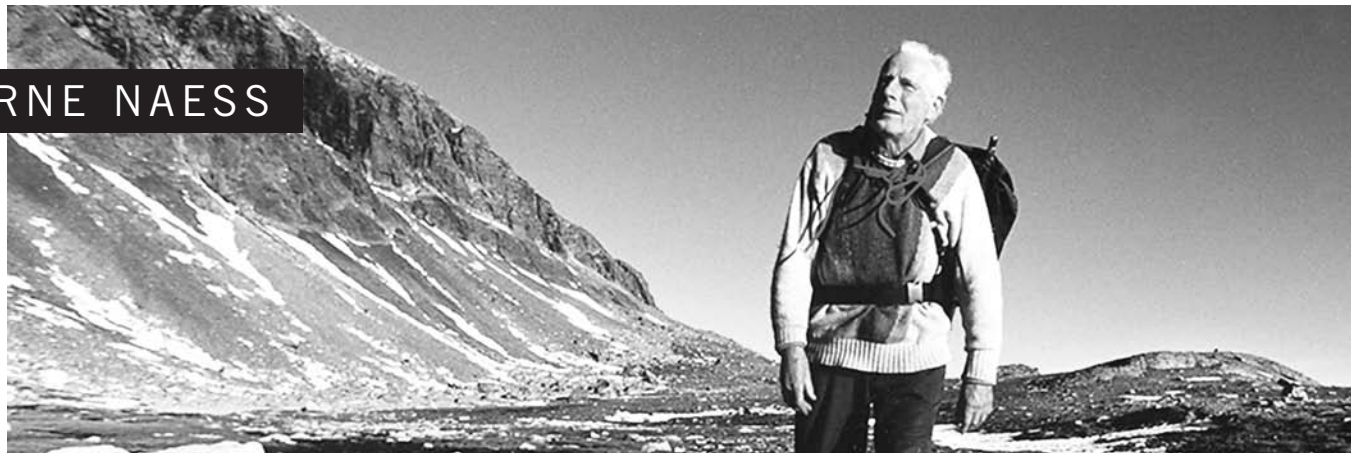
ARNE NAESS



The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement

A Summary BY ARNE NAESS

The emergence of ecologists from their former relative obscurity marks a turning point in our scientific communities. Their message, however, is twisted and misused. A shallow, but currently rather powerful movement, and a deep, but less influential movement compete for our attention. I shall make an effort to characterize the two.

The *shallow ecology movement* is concerned with fighting against pollution and resource depletion. Its central objective is the health and affluence of people in the developed countries.

The *deep ecology movement* has deeper concerns, which touch upon principles of diversity, complexity, autonomy, decentralization, symbiosis, egalitarianism and classlessness.

1. The deep ecology movement rejects the human-in-environment image in favor the relational, total-field image: organisms as knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relations. An intrinsic relation between two things A and B is such that the relation belongs to the definitions of basic constitutions of A and B, so that without the relation, A and B are no longer the same things. The total-field model dissolves not on the human-in-environment concept, but every compact thing-in-milieu concept—except when we speak at a superficial or preliminary level.

2. The deep ecology movement accepts biospherical egalitarianism—in principle. The "in principle" clause is inserted because any realistic praxis necessitates some killing, exploitation, and suppression. The ecological

Reference to original publication: Naess, A. (2005). The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement: A summary. In A. Drengson & H. Glasser (Eds.), *Selected Works of Arne Naess, X* (pp. 7–12). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer. This article was edited from its first publication in 1973 in *Inquiry*, *16*, 95–100. Permission for publication on OpenAirPhilosophy generously granted by Springer.

PHOTO ABOVE: JØRN MOEN

field-worker acquires a deep-seated respect, or even veneration, for ways and forms of life. He reaches an understanding from within, a kind of understanding that others reserve for fellow human beings and for a narrow section of ways and forms of life. To the ecological field-worker, the equal right to live and blossom is an intuitively clear and obvious value axiom. Its restriction to human beings is an anthropocentrism with detrimental effects upon the life quality of men and women themselves. The quality depends in part upon the deep pleasure and satisfaction we receive from close partnership with other forms of life. The attempt to ignore our dependence and to establish a master-slave role has contributed to the alienation of man from himself.

