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From Deep Ecology to Integral Ecology: A Retrospective Study

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The aging process has only a few advantages. One is a perspective on historical developments. When events happen in the present, they are not yet history, but instead just the circumstances we are coping with. As years go by, however, the opportunity grows to see such events in context and thus to have some sense of their significance. Some events have far-reaching consequences in a person's life. Meeting George Sessions was such an event for me. Although many people contributed to the development of the American version of the Deep Ecology movement, Sessions was the most important figure. The history of our relationship traces my embrace of Deep Ecology as well as my move to integral ecology.

The following account is hardly unbiased, because it is a product of my own perspective, which is both limited and motivated by various interests. One such interest, I admit, is to recount my participation in the Deep Ecology movement. Despite my later criticisms, I never forgot that Deep Ecology was needed at a certain historical moment, and that George Sessions in particular played a crucial role in forming its American wing. Of course, others made important contributions, including the late Humboldt University sociologist William (Bill) Devall, with whom Sessions co-authored several influential articles as well as their book, *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered.*

Early Days with George Sessions

The occasion of my first encounter with Sessions was the Pacific Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, held in Berkeley in February 1976. My paper, "Technological Culture and the End of Philosophy," was on the program.[1] The paper

[1] Later published as "Technological Culture and the End of Philosophy," *Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 2 (1977): 137-145. My first environmental philosophy publication was "Heidegger on Nihilism and Technique," *Man and World*, 8 (November 1975): 399-414. Other of my eco-philosophy publications from the 1970s include "Beyond Humanism: Heidegger's Understanding of Technology," *Listening*, 12 (Fall 1977), 74-83; "Heidegger and Marcuse: Technology as Ideology," *Research in Philosophy and Technology*, 2 (1977): 245-261; and "Marx and Heidegger on the Technological Domination of Nature," *Philosophy Today*, 23 (Summer 1979): 99-112.

discusses Martin Heidegger's claim that techno-industrial civilization discloses nature as nothing but a means to promoting the techno-industrial Will to Power. This was among the first papers presented at the APA on the inherent value of nature. My remarks led to a useful discussion, including critical comments by a man who insisted that value is an assessment made by human beings, not a quality adhering in things. I did my best to defend my position, but soon thereafter I discovered that Holmes Rolston, III had already done a much better job in his path-breaking 1975 essay "Is There an Ecological Ethics?"[2] His book, *Environmental Ethics* (1988), remains the best defense of the view that everything carries at least some inherent value.[3]

As my APA session was winding down, a smiling, energetic man introduced himself to me: "I'm George Sessions, and I just wanted to say how much I liked your paper." What a pleasure it was to encounter someone else who was exploring a relatively new question for philosophers, namely, how to criticize and transcend the taken-for-granted anthropocentrism that justifies practices that caused such damage to the natural world? How to conceptualize the moral blameworthiness of environmentally harmful practices, that is, those that went well beyond what was required for satisfying basic human needs? The conceptual distinctions needed to answer such questions were still under development at the time. As academics exploring environmental philosophy and ethics, Sessions and I were out on the skinny branches, but already we were intent on forming a new branch of applied philosophy.

Environmentalism had already gained considerable influence by 1976, with Republican President Richard Nixon having signed the Clean Air Act (1970), the Clean Water Act (1972), and the Endangered Species Act (1974). In addition to environmentalism, several liberation movements had also arisen in the 1960s and 1970s, including the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, and the Animal Rights Movements.[4] Despite the growing political clout of these movements, only gradually did they make their way into philosophy journals and classrooms. Philosophers do not readily adopt radically new viewpoints. Environmental philosophers were faced with a very big challenge, namely, to persuade their colleagues that the natural world is not only *instrumentally* valuable, but is also in some sense *valuable in itself*, independent of its usefulness. If that claim

[2] Holmes Rolston, III, "Is There an Ecological Ethics?" *Ethics,* 85, no. 2 (January 1975).

[3] Holmes Rolston, III, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).

[4] Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics For Our Treatment of Animals* (New York: Avon, 1975); Singer, "Animal Liberation," *The New York Review of Books,* April 5, 1978.

were to prove valid, humans could no longer regard nature solely as property to be used however the owner (private or public) decides to do so.

