

# Arne Næss on Environmental Ethics

Næss, A., 1989. Ecology, Community And Lifestyle. Translated by D. Rothenburg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## Introduction: Ecosophy T: from Intuition to System

**1. Beginning with intuitions:** to develop an ecosophy (i.e. a personal philosophy built on ecology), human beings must first intuit the intrinsic value of the environment, and then develop a philosophy that inspires environmentally friendly action. There are many different ways of developing a philosophy based on ecology, because intuition is personal and subjective. Consequently, Arne Næss refers to his ecosophy as "Ecosophy T": the "T" stands for "Tvergastein", his mountain hut, and indicates the personal nature of his ecosophy. Other ecosophies are possible (Ecosophy A, Ecosophy B, Ecosophy C, etc.), although they should all be based on intuition of the intrinsic value of the environment.

**2. Interpretation and precision in Næss's philosophy:** Arne Næss acknowledges that the formulations in his ecosophy (Ecosophy T) can be interpreted in different ways; however, he argues that different interpretations are still compatible with one another. Some interpretations are more general whilst others are more specific; however, Arne Næss argues that specific interpretations are usually contained within general interpretations. Arne Næss accepts that his general formulations can be made more precise in certain directions. Importantly, human beings are inspired to environmentally friendly actions based on their intuited worldviews (derived from gestalt perceptions), but find it impossible to articulate this fully. Different interpretations are inevitable but not too problematic, because members of the deep ecological movement only share some core values (other values are personal choices).

**3. Clarification of terms in translation:** Arne Næss uses several words that do not translate easily from Norwegian to English:

- a. Milieu/environment: the immediate surroundings of human beings on a micro scale (e.g. local environments) as well as on a macro scale (e.g. Earth). Arne Næss means both the close, familiar and immediate environment and the distant environment.
- b. Self-realisation: the process by which human beings (i.e. "selves") intuit or become increasingly aware that they are an interconnected part of a larger system (i.e. "the Self" that is the environment, or the environment of living things).
- c. Derivation: the process by which environmentally friendly actions are logically derived from the process of human Self-realisation. Awareness of the interconnectedness between human beings and the environment leads to environmentally friendly actions.
- d. Identification: the process by which human beings become aware that part of the environment is part of themselves. This process involves human beings loving the environment as they love themselves, and recognising that it has equal status to them (i.e. that it has intrinsic value).
- e. Intrinsic value: awareness that the environment has worth because it exists, and is interconnected with and inseparable from human beings; consequently, it should not be used for the selfish ends of human beings (just as human beings should not use their friends for selfish ends, at least if they want to keep them).
- f. Depth: consideration of the environment that is thorough instead of superficial. In other words, consideration of the environment in decision-making that attributes intrinsic value to it (instead of instrumental value, or value only as means to ends).

**4. Where do we place deep ecology?** Arne Næss argues that deep ecology should be a movement (involving thought and action) instead of a philosophy (involving thought alone). Although deep ecology is caricatured as a subjugation of human beings to the environment, it is actually an attempt to fully connect human beings with it, because human beings are understood as interconnected and inseparable parts of the environment. Deep ecology is part of the environmental movement, and is the most vocal opponent of modern lifestyles in developed societies. Arne Næss argues that deep ecology is grounded in human experience of the environment, because experience inspires intuition of its intrinsic value; it is human reflection on this intuition that facilitates the development of philosophies (or ecosophies) that inspire environmentally friendly action.

## 1. The Environmental Crisis and the Deep Ecological Movement

**1. The gravity of the situation:** Homo sapiens can self-consciously regulate its population and environmental impact; however, the global techno-industrial culture makes most human beings indifferent about doing so. The science of ecology does not attribute positive or negative value to environmental damage or destruction; however, it should, because most human beings acknowledge that environmental damage or destruction involves a decrease in environmental value. Economic objectives are not affected by a decrease in environmental value, and techno-industrial systems are controlled by different groups that are uninterested in it.