Ecological egalitarianism implies the reinterpretation of the future-research variable, "level of crowding," so that general mammalian crowding and loss of life-equality are taken seriously—not just human crowding. Incidentally, research on the high requirements of free space of certain mammals has suggested that theorists of human urbanism underestimate human life-space requirements. Behavioral crowding symptoms (neuroses, aggressiveness, loss of traditions) are largely the same among mammals.

3. The deep ecology movement emphasizes principles of diversity and of symbiosis. Diversity enhances the potentialities of survival, the chances of new modes of life, the richness of forms. And the so-called struggle for life, and survival of the fittest, should be interpreted in the sense of the ability to coexist and cooperate in complex relationships, rather than ability to kill, exploit, and suppress. "Live and let live" is a more powerful ecological principle than "Either you or I."

The latter tends to reduce the multiplicity of forms of life, and to create destruction within the communities of the same species. Ecologically inspired attitudes therefore favor diversity of human ways of life, of cultures, of occupations, of economies. They support the fight against economic and cultural as much as military invasion and domination, and they are opposed to the annihilation of seals and whales as much as to that of human tribes and cultures.

4. The deep ecology movement assumes an anti-class posture. The modern-day diversity of human ways of life is in part due to (intended or unintended) exploitation and suppression on the part of certain groups. The exploiter lives differently from the exploited, but both are adversely affected in their potentialities of self-realization. The principle of diversity does not cover differences—differences that arise merely because certain attitudes or behaviors have been forcibly blocked or restrained. The principles of ecological egalitarianism and of symbiosis support the same anti-class posture. The ecological attitude favors the extension of all three principles to any group conflicts, including those that exist today between developing and developed nations. The three principles also favor extreme caution toward any overall plans for the future, except those consistent with wide and widening classless diversity.

5. The deep ecology movement is also involved in the fight against pollution and resource depletion. In this fight ecologists have found powerful supporters, but sometimes to the detriment of their total stand. This happens when attention is focused on pollution and resource depletion rather than on the other points, or when projects are implemented that reduce pollution but increase evils of other kinds. Thus, if prices of life necessities increase because of the installation of anti-pollution devices, class differences increase too. An ethics of responsibility implies that ecologists do not serve the shallow, but the deep ecological movement. That is, not just point 5, but all seven points outlined in this paper must be considered together.

Ecologists are irreplaceable informants in any society, whatever their political color. If well organized, they have the power to reject jobs in which they submit themselves to institutions or to planners with limited ecological perspectives. As it is now, ecologists sometimes serve masters who deliberately ignore the wider perspectives.

6. The deep ecology movement emphasizes complexity, not complication. The theory of ecosystems contains an important distinction between what is complicated without any gestalt or unifying princi-

ples—we may think of finding our way through a chaotic city—and what is complex. A multiplicity of more or less lawful, interacting factors may operate together to form a unity, a system. We make a shoe or use a map or integrate a variety of activities into a workaday pattern. Organisms, ways of life, and interactions also from a workaday pattern. Organisms, ways of life, and interactions in the biosphere in general exhibit complexity of such an astoundingly high level as to color the general outlook of ecologists. Familiarity with this complexity makes for a keen, steady perception of our profound ignorance of biospherical relationships and, therefore, of the effect of disturbances.

Applied to human communities, the complexity-not-complication principle favors division of labor, not fragmentation of labor. It favors integrated actions in which the whole person is active, not mere reactions. It favors complex economies, an integrated variety of means of living (combinations of industrial and agricultural activity, of intellectual and manual work, of specialized and nonspecialized occupations, of urban and non-urban activity, of work in city and recreation in nature with recreation in city and work in nature, and so on).

It favors soft technique and "soft future-research," less prognosis, more clarification of possibilities, more sensitivity toward continuity and live traditions and—most important—towards our state of ignorance.

The implementation of ecologically responsible policies requires in this century an exponential growth of technical skill and invention—but in new directions, directions that today are not consistently and liberally supported by the research-policy organs of our nation-states.