Aldo Leopold had articulated a number of these ideas thirty years before I spoke in Berkeley. Moreover, Arne Naess had staked out the basic features of Deep Ecology in his 1973 essay, "The Shallow, and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements."[5] Still, the great majority of philosophers (not to mention the vast majority of scholars in academe) were anthropocentric in their outlook. Despite Darwin's influence, most philosophers – and most people – regarded human beings as so uniquely important that everything non-human was valuable only instrumentally. Many philosophers were still having a difficult time agreeing to the consequentialism of Bentham and Mill, according to whom *sentience*, not intelligence, confers moral considerability. What Sessions and I were suggesting was beyond the pale: not only do animals, but also plants, life itself, and even *the land* (the biosphere, including mountains, rivers, oceans, and even the atmosphere) have value of their own.

That day in Berkeley, Sessions and I struck up a conversation that would go on for three decades. Raised in California, Sessions enrolled in the philosophy graduate program at the University of Chicago. After accepting a position at the Sierra College in California, where he is still on active faculty as I write this in 2014, he was motivated to find a philosophically way to articulate and to defend nature against human abuse. Evidence of such abuse was widespread in California during the go-go years of post-World War II economic expansion. California already had a long history of efforts to protect wild nature, as evidenced by the fact that John Muir helped to found the Sierra Club there in 1892. Hence, it is not surprising that Deep Ecology found early exponents in Californians, including Sessions and Devall.

Deep Ecologists criticized reform environmentalism, which sought to curb pollution and to save endangered species, but remained committed to anthropocentric modernity's commitment to economic growth and a rising standard of living for humans. Deep Ecologists called for nothing less than a *radical* version of environmentalism, one that would challenge modernity's anthropocentric paradigm. That we were overly optimistic in our expectations goes without saying.

Although Sessions and I had much in common, we gradually became aware of significant differences in our understanding of humankind and thus of the humanity-nature relationship. We agreed that industrial civilization threatened the ecosystems on which

[5] Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements," *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 95-100.

human life depends. We also agreed that anthropocentrism was the major ideological problem in the way of transforming the nature-humanity relationship. Sessions was influenced by thinkers like Spinoza, as well as by realists who resisted the post-Kantian tendency to view the human mind or human consciousness as responsible for how "nature" appears to humankind. Sessions emphasized the importance of taking the "outside-in" approach, rather than the "inside-out" approach to describing the humanity-nature relationship. According to the former, humankind arises within and is profoundly structured by terrestrial evolutionary processes. Inherently valuable nature gives rise to inherently valuable humans only very late in cosmic history. According to the inside-out approach, in contrast, human consciousness profoundly structures what shows up to us as nature. Kant's highly influential critical idealism developed such an inside-out approach. Years later, as we will see, a number of writers influenced by Kant, Nietzsche, and postmodern theory developed what is known as the "social construction of nature," about which most Deep Ecologists have been sharply critical.

My own way to Deep Ecology was inspired by childhood experiences that revealed the beauty and complexity of nature. Later, I discovered that such experiences resonated both with literary Romanticism and also with German philosophy, especially that of Martin Heidegger and his student, Herbert Marcuse. The latter's 1964 book, *One-Dimensional Man*, offered a highly influential critique of the domination of nature, a theme important to the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, of which Marcuse had been a member, along with Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, and others.[6] Marcuse's critique drew on Heidegger's idea that anthropocentric humanism treated nature as nothing but a planetary filling station for human projects. One of my first publications, "Heidegger on Nihilism and Technique" (1975) argued that Heidegger's thought was pertinent for environmentalism.

In 1976, the same year we met, Sessions published the first issue of *Ecophilosophy*, a newsletter that he disseminated at his own expense long before the Internet existed and three years before the founding of the journal *Environmental Ethics*. Via his newsletter, Sessions provided invaluable information, extensive bibliography, and pithy commentaries that proved useful for budding environmental philosophers. The fifty-page long second issue (1979), now available on line, offered a remarkably panoramic view of the then-current state of English-language environmental philosophy.[7] This

[6] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1964).

[7] The second issue of Ecophilosophy can be found at: http://iseethics.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/sessions-Sesssions-ecophilosophy-newsletter-2-may-1979.pdf

issue, which included a discussion of Heidegger's pertinence for Deep Ecology, introduced many eco-philosophers to one another's work. The indefatigable Sessions was a catalyst not only for Deep Ecology, then, but also for environmental philosophy in general.