**2. Production and consumption:** ideology and practice: historically, progress was measured by the rate of energy consumption and material acquisition. Consequently, politicians have frequently and mistakenly conflated material wealth (i.e. production and consumption) with quality of life. Material acquisition now threatens the environment, and is an economic objective that cannot be extended to Africa, Asia, and South America without causing environmental apocalypse. Ecologists must alert societies to the potentially disastrous course of human beings, and campaign for a change of course as soon as possible.

**3. Our ecological knowledge is severely limited;** ecopolitical consequences of ignorance: the ecological movement relies on the research of ecology scientists; however, ecology scientists can rarely provide definite predictions about the future. Consequently, politicians frequently commission further research instead of enacting radical and unpopular change. Human beings need to accept a new normality: radical change based on inconclusive research, because otherwise the inability of ecology science to provide definite predictions about the future will undermine the ability of human beings to prevent environmental disaster.

**4. The deep ecology movement:** deep ecology is different from shallow ecology. The shallow ecological movement campaigns against pollution and resource depletion with the objective of increasing the health and wealth of human beings in developed societies. The deep ecological movement campaigns against the same things with the objective of increasing the health and wellbeing of all living things: it promotes biospherical egalitarianism (i.e. the idea that all living things are of equal value) and a relational understanding of human beings (i.e. the idea that human beings are partly defined by their relationships with other living things).

**5. A platform of the deep ecology movement:** generally, supporters of the deep ecological movement share eight basic views:

1. The flourishing of human beings and other living things has intrinsic value (this includes ecological life, e.g. river ecosystems).
2. Richness (i.e. abundance) and diversity of living things has intrinsic value (this includes the richness and diversity of habitats).
3. Human beings have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of living things, except to fulfil vital needs (however, the term "vital need" is deliberately broad to allow for broad interpretation).
4. Human interference with other living things is excessive and worsening. Human beings should be able to modify their environments (like some other living things), but not to such an excessive extent.
5. The flourishing of human beings and human culture is compatible with a significant decrease in the human population, and the flourishing of other living things requires this.
6. Significant improvement in the quality of life of human beings and other living things will require policy change, and the measurement of values other than economic value (e.g. ecological value).
7. Appreciating quality of life instead of material wealth (i.e. production and consumption) will require ideological change in developed societies.
8. Human beings who share the first seven basic views have a responsibility to campaign for the implementation of the necessary changes.

**6. How the themes of deep ecology are presented in what follows:** the first three chapters of Ecology, Community and Lifestyle focus on defining "ecology", "ecophilosophy" and "ecosophy", and supporting different ways of valuing the environment that acknowledge its intrinsic value. The second three chapters focus on the consequences of developing ecosophies on technology, economics and politics in developed societies. The final chapter focuses on the development of Ecosophy T, a personal ecosophy, and the summarisation of the prospects for the future of the deep ecological movement.

## 2. From Ecology to Ecosophy

### 1. The terms ecology, ecophilosophy, ecosophy:

1. Ecology: the interdisciplinary scientific study of the environment (including living things and ecological life (e.g. rivers)), and their relationships with one another.
2. Ecophilosophy and ecosophy: the study of the philosophy of ecology (i.e. ecophilosophy), and the sets of personal values about how to act in the environment that human beings have (i.e. ecosophies).
3. Ecologism: belief that ecology is the ultimate science, on which a universal worldview can be built; this is to be avoided if ecophilosophy is to avoid inconsistency and paradox.

### 2. Normative evaluation:

- a. Objective science cannot provide principles for action: science provides descriptions about the way the world works; evaluation is required to provide prescriptions about how human beings should act.
- b. Norms and hypotheses; normative systems: ideas about how human beings should act (i.e. ethical theories) are based on ideas about how the world works (descriptions and prescriptions are interlinked).
- c. The generalist in us: when there is general agreement about the validity of an evaluation, it is generally assumed in later work. The deep ecological movement needs to inspire general agreement of its views.
- d. Conservation biology: conservation biology is science that does provide evaluative conclusions about the environment (e.g. diversity of organisms is good) on which ecosophies can be based.

