

There has emerged through grassroots work a growing global conception and commitment to basic principles of social justice, nonviolence and world peace, and environmental integrity. That broad principles which form a platform for

action and questioning can emerge cross culturally is a significant historical event, made possible in part by modern communications technology. We can appreciate from a global perspective the importance of human cultural diversity. If we spend time in the world of nature, we begin more deeply to appreciate all forms of ecological diversity. We realize that the importance of diversity is related to our awareness that it is in itself an intrinsic value. A diversity of intrinsic values is itself a form of abundance that we treasure for its own rich sake.

The platform principles of the deep ecology movement, as formulated by Naess and Sessions and often reprinted in *The Trumpeter* and elsewhere, have been endorsed by diverse groups and individuals. Using Naess' terminology we do not call people who support the platform principles, deep ecologists, nor people who support the Shallow Ecology Movement principles shallow ecologists. Following Naess, we say they are "supporters or followers of the Deep Ecology Movement," or "supporters or followers of the Shallow Ecology Movement." Most supporters of the Deep Ecology Movement (including Naess) also support the peace and social justice movements. Many support and practice nonviolence. These movements are not incompatible with each other; they are complementary. Supporters welcome diversity and encourage it to flourish.

Some of us will put most of our energies into one or another of these three broad movements. This is fine, since we need all three. We also need work on every level from reflections on values and wisdom to cleaning up a beach or doing social service work.

Arne Naess calls his personal philosophy *Ecosophy-T*, rumored to be named after his hut *Tvergastein*. One of Ecosophy-T's ultimate norms is Self-Realization! Naess develops this in terms of the theory and practice of extension of self-identification, expanding our sense of self-identity to what we can care for. Quite a number of theorists have followed this approach and have developed ecosophies similar to Naess'. Others, however, have ecosophies based on different traditions, such as Christian, Neo Pagan, or Aboriginal, etc. People writing for this journal should not treat Naess' Ecosophy-T as *the* philosophy of the Deep Ecology Movement. The movement is supported by followers holding diverse worldviews and ecosophies. Ecosophy-T is Naess' personal basis for supporting the platform of the movement, but also (I assume) for his support for other movements. And clearly, a person can support the platform without having clarified their own ultimate philosophy.

Warwick Fox calls Naess' Self-realization! approach a form of transpersonal ecology. He describes its affinities with some work done in transpersonal psychology and ecophilosophy. I mixed transpersonal psychology and ecophilosophy some time ago, independently of Naess and Fox. I see the entrance to transpersonal awareness - which unifies the transpersonal self and crosses biotic boundaries - to lie through the practice of compassion. I see it as a matter of energizing the heart center within us. We come to see that our self-realization depends on

the flourishing of others. Thus one transcends egocentrism and expands his/her sense of commitment and values to include his/her whole range of ecological relationships. This we call *ecocentrism* and realization of the Ecological Self. These are elements of our respective ecosophies. Most main authors in support of the DEM are ecocentrists, but do not emphasize the transpersonal. They have other ecosophies. Ecocentrism is not human lastism or a hating of humans, it involves recognizing multiple centers of intrinsic worth. We can appreciate these on all levels from sensual to intellectual. This is not a purely intellectual endeavor or process but involves our whole being, our mind-body-spirit as rooted in Earth.

When we engage in deep questioning and seek to create or realize our own ecosophies, we also attempt to reach a *total* view of our situation. Since ecosophy literally means ecological wisdom, and wisdom is not idle but practically manifest, we say that the active pursuit of understanding and articulating ecosophies is *ecophilosophy*. In *The Trumpeter*, ecophilosophy is an activity and a means to ecosophic articulations and expressions. Ecophilosophy is a comprehensive ecocentric, values inquiry. It is an ongoing practice which seeks to unify all our powers of knowing so as to realize the most optimum state of being, that involves harmony in all of our relations, on every level: within ourselves, between each other in our families and communities, between communities and other groups, between cultures, and between humans and animals, plants, other living beings, and also with larger ecological processes. Since human ignorance is deep, our construction of total ecosophies can never been complete. We work toward such a goal to improve our articulations, much as we work to improve our practice of any art. We can never reach completion as we are always changing and so is the world. In this pursuit our questions deepen, we realize levels of ourselves we did not know before. The aim of ecophilosophy is living ecosophy. Our articulations and awareness is always shifting because through living new values are being created and made manifest. We have opportunities to create more values, deeper values, etc. with others depending on how we interact and treat each other. The platform principles lead us to see the importance of nonviolence in thought, word and deed. Without mutual respect and appreciation of our inherent differences we can not fully realize ourselves (see especially platform principles 1 & 2). Needed is much cooperation.

The Summer 1995 *Trumpeter* focused on some major features of the Deep Ecology Movement assumed as background for this journal. All authors considering submitting articles discussing Deep Ecology as a movement should read these articles for further clarification. Unfortunately, many authors critical of the Deep Ecology Movement do not go back to the authentic sources for their conceptualization of the movement. They quote heresy and fabrications from others who do not understand the basic approach and terminology refined and in use since 1972.

Please study these matters and let's be nonviolent in our language as one way

to show support for the three great grassroots movements of this century: The global movements for social justice, world peace and nonviolence, and environmental integrity. Blessings to all beings!

*The Platform Principles of the Deep Ecology Movement*

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman Life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realizations of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy *vital* human needs.
4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.
5. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation to directly or indirectly try to implement the necessary changes.

(Quoted from *Deep Ecology* by Bill Devall and George Sessions, Gibb Smith, Salt Lake City, 1985.)

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**Citation Format**

Drengson, Alan Rike (1996) Editorial: Terminology of the Deep Ecology Movement  
*Trumpeter*: 13, 3. <http://www.icaap.org/iuicode?6.13.3.1>

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