HEIDEGGER IN THE MOUNTAINS: HIGH FLYING DAYS IN THE DEEP ECOLOGY MOVEMENT

Early in 1981, I received a letter from someone named Dolores LaChapelle. LaChapelle, so I was to discover, was a legendary figure in Colorado for having summited all of the state's Fourteeners (peaks more than 14,000 feet high) and for her skills as a powder snow skier. In 1978 she had published *Earth Wisdom*, a compendium of environmental insights informed not only by her first-person experience, but also by her research into the works of many authors, including Heidegger.[8] Having come across some of my essays interpreting Heidegger as a proto-environmental thinker, she sent me a copy of her book. Thus began a long relationship, which ended only with her death in 2007.[9]

LaChapelle had also become acquainted with the work being done by Sessions and Devall, who were committed to developing and promulgating Deep Ecology. To provide an occasion for us to meet, LaChapelle hosted "Heidegger in the Mountains," a symposium held in August 1981 in Silverton, Colorado (elevation 9308 feet). LaChapelle, Sessions, Devall, Steve Meyers, and myself were the primary participants (Meyers, an expert angler and environmental writer who teaches at Fort Lewis College in Durango, was a close friend of LaChapelle). "Heidegger in the Mountains" was a memorable event, which involved an attempt to climb a nearby peak at nearly fourteen thousand feet. Two nights of snow on the Continental Divide persuaded us to turn back. We were more successful in conversing about Deep Ecology, including the different ways in which one might conceive of it, whether from the perspective offered by Taoism, by Spinoza, by Heidegger, or by several other thinkers.

Bathed in brilliant Colorado sunshine while we sat outside of LaChapelle's small house, Sessions raised concerns that Heidegger's thought took the inside-out approach to nature and was thus guilty of anthropocentrism. I replied that Heidegger did not fit into either the inside-out or outside-in approach. Instead, he claimed that humankind is the

[8] LaChapelle was such an avid reader that the small library of Silverton, Colorado had the highest demand for interlibrary loan books of any library in the state.

[9] Despite vowing never to venture east of the Mississippi River, LaChapelle graciously accepted my invitation to lecture at Tulane University in the 1990s.

site necessary for beings to reveal themselves in their intelligibility, and in this sense "to be." Heidegger was no subjective idealist, but neither was he a naïve realist. The "clearing" that opens up through human existence allows beings that were always already there to show up, although always in limited ways. Unlike many modern thinkers, Heidegger did not adhere to representationalism, according to which beings appear within consciousness as "ideas" (somehow) generated by sensory experience. Instead, humans encounter beings in themselves, at least insofar as those beings reveal themselves to us. Hence, Heidegger consistently emphasized human *finitude*, including humanity's dependence on the natural world. Humans go astray when they forget their obligation to "let things be," and instead regard themselves as masters and possessors of nature. The human capacity for disclosing beings creates opportunities for us to utilize them, but also responsibilities for us to care for them. Heidegger shares this point of view with Holmes Rolston, III.

Despite his criticism of anthropocentric humanism, Heidegger affirmed the importance of human existence, which bears witness to and increasingly understands to interplay of beings. The significance of this fact was once again brought home to me recently, when I watched *Earth from Space*, a splendid two-hour NOVA special about how satellites reveal the beauty and interrelatedness of life on Earth. This largely confirms James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, according to which Earth is a dynamic system that maintains the conditions needed for terrestrial life. The NOVA special also implicitly demonstrates something else, namely, that human beings are the only (known) species that can launch satellites that can study Earth from space. There would be no science of ecology without humankind, nor would there be any criticism of one species gobbling up too many resources at the expense of other species. All species are special and perfect in their own way, but humankind brings with it the self-consciousness and linguistic capacity that reveals the world *as* a world. As Aristotle opined, philosophy begins in wonder, not least wonder at the fact that anything *is* at all.

Many Deep Ecologists are wary of such assertions, insofar as they seem consistent with modernity's arrogant humanism, according to which only humans have any inherent worth. Heidegger makes no such claim, however. He would agree that despite modernity's important achievements, its dark side includes scientific-technological thinking that reveals nature primarily as raw material for enhancing human power. One of the tensions within Deep Ecology in the early decades can be described as follows. Scientific ecology was revealing important findings that could help bolster defense of wild nature against industrial technology. That same scientific ecology, however, was itself a product of the techno-science responsible for growing environmental

destruction. Heidegger maintained that techno-science was aimed not only at plants and animals, but also at humankind itself. In the twentieth century, world wars had reduced human beings to the status of commodities for enhancing *power for its own sake*. Although neither Sessions nor Devall were mollified by my defense of Heidegger's perspective, LaChapelle argued that her experiences in powder snow skiing confirmed for her that Heidegger's recommendation about letting things be is a crucial insight for Deep Ecology. Indeed, that slogan soon became popular in Deep Ecology circles and has remained so far many years.