**3. Objective, subjective, and phenomenological descriptions of nature:** accurately describing nature cannot be done exclusively objectively, subjectively, or phenomenologically; different types of description must be combined. The most accurate description of nature is relational, and describes the relationships connecting living things. A rich description of nature is a diverse description.

**4. Primary, secondary, and tertiary qualities: do they exist in Nature?** Generally, scientists argue that only primary qualities exist in reality (e.g. size, shape, weight), and that secondary qualities (e.g. colour, taste) and tertiary qualities (e.g. sorrow, beauty) are projected by human beings. However, arguably primary qualities are also projected, because primary qualities like size are actually human concepts (i.e. measurement in units) that are projected onto things. Members of the deep ecological movement argue that primary, secondary, and tertiary qualities actually exist in reality, in the relationships that human beings have with the environment.

### 5. Protagorean 'both-and' theory:

- a. The relational field: Protagorean theory proposes that things are defined by the relationships they have with other things, which means that subjective and tertiary qualities define part of reality.
- b. The world of concrete contents: primary qualities are descriptions of things but not the fundamental building blocks of reality (contrary to scientific assumption). All three types of quality describe reality.

**6. Gestalts and gestalt thinking:** a gestalt is any organisation of parts in which the whole is perceived to be greater than the sum of the parts. A musical movement is greater than the sum of its parts (i.e. the musical notes), because the arrangement creates something greater than the individual musical notes. The environment is a series of gestalts, and is greater than the sum of its parts. The reduction of environmental gestalts to their parts devalues them, and makes it easier for human beings to justify environmental damage and destruction (because they do not accept that they are irreparably damaging something greater than the sum of its parts).

**7. Emotion, value, and reality:** emotional reactions are a part of any gestalt, and are more than expressions of like or dislike: on reflection, human beings sometimes review their emotional reactions as right or wrong, but expressions of like or dislike cannot be right or wrong. Emotional reactions reveal the values that human beings hold.

**8. From emotion to evaluation:** emotional reactions (which are tertiary qualities) are as intrinsic to any definition of a thing as its primary qualities. For example, just as the height of a tree is the function of a unit of measurement multiplied over a distance, the sombreness of a tree is a function of its geographical location, the emotional state of the person, the quality of light, etc. Conservationists perceive forests differently from developers because they do not ignore secondary and tertiary qualities, and they perceive individual trees as part of an environmental gestalt. Developers perceive forests as collections of individual trees of certain heights, nothing more and nothing less.

### 3. Fact and Value; Basic Norms

**1. Announce your value-priorities forcefully:** the deep ecological movement requires a change in public attitudes to the environment in developed societies. Consequently, members of the deep ecological movement need to express their norms and values to support a change in public attitudes; however, this is difficult, because politicians are inclined to ignore value-based views about environmental issues that appear ideological (and attend to fact-based views). Notwithstanding this, members of the deep ecological movement should announce their value-priorities loudly, because it facilitates more meaningful debate. Every argument can be reduced to axioms that cannot be proven (including mathematical equations); meaningful debate can expose the axioms that public attitudes are based on and undermine them (if they exist). Meaningful debate can also expose the assumptions behind the problematic idea of progress. For example, why are larger airports and industrial growth assumed to be inevitable consequences of progress, but the eradication of poverty is not?

