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The Trumpeter Remains Aloft!

Alan Drengson
Trumpeter

DAVID ROTHENBERG HAS ENDED HIS TURN leading the trumpeters, and I now go to the front of the flight - still looking for a new flight editor. There are many styles and views about editing. Some think editors should uphold standards and act as policemen. Some think the main activity should be administration and kindly oversight, while editorial boards make decisions. We do not follow these approaches.

The Trumpeter as journal discusses all aspects of ecosophies, practicing philosophies of ecological wisdom. We are for diversity. The variety of editorial styles corresponds to the diversity of those who are willing to take a turn leading. If you fly with trumpeters don't guide like a hummingbird.

Animals display an amazing array of styles and arts, and yet there is no central director. The trumpeter is a bird with a large range, a far journeyer, a bird who sees from large perspectives, different bioregions. They have a distinctive call. It is a journeyer that explores the air, water and land; it lives with the natural cycles. It has endurance and natural beauty. The trumpeter is also metaphor and totem for exploring the intrinsic worth of natural beings.

Some human societies and nations nurture great internal diversity by encouraging people in local communities to develop their own distinctive styles, customs, dialects and arts. This enriches and deepens the life of the larger national whole; as it ages it gains authority grounded in place specific dwelling. The wisdom arising reflects natural harmony with each place. Natural diversity is beautiful.

Norway as a modern nation followed the way of diversity, intertwined with a tradition of love for nature and vigorous outdoor activities of all sorts, folk dancing and musical performance, but reaching to explore seas and mountains, embracing all forms of movement. Orienteering is a seminal sport of great devotion in Norsk circles. It is an art which is metaphor for being in tune, oriented in daily life in place and history.

Given Norwegian tradition, it is not surprising that Arne Naess, a Norwegian devoted to "friluftsliv" (literally free-air- life, i.e. active outdoor living), would be able to clearly articulate the sense of the worldwide deep ecology movement. People engaged in intense participatory activity outdoors know what is happening to the natural world around them. Naess, an inveterate mountaineer, travelled extensively throughout the world. He not only saw the results of the changes of modern times on nature, but how these affected people and cultures; he became aware of how others, too, saw *these* problems. Naess is representative of *friluftsliv* practitioners, regardless of country or national origin.

Naess is also a philosophical explorer who asks deep questions. Such inquiry takes us down to our deepest beliefs and values. Deep exploration leads us to consider our basic philosophy and what we intrinsically value. Naess recognized that many environmental activists undertake such self-questioning. They find that their values, aspirations and life styles come out of the natural places where

they have dwelled, that is, lived in daily outdoor contact with the natural world. When people examine their lives dwelling in this way, they are led to seek a *total view* (Naess' terminology). A view is not total if we see the world only from narrow egoic or human only perspectives. We must connect with larger human and natural communities. It is through our bodies in the earth that we ground ourselves. It is a literal process, digging ourselves into our context, rooting for centuries. Generations can be assimilated in hours.

People who are rooted know what is of intrinsic value to them. Those who perceive the ecological crisis in this holistic way, recognize that we must make fundamental changes in our modern culture, if we are to restore and protect the Earth's ecological integrity. They see we cannot separate ourselves from our context. It is our embodied reality. It is what we *must* live. There is no other life. If we choose to do nothing, that is how we participate. If we choose to oppose the system, that is how we participate. We can choose to live in harmony together, and create beautiful acts, arts, activities, and cultures. There can be great diversity, with place specific bodies and beauty. The range of choices is large and rich, the possibilities for quality unlimited.

The environmental movement expresses urgent grassroots concern over the destruction of the Earth's ecological integrity. Many who demand and work for solutions understand the fundamental changes we must make. Their values recognize the inherent worth of all natural beings. Thus they act with mutual respect flowing from this recognition. Natural beings have ecological wisdom in which we can share. This involves no taking. Diverse cultures arise from diverse places. They reflect the will of the land and the wild that is there, the natural and human communities.

As we question and root more deeply, we come home to where we are. We live with higher levels of quality but less consumption. To live simply is not a sacrifice because it is the *quality* of life, rather than quantity that is basic. If a tool is excellent to use and lasts generations, this increases its value and quality. To use such a tool is a totally different *quality* of experience than to use a poorly made disposable one. There are deep differences in attitudes and values between the two practical philosophies of those who make and use these two different traditions and styles of tools. My ancestors adhered to and taught me the former.

In *The Trumpeter* we celebrate diversity and trust natural integrity to spontaneously articulate unique expressions of beings, people, and their places; they are their distinctiveness. This becomes embodied in those who *dwell* where they live. We call this *being* indigenous, or native to place.

Deep philosophy in practice leads us to our roots, not just to *where* we dwell, but to our deeper cultural influences. A dominant influence in my formative years was Norwegian. My parents descended from Norwegian ancestors. Their grandparents were born in Norway; mom's father was born in Bergen. The

rural, community life was more intense on my dad's side. His people were from the Setesdal valley, then a remote area of Norway. Dad exposed me to *friluftsliv* without calling it that.

For many years I did not recognize how deeply I was influenced by this Norsk culture. The recollection began when I read Arne Naess' work in ecophilosophy. I had worked my way independently to the same general conclusions as he, but articulated my findings in a different way. When in 1979 I read his seminal piece in *Inquiry* (1973), I was delighted, mainly because he so simply stated a deep insight. I preferred his articulation to my own. It was not our common Norwegian heritage that at first appealed to me, but our shared experience in *friluftsliv*, especially in the mountains. Mountaineering encourages us to reflect on the deep questions of value and meaning in human life. We must face both life and death.

In many ways and on many levels mountain experiences inspired and drove my explorations in philosophy, and I felt that this was true for Naess as well. Professor Naess is widely respected for his scholarly work, and for me - a junior professor at the time of our convergence - validated my hunches and sense of direction. Naess' work encouraged me to go on, to work beyond the existing academic mainstream, and to keep trying to publish pieces which explore ecosophies and forms of practical support for the deep ecology movement. Naess also gave us the word ecosophy - ecological wisdom.

Recently I have begun to appreciate the value of studying the Norwegian experience in relation to preserving and creating cultural diversity which respects place specific ecosophies. Norway is a country with a small population and highly diverse landscape. Its people are committed to *friluftsliv*, respect for nature and democracy. It gained its freedom in this century after centuries of outside domination, only to lose it during the Second World War and regain it again after five years. The Norwegian tradition of this century has encouraged diversity which clearly has increased the richness and quality of life in Norway. There are valuable lessons for the deep ecology movement here. My own Norsk heritage has led me back to an appreciation of this Earth based wisdom, the wisdom of my ancestors.

It was all of the above and more which inspired the flight of *The Trumpeter* as a journal for those who want to express, celebrate, discuss, articulate, examine, and savor ecosophies. *The Trumpeter* is mostly an abundance of reflections on ecosophies, for those of us who appreciate and enjoy such activities, but it also aims to contribute practices to the grassroots deep ecology movement. Many gifts have come from support for the movement. Ecoforestry, ecoagriculture, and ecosophic technology design are gifts from the movement. Diversity builds networks of strength based on mutual understanding. These grow from commitment to respect and honor natural diversity and the intrinsic worth of all beings and places, including humans. "Self-realization for all beings!", is a maxim many of us share.

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