For many years after the Silverton meeting, I wrote essays and gave presentations about Deep Ecology. In 1983, I returned to the Pacific Division APA meeting, this time with a paper called "Heidegger and Deep Ecology." The previous year, I attended a powerful workshop led by Joanna Macy, who later became involved with the Deep Ecology movement. Her workshop took place at a Stanford University gathering to address the growing danger of nuclear war. Thereafter, I became deeply involved in a campaign against the nuclear arms race, which I interpreted – once again, calling on Heidegger's philosophy – as a suicidal quest for power by the USA and the USSR, whose anthropocentric worldviews had much in common, despite their political differences.[10]

In the summer of 1983, *Environmental Ethics* published my essay, "Toward a Heideggerian *Ethos* for Radical Environmentalism," which argued for the applicability of Heidegger's thought to environmentalism, especially to Deep Ecology.[11] Around this time, Gibbs Smith of the eponymous publishing company in Layton, Utah, invited me to write a book about the philosophy of Deep Ecology. In my reply, I recommended that he invite Sessions and Devall to write the book, in view of their important contributions to the Deep Ecology movement. Gibbs Smith published the book in 1985 as *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered*.

The book's composition process did not go smoothly. While Sessions and I were camping in Yosemite in the summer of 1985, he complained that Devall was not consulting enough with him. Sessions feared that the book *he* wanted to write – a

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[10] Michael E. Zimmerman, "Humanism, Ontology, and the Nuclear Arms Race," *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 6 (1983): 157-172; Zimmerman, "Anthropocentric Humanism and the Arms Race," *Nuclear War: Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Michael Fox and Leo Groarke (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 1985); and Zimmerman, "The Incomplete Myth: Reflections on the 'Star Wars' Dimension of the Arms Race," in *Consciousness Evolution*, ed. Stanislav Grof (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).

[11] Michael E. Zimmerman, "Toward a Heideggerian *Ethos* for Radical Environmentalism," *Environmental Ethics* 5 (Summer, 1983): 99-131. See also Zimmerman, "Implications of Heidegger's Thought for Deep Ecology," *The Modern Schoolman* 64 (November 1986): 19-43.

philosophically rigorous account of Deep Ecology – would be compromised by Devall's interest in producing a semi-popular work that would appeal to a larger audience. Sessions' concerns were warranted. Although having merit as an introduction to the many facets of Deep Ecology, the book did not successfully tie them together.

To some extent, Session and Arne Naess solved this problem with their thoughtful eight-point "Deep Ecology platform," which Naess discussed in "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects" (1986).[12] According to Naess, there are many possible "ultimate premises and ecophilosophies" consistent with the Deep Ecology platform, from which can be derived "general normative consequences" and "particular rules and decisions adapted to particular situations." Buddhism, Christianity, Spinozism, and a host of other "total views" could be interpreted in ways consistent with the deep ecological principles.

Taking the platform seriously, I wondered whether feminist theory might serve as a total view consistent with the Deep Ecology platform. At the first ecofeminism conference, held at the University of Southern California in March 1987, I presented "Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology,"[13] At the conference, I met ecofeminists such as Ariel Kay Salleh who regarded Deep Ecology as an enterprise dominated by while Western males who were unsurprisingly clueless about how women and people from non-Western countries might view environmental issues.[14] Soon thereafter I published essays attempting to find common ground between ecofeminism and Deep Ecology.[15] In 1989 the Australian philosopher, Warwick Fox, published "The Deep Ecology-Ecofeminism Debate and Its Parallels."[16] Despite such interventions, however, Sessions and Devall showed little

[12] Arne Naess, "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects," *Philosophical Inquiry* 8, 1-2 (1986).

[13] *Symposium on Culture, Nature, and Theory*, Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society, University of Southern California, March 27-29, 1987.

[14] Ariel Kay Salleh, "Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection," *Environmental Ethics*6, no. 4 (1984): 339-345.

[15] Michael E. Zimmerman, "Feminism, Deep Ecology, and Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 9 (Spring 1987): 21-44; "Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism: The Emerging Dialogue," in *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, ed. Irene Diamond (San Francisco: Sierra Books, 1989).