**2. Total systems; norm system models in pyramidal form:** the deep ecological movement requires a system of norms, because such a system can help turn opponents into supporters. Opponents and supporters of deep ecology share most fundamental values; however, they do not share the norms derived from these values (i.e. they do not agree about how human beings should act based on these values). Systems of norms can be arranged in the form of a pyramid: at the top of the pyramid are fundamental values, including liberty, equality, fraternity, etc.; at the bottom of the pyramid are norms (i.e. statements like, "human beings should...") derived from the fundamental values that direct how human beings should act (with intermediary norms in the middle). Opponents and supporters of deep ecology argue about the norms at the bottom of the pyramid, without demonstrating how they are derived from and agree with the fundamental values at the top of the pyramid. Among members of the deep ecology movement, the norms at the bottom of the pyramid are clearly derived from the fundamental values at the top of the pyramid; however, in developed societies, most norms are not clearly derived from fundamental values. Instead, there is a hole in the middle of the pyramid: developed societies have fundamental values and norms that are not related to one another. For example, in Norway, the fundamental values of the school system (e.g. fostering cooperation) are divorced from the way it operates (e.g. fermenting competition through high stakes testing).

**3. Ecological system thinking:** ecology should move away from the study of parts of the environment in isolation towards the study of the environment as a whole. By analogy, only a limited amount can be learned about a cell by studying it in isolation; in order to learn about how a cell wall and membrane work, and how they react to electrical and chemical processes, cells must be studied as part of a body. System thinking contributes to an understanding of human beings as interconnected and inseparable parts of the environment.

**4. The search for ultimate goals: pleasure, happiness, or perfection?** Material wealth (i.e. production and consumption) is no longer satisfactory as the ultimate political objective; instead, others should be considered:

1. Pleasure is a possible ultimate objective; however, it overlooks seeking painful experiences that are meaningful and worthwhile (e.g. mountaineering).
  2. Happiness is a possible ultimate objective; however, it is sometimes mistakenly conflated with success. Instead, happiness should be understood as a long-lasting positive emotion, like joy.
  3. Perfection is a possible ultimate objective, literally meaning "to carry through" or "to complete as intended", and is close to the ultimate objective that should be sought by members of the deep ecological movement.
- Personal quality of life is proportional to the degree to which the ultimate objective of perfection is pursued and achieved (although some aspects of pleasure-seeking or happiness-seeking may be involved).

**5. Self-realisation as top norm and key term for an ultimate goal:** Self-realisation is the fundamental value at the apex of the pyramidal system model of Ecosophy T. In other words, Self-realisation is the fundamental value that all norms in Ecosophy T are derived from: Ecosophy T directs human beings to act in ways that lead to Self-realisation. Self-realisation is a type of perfection; however, it is not envisaged in the same way that most developed societies envisage it. Self-realisation has a capital "s": it is envisaged as the realisation of the self (i.e. the individual) as part of the Self (i.e. the environment, or the environment of living things). Following Immanuel Kant, it is possible to act morally and to act beautifully: acting morally involves accepting a moral law; acting beautifully involves behaving benevolently from inclination. Beautiful action is a consequence of the deep maturity of human beings that can be brought about by Self-realisation, or becoming aware that the self/individual as an interconnected and inseparable part of the Self/environment.

#### 4. Ecosophy, Technology, and Lifestyle

**1. Ecosophical consciousness and lifestyle:** no great philosophy supports material wealth (i.e. production and consumption) as the ultimate political objective of developed societies; however, it is so firmly established that it is difficult to displace. In order to change, human beings should pursue a higher quality of life instead of a higher standard of living; the difference is that quality of life is self-defined, whilst standard of living is defined by society.

**2. Mutual help towards ecosophical lifestyle: 'The Future in Our Hands':** generally, ecological consciousness manifests itself at a personal level, and involves individuals and small groups living in opposition to the established norms of developed societies. However, in order to affect greater change, members of the deep ecological movement should establish information centres and organisations (like the organisation, The Future is in Our Hands (FIOH)). Furthermore, they should not accept that changes at the individual level are meaningless without changes at the society level; instead, they should affect personal change at the individual level and campaign politically for change at the society level. Ecosophical lifestyles should lead to more satisfying lives for human beings.