7. Finally, the deep ecology movement supports local autonomy and decentralization. The vulnerability of a form of life is roughly proportional to the weight of influences from afar, from outside the local region in which that form has obtained an ecological equilibrium. This understanding lends support to our efforts to strengthen local self-government and material and mental self-sufficiency. These efforts, however, presuppose an impetus towards decentralization. Pollution problems, including those of thermal pollution and recirculation of materials, also lead us in this direction because increased local autonomy, if we are able to keep other factors constant, reduces energy consumption. (Compare an approximately self-sufficient locality with one requiring the importation of foodstuff, construction materials, fuel and skilled labor from other continents. The former may use only 5 percent of the energy used by the latter.)

Local autonomy is strengthened by a reduction in the number of links in the hierarchical chains of decision. For example, a chain consisting of a local board, municipal council, highest subnational decision-maker, a state-wide institution in a state federation, a federal or national government institution, a coalition of nations and institutions (e.g., EEC top levels), and a global institution can be reduced to one made up of local board, nationwide institution, and global institution. Even if a decision follows majority rules at each step, many local interests may be dropped along the line when the chain is too long.

SUMMING UP THEN, it should first of all be borne in mind that the norms and tendencies of the deep ecology movement are not derived from ecology by logic or induction. Ecological knowledge and the lifestyle of the ecological field-worker have suggested, inspired, and fortified the perspectives of the deep ecology movement. Many of the formulations in the above seven-point survey are rather vague generalizations, tenable only if made more precise in certain directions. All over the world, however, the inspiration from ecology has produced remarkable convergences. This survey does not pretend to be more than one of the possible condensed codifications of these convergences.

Second, it should be fully appreciated that the significant tenets of the deep ecology movement are clearly and forcefully normative. They express a value priority system only in part based on results (or lack of results, see point 6) of scientific research. Today, ecologists try to

influence policymaking bodies largely through threats, through predictions about pollutants and resource depletion, knowing that policy makers accept at least certain minimum norms of health and just distribution. It is clear, though, that vast number of people in all countries, and even a considerable number of people in power, accept as valid the wider norms and values of the deep ecology movement. There are political potentials in this movement that should not be overlooked and that have little to do with pollution and resource depletion. In plotting possible futures, the movement's norms should be freely used and elaborated.

Third, insofar as ecology movements deserve our attention, they are ecophilosophical rather than ecological. Ecology is a limited science that makes use of scientific methods. Philosophy is the most general forum of debate on fundamentals, descriptive as well as prescriptive, and political philosophy is one of its subsections. By an ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of wisdom is openly normative; it contains norms, rules, postulates, value-priority announcements, and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction.

The details of an ecosophy will show many variations. This is because there are significant differences not only in the "facts" of pollution, resources, population, and so on, but also in value priorities. Today, however, the seven points listed provide one unified framework for ecosophical systems.

In general systems theory, systems are usually conceived in terms of causally or functionally interacting or interrelated items. An ecosophy, however, is more like a system of the kind constructed by Aristotle or Spinoza. It is expressed verbally as a set of sentences with a variety of functions, descriptive and prescriptive. The basic relation is between subsets of premises and subsets of conclusions, that is, the relation of derivability. The relevant notions of derivability may be classed according to rigor, with logical and mathematical deductions topping the list, but also according to how much is implicitly taken for granted. An exposition of an ecosophy must necessarily be only moderately precise, considering the vast scope of relevant ecological and normative (social, political, ethical) material. At the moment, an ecosophy might profitably use models of systems, rough approximations of global systematizations. It is the global character, not preciseness in detail, that distinguishes an ecosophy. It articulates and integrates the efforts of an ideal ecological team, a team comprising not only scientists from many disciplines, but also students of politics and active policy makers.

Under the name of ecologism, various deviations from the deep movement have been championed—primarily with a one-sided stress on the problems of pollution and resource depletion, but also with a neglect of the great differences between under- and overdeveloped countries in favor of a vague global approach. The global approach is essential, but regional differences must largely determine policies in the coming years.