[16] Warwick Fox, "The Deep Ecology-Ecofeminism Debate and Its Parallels," *Environmental Ethics* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 5-25.

interest either in ecofeminism or in Third World critiques of Deep Ecology and of the wilderness ideal.[17]

In 1990, Fox published Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism, which has some things in common with Ken Wilber's version of transpersonal ecology.[18] Fox's book interprets Deep Ecology – especially Naess's Ecosophy T – as calling on people to transcend the limits of the modern ego-structure, which is bound by rational self-interest in the context of nationalistic and ideological struggles. The ego is detached from and even dissociated from nature, including to some extent the human body and its desires. When Naess affirmed the self-realization of all beings, in accordance with his interpretation of Spinoza's philosophy, he meant that human self-realization (becoming who we really are) includes discerning our deep relationship with all other beings. In effect, Naess called for humans to let beings be. Truly to be who we are entails in part letting other beings be what they are, that is, letting them realize their own possibilities. This is a profound as well as a demanding teaching, which the noted Deep Ecologist Alan Drengson has explored over the years.

In 1989, I was invited to contribute a paper to a conference titled "The Wilderness Condition: A Conference on Environment and Civilization," which was held at the YMCA next to Rocky Mountain National Park. The conference also drew noted writers such as Gary Snyder, Paul Shepard, George Sessions, Curt Meine, Erazim Kohak, Michael P. Cohen, Peter A.Y. Gunter, Dolores LaChapelle, and Max Oelschlaeger.[19] An interchange took place between Snyder and Sessions, two Californians who had known each other for years. Expressing dismay at the rate at which industrial civilization was harming the natural environment, Sessions insisted that the federal government and other national government would have to intervene. In his ironic but compassionate way, Snyder intoned that such a move "would be like inviting the fox to guard the henhouse." Big Government, in the guise of the military, the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, and other such agencies, was responsible for untold environmental

[17] See for example Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," *Environmental Ethics* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 71-83.

[18] Warwick Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990).

[19] My paper, "The Blessing of Otherness: Wilderness and the Human Condition," along with the papers presented by the aforementioned people, were published in *The Wilderness Condition*, ed. Max Oelschlaeger (San Francisco: Sierra Books, 1992).

damage, including the Glen Canyon Dam against which Edward Abbey and members of Earth First! had taken symbolic direct action in 1981.

Clouds on the Horizon: Rethinking Deep Ecology in Light of Heidegger's Politics

1989 proved to be a turning point in my relation to Deep Ecology. That year, Victor Farias published a book arguing that Martin Heidegger's infamous decision to join the Nazi Party in 1933 was not merely an instance of bad political judgment, but instead reflected anti-modernist, anti-democratic attitudes that are discernible in his thinking.[20] In view of such findings, I began to develop a more critical attitude to Heidegger's thought as well as to Deep Ecology. I have recounted these developments elsewhere.[21] Heidegger's anti-modernist thought, when allied with radical environmentalism, so I concluded, could lead toward views compatible with far right-wing politics. Moreover, a totalizing anti-modernism could lead to misanthropic attitudes, as it did on the part of a few Deep Ecologists. For example, in his 1987 interview of Earth First!er Dave Foreman, Bill Devall tacitly agreed with Foreman's contention that nature should be allowed to "take its course" among the starving masses in Ethiopia and other "overpopulated" third world countries. That same year, another Earth First!er, Christopher Manes – writing under the pseudonym "Miss Ann Thropy" – depicted AIDS as a welcome development:

> Barring a cure, the possible benefits of this (AIDS) to the environment are staggering. If, like the Black Death in Europe, AIDS affected one-third of the world's population, it would cause an immediate respite for endangered wildlife on every continent. More significantly, just as the Plague contributed to the demise of feudalism, AIDS has the potential to end industrialism, which is the main force behind the environmental crisis.[22]

Such callous comments led social ecologist Murray Bookchin to open fire on Deep Ecology and Earth First! in a paper delivered at a Green Party conclave in 1987:

> Deep Ecology is so much of a black hole of half-digested, ill-formed, and half-baked ideas that one can easily express utterly vicious notions like

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[20] Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

[21] See Michael E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). See also Zimmerman, *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

22 See http://www.off-road.com/trails-events/voice/population-and-aids-miss-ann-thropy-earth-first-1987-16372.html

> Foreman's and still sound like a fiery radical who challenges everything that is anti-ecological in the present realm of ideas. The very words Deep Ecology, in fact, clue is into the fact that we are not dealing with a body of clear ideas but with a bottomless pit in which vague notions and moods of all kinds can be such into the depths of an ideological toxic dump.[23]