**3. Effects of change of mentality:** a change of attitude will benefit the ecological movement, because environmentally friendly action will become perceived as less of a chore and more of an opportunity. Moreover, it will lead to significant changes in society (e.g. waste reduction will lead to unemployment), so a change of attitude at the individual level should be combined with system change at the society level.

**4. Technology and lifestyle:** technological advances in developed societies lead to lifestyles that are repugnant to members of the deep ecological movement, but this does not mean that they are anti-technology (in fact, they have their own technological symbols (e.g. bicycles, home-baked bread)). Members of the deep ecological movement judge technological advances by the positive effect they have on quality of life; judging technological advancements by the positive effect they have on standard of living is unsustainable.

- a. The non-existence of purely technical advance: purely technical technological advances do not exist, because they always have a positive or negative effect on culture, economics, etc. Technological advances do not need to be unquestionably accepted, even though this is promoted in many developed societies; instead their effect on health, employment, the environment, etc. should be taken into consideration. Just as the ancient Chinese rejected banking and some agricultural technologies because of their negative effects on their culture, developed societies should be more discerning.
- b. 'The environmental crisis can be technically resolved...': elites within developed societies argue that environmental issues can be solved by technological advances; this is a central principle of the shallow ecological movement. However, technological advances actually solve problems of survival in an environment that has been damaged or destroyed by modern lifestyles. In other words, environmental issues are exacerbated by modern lifestyles, and technical advances just make living in a diminished environment possible (they do not restore or replenish damaged or destroyed environments).
- c. Soft technology and ecosophy: technologies that reduce interference with the environment but satisfy the vital needs of human beings are required; however, although technically proficient human beings are interested in developing them, government support is weak. Developed societies should try to transition from large, centralised and hierarchical structures (e.g. megafarms, superstores) to small and diverse structures that are embedded in their local environments (e.g. local farm stores). The need for the transition is urgent, because of the increasing rate of production and consumption in less developed societies.
- d. The invasion of hard technology in the Third World: Earth cannot support less developed societies reaching the same level of production and consumption as developed societies, because there are insufficient natural resources. For many years, elites in less developed societies thought they could import some technologies from developed societies without others; however, this is impossible, because of the interconnected nature of technologies. Consequently, the wholesale importing of hard technologies has happened in some less developed countries, damaging and destroying their environments (e.g. India).
- e. Ecosophy and technology: a summary: technology is partly a product of culture, so a change in technology implies a change in culture. Moreover, developed societies judge technologies by how much progress (i.e. economic growth) they create. Generally, advanced technologies change cultures, and, because of their complexity, require specialisation and expertise that disconnects and separates human beings from the environment (e.g. assembly line work, secondary education, specialist training). This process removes human beings from the environments, pacifies them, and increases their dependence upon megasociety.