Although intemperate, uncharitable, and exaggerated, Bookchin's paper was right in recommending that Deep Ecologists become informed that environmentalism had once been enlisted for dark purposes. National Socialism, a virulently anti-modernist movement, had developed something like ecofascism, as evidenced in the slogan *Blut und Boden*, "blood and soil," which called for racial purity and land purity. Heidegger's apparently eco-friendly discourse about "letting things be" was bound up with his favorable attitude toward at least his own version of National Socialism. After much soul-searching, I published essays examining ecofascism and possible signs of it in Deep Ecology.[24]

Although continuing to believe that Deep Ecology promoted an important perspective regarding humanity's place in nature, I also knew that there were other important perspectives that needed to be taken into account. Having supported the Civil Rights Movement, and having been a Frankfurt School socialist for a time in the 1970s, I supported many modernist goals. Among modernity's shortcomings, however, was its exploitative attitude toward and treatment of the natural world. What Marx once said about capitalism's corrosive and highly productive power, "All that is solid melts into air,"[25] was also applicable to industrial modernity's relation to nature: "All that is natural becomes a commodity."

In 1991, I enlisted Sessions to edit the Deep Ecology section of my anthology, *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology* (1993), the first such anthology to devote sections not only to Deep Ecology, but also to ecofeminism (edited

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[23] Murray Bookchin, "Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology: A Challenge to the Ecology Movement," originally published in *Green Perspectives: Newsletter of the Green Program Project*, nos. 4-5 (summer 1987); available online at http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html. Devall's interview with Foreman was published by the Australian periodical *Simply Living* in 1987.

[24] Michael E. Zimmerman, "Rethinking the Heidegger--Deep Ecology Relationship," *Environmental Ethics,* 15, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 195-224; Zimmerman, "The Threat of Ecofascism," *Social Theory and Practice,* 21 (Summer 1995): 207-238.

[25] Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm

by Karen J. Warren) and to social ecology (edited by John Clark). J. Baird Callicott edited the section on environmental ethics.[26] Shortly thereafter, I published *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity* (1994), which offers a comparative analysis of the three aforementioned versions of radical environmentalism: Deep Ecology, ecofeminism, and social ecology. In my view, each had something important to offer environmental discourse. No single position could adequately represent the multitude of perspectives that people had toward nature. Indeed, so I argued, environmentalists would henceforth have to engage in a *contest* with other people –including ecofeminists and Third World critics of Western environmentalism – about the status of nature.

In 1996, William Cronon published his highly influential and controversial anthology, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, in which he spoke of the "end of wilderness," in which he criticized the notion of a nature untouched by human activity, perception, emotional response, or interpretation.[27] According to the wilderness ideal embraced by many Deep Ecologists, however, the only kind of nature worth saving is nature untrammeled by human beings. Except, there isn't any such nature. In an essay that appeared two years later in *The Trumpeter*, Sessions sharply criticized Cronon's claim that wilderness is a social construct. Several other environmentalists also contested what they took to be Cronon's position.[28] The many insightful essays in his anthology constituted a major intervention in the "social construction of nature" approach that was becoming widespread in the 1990s. Feminism's critique of essentialism, including the idea of an "essential" woman and an "essential" nature, also played a crucial role in social constructivism. Given that some social constructionists made claims about nature that verged on subjective idealism, however, a number of Deep Ecologists dismissed social construction theory as well as postmodernism and postmodern theory, which were deeply interrelated.[29] This, I

[26] Sessions remained editor of the Deep Ecology section until the fourth edition (2005), in which I introduced a new section (edited by Irene Diamond) on Continental environmental philosophy. Had the publisher allowed the fourth edition to expand in size, I would have retained the Deep Ecology section.

[27] William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996).

[28] George Sessions, "Reinventing Nature, the End of Wilderness? A Response to William Cronon's Uncommon Ground," *The Trumpeter* 13, No. 1 (1996).

[29] For an excellent treatment of themes the postmodern construction of nature, see Steve Vogel, "Nature as Origin and Difference: On Environmental Philosophy and Continental Thought," *Philosophy Today*, vol. 42, supplement (1999): 169-181. See also Vogel, *Against Nature: The Concept of Nature in Critical Theory* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996).

believe, was a mistake. A restrained social construction view has much to offer the Deep Ecology movement.[30]

FROM DEEP ECOLOGY TO INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

For years I had largely identified with Deep Ecology's affirmation of nature, as well as with its insistence that humans are destroying the world because of greed and arrogance. What I lacked was a way to reconcile progressive politics, including the noble aims of the