## 5. Economics within Ecosophy

- 1. The contact with total views:** developed societies prioritise economic growth at the expense of the environment (among other things), a problem exacerbated by the separation of economics from ethics (i.e. its incomplete view).
- 2. The neglect of economics within the deep ecological movement:** members of the deep ecological movement often avoid economics; however, they need to engage with it to increase their political power.
- 3. 'As seen from a purely economic standpoint...':** pure economics separates economics from a total view; ironically, this leads to impractical and irrational policies. Economists must engage with ethics.
- 4. An economic policy system fragment:** Norwegian economic policy is dictated by basic norms, including full employment, high consumption and maximum leisure time; some are unwise (e.g. high consumption), and some are unachievable (e.g. high investment, which will be weak in an economy that prioritises leisure time).
- 5. Gross National Product (GNP):** GNP is the annual value of goods and services produced by a country, which is frequently used as a measure of welfare; however, some critical economists argue that it is a misleading measure.
- 6. Arguments for ignoring GNP in the industrial countries:**
  - a. Historical background for the overevaluation of GNP: after the Second World War, GNP was used to measure European recovery, so became mistakenly conflated with a measure of welfare.
  - b. GNP is not a measure of welfare: why not? Sustainable living improves welfare but not GNP, so it is considered bad. Likewise, decreases in smoking are bad for GNP, so it must be a misleading measure.
  - c. GNP growth favours hard and distant technologies: soft (i.e. environmentally friendly) technologies do not generate as much profit as hard technologies that require resources to be transported globally.
  - d. GNP growth favours wants not needs: GNP does not distinguish between vital needs and luxuries; consequently, some developed societies have simultaneous GNP growth and poverty growth.
  - e. GNP discriminates against people working at home: GNP does not include the work of housewives or househusbands, so systematically devalues it.
  - f. GNP growth supports irresponsible and unsolidaric resource consumption and global pollution: GNP growth can only be fuelled by resource consumption, which damages and destroys the environment.
  - g. The irrelevance of economic growth: GNP is irrelevant, because it is a sum total that hides a wide range. The individual contributors to GNP and the economies of small communities are more important.
  - h. Misplaced attempts at salvation of GNP: deducting the environmental costs of production from GNP is misguided, because it introduces values into the calculation of GNP (which defeats the point).
  - i. Employment and growth: most human beings assume that high employment leads to high GNP, but this is sometimes wrong: replacing workers with machines decreases employment but increases GNP.
- 7. Basic notions in economic welfare theory:**
  - a. The notion of economic welfare: economic welfare is measured by assessing whether or not needs are satisfied by a market; arguably, measuring this is impossible, which makes it meaningless.
  - b. From welfare theory to normative systems: to increase welfare, human beings must adopt a total view; they must make decisions that benefit themselves, because they first benefit the environment.
  - c. Welfare to Self-realisation: from W to T: when human beings consider Self-realisation in their decision-making, they are likely to make decisions that are better for both their welfare and the environment.
- 8. Life quality research:** deep interviews: deep interviews are a better way of discovering the values and priorities of human beings than market research, and should be used to determine economic policies and measure welfare.
- 9. Shadow-pricing nature:** environmentalists argue for shadow-prices to be placed on nature (i.e. it should be given a monetary value); however, this may be misguided. Human beings do not place a shadow-price on their arms: they should not place a shadow-price on another part of themselves (i.e. the environment).
- 10. Summary:** historically, economics has been concerned with the objective monetary quantification of products; consequently, it has not accurately valued the environment (which is not a product, so cannot be quantified).

## 6. Ecopolitics within Ecosophy

### 1. The ecological movement cannot avoid politics:

- All is politically relevant, but not all is politics: environmentalists should make their politics known.
- Power analysis is necessary: power systems must be understood to defeat the most powerful interests.
- The politicisation of conservation: political opinions drive conservation efforts, and must be influenced.

**2. The three poles of the political triangle – the blue, the red, and the green;** the limitations of triangular analysis: green politics is different from blue and red, because it is a direction that all politics must move in.

**3. Checklist of ecopolitical issues and their expansion:** significant ecopolitical issues include the politics of pollution, resources, and population (all for both humans and nonhuman animals). Deep ecology encourages politicians to focus on long term perspectives, global perspectives, and nonhuman perspectives, because the Earth is not a use and throwaway resource.

### 4. More comments on the basic ecopolitical areas of pollution, resources, and population:

- Pollution: politicians often locate polluting industries in poor, less populated, and/or border areas.
- Resources: capitalist and socialist systems are both ineffective at significantly reducing resource waste.
- Population: there are too many human beings on Earth for them all to have a good quality of life.

### 5. Strengthening the local and the global:

- Self-determination: decentralising society supports self-determination and Self-realisation.
- Self-reliance: reducing international trade supports self-reliance and the development of skills.
- The realisation of local communities: realising local communities supports Self-realisation.

**6. Direct action; norms of Gandhian nonviolence:** grass roots environmental organisations are most likely to cause change through Gandhian nonviolent direct action. Every direct action should start early and contribute to a larger campaign (e.g. protesting against a dam should contribute to conserving national rivers). Through force of argument, direct action should aim to turn opponents into supporters.

**7. The rich and poor countries: from exploitation to mutual aid:** currently, developed societies and big businesses exploit less developed societies; this must change in order to avoid environmental disaster.

**8. Critiques of the "Limit to Growth" approach:** members of the deep ecological movement should support writing from outside the movement (e.g. "Limit to Growth") if it is imperfect but reaches a wide audience.

**9. Are green political parties desirable?** Changing existing political parties in a green direction may be more sensible tactically than creating a new political party with either short term or long term ambitions; if a green party receives a small share of the vote, it undermines the importance of environmental issues in the minds of individual member of the public. Green politics should try to be pragmatic rather than ideological.

### 10. The deep ecological movement and the big political issues:

- The basic ideological choices: reformation, socialism and anarchism appear most influential to deep ecology.
- Socialism and ecosophy: socialism is better aligned with ecosophy than capitalism, but not perfectly.

**11. Bureaucracy:** regulation should be reduced in a more environmentally friendly society; however, some way of shaping norms would have to be developed (perhaps through systems of informal education).

**12. The deep ecological movement and the peace movement:** the deep ecological movement is now close to the peace movement, because of the potential environmental issue of nuclear war.

**13. Green political programmes from day to day:** members of the deep ecological movement should formulate positions on present political issues and actively participate in debates about them.

**14. Concluding remarks:** ecopolitics is moving slowly, but must be engaged with for results to be seen.

## 7. Ecosophy T: Unity and Diversity of Life

### 1. The universal right to self-unfolding and the correlative intrinsic value of every life form:

- a. Ecosophy ties together all life and nature: human beings cannot be isolated from the environment, nor can social units; they are tied to the environment and other living things.
- b. 'The unfolding of potentialities is a right': other living things have a right to life, because all living things (including human beings) are fundamentally one (i.e. life or the totality of living things).
- c. Life as a vast historical process: human beings are uniquely capable of understanding their relationships with the environment and other living things, and their development through evolutionary history.
- d. The universal right to live and blossom: all living things are of equal value; understanding the interconnectedness of life reveals this. However, human beings can still kill to serve vital needs.
- e. The uniqueness of humankind should not be underestimated: environmentalists highlight similarities between human beings and other living things; however, they are unique, and can use this for good.

### 2. Identification, oneness, wholeness, and Self-realisation:

- a. Identification and alienation; ideas of oneness and wholeness: when human beings identify with other living things, they begin the process of Self-realisation; alienation from them reverses this process.
- b. Identification and Self-realisation: helping human beings interact with the environment, and identify their interconnectedness with it, increases their chances of Self-realisation and environmentally friendly actions.
- c. 'That which is not of value to any human being is of no value at all': this view is a form of anthropocentrism, which is not philosophically tenable (and leads to selfish egotism).
- d. Friluftsliv: exuberance in nature: human beings should experience nature unmediated to promote Self-realisation, and societies should try to protect free nature (even from camping stores, car parks, hotels, etc.).

### 3. Cruelty in nature; the tragedy and the comedy of life: nature is cruel, but individual living things are not cruel.

### 4. A historical perspective I: the Bible: God gives human beings usage rights over Earth, not property rights; consequently, human beings should avoid unnecessarily harming the environment or living things.

### 5. A historical perspective II: from Plotinus to Descartes: philosophy from Plotinus to Descartes elevated the metaphysical above the physical, and alienated human beings from both their bodies and the environment.

### 6. Our self-respect is not solely due to our own significance: the Milky Way also stimulates respect: the potential for other living things like human beings in the universe, increases human awareness of interconnectedness.

### 7. Nonviolence and the philosophy of oneness: members of the ecological movement should embrace two Gandhian principles: nonviolence, and the philosophy that everything is one (i.e. interconnected).

### 8. The systematisation of the logically ultimate norms and hypotheses of Ecosophy T:

- a. The idea of models of logical relations: Ecosophy T has an expression of norms in pyramidal form, which includes fundamental values and the norms logically derived from them; however, it is only a partial model.
- b. Formulation of the most basic norms and hypotheses: the most basic norms of Ecosophy T are the directives to Self-realise, and to promote the Self-realisation of all living things; several hypotheses derive from them.
- c. Norms and hypotheses originating in ecology: from the basic norms, others are derived with inspiration from the science of ecology. These include directives to promote the complexity and diversity of life.
- d. The meaning of diversity, complexity, and symbiosis in the context of Self-realisation: Self-realisation requires diversity, complexity, and interconnectedness (i.e. symbiosis) among living things.
- e. Derivation of the norms of the local community: self-sufficiency, decentralisation, and autonomy are local community norms, because the satisfaction of vital needs locally promotes opportunities for Self-realisation.
- f. Minimum conditions and justice: classes; exploitation: food, water, and territory are minimum conditions for human Self-realisation; some conditions far exceed these, so conditions should be redistributed.
- g. The overview of Ecosophy T in diagram form: Ecosophy T can be presented in diagram form, which may assist with understanding how the norms are logically derived from the fundamental values.

### 9. The future of the deep ecological movement: progress is slow, but awareness constantly increases.



## George Thinks

Ecology, Community and Lifestyle is definitely worth reading, but it's pretty challenging in places. James Lovelock wrote about environmental ethics in Gaia; however, he dedicated considerably more space to describing the environment and how it works than to discussing the ethics that arise from it (in other words, how we should behave). Arne Næss did the opposite, and this is what makes his work more difficult to access: the environment is concrete but ethics is abstract (we can observe the environment because it's physical, but we can't observe ethics because it's metaphysical). Ultimately, James Lovelock is a scientist and Arne Næss was a philosopher, and because scientists generally deal with the observable and philosophers often deal with the unobservable (as in this case), I think it's fair to say that Gaia introduces ideas that it's easier for many readers to relate to (and I include myself here). Notwithstanding this, Arne Næss wanted to build a firm foundation for his environmental ethics, so it's worth persisting to see how this can be achieved.

This brings me to the genuinely tricky bit: Arne Næss built his environmental ethics on a foundation of ontology. Ontology is a branch of metaphysics, which is itself a branch of philosophy. Metaphysics is concerned with the nature of reality, or, to put it another way, the properties of existence. What makes something exist might appear obvious; being made of matter (or atoms) is a common answer, but then what about conscience, evil or love? These don't appear to be made from matter, so things become a bit more complicated than they seem. Ontology is concerned with categorising existing things and grouping them into hierarchies; it's at the bottom of why most people think humans are more important than animals, animals are more important than plants, and plants are more important than rocks, for example. Anyway, Arne Næss dedicated a lot of space in Ecology, Community and Lifestyle (chapters 2-3) to justifying his belief that all living things should be treated alike as existing things of intrinsic value; in other words, people shouldn't be perceived as more important than other living things.

I'm a little worried that my thoughts on Arne Næss are almost as difficult to read as his ideas on environmental ethics, so I'll wrap up with how the book reads once his ontology is out of the way. In the second half of Ecology, Community and Lifestyle (chapters 4-6), the tone changes entirely; it becomes much more practical. In these chapters, Arne Næss focused on the effects that adopting personal ecosophies might have on technologies and lifestyles, economics, and politics. He provided a wealth of advice for the would-be deep ecologist about how to avoid the perils and pitfalls of the environmental movement, and make a meaningful difference in a world so apparently ambivalent towards environmental issues. The final chapter is an incredibly personal reflection on Arne Næss's own journey of environmental enlightenment, which takes into account a number of interesting reference points (including the Bible and philosophical developments from Plotinus to Descartes). It is, like the rest of the book, thoroughly thought-provoking; but be warned, it isn't always easy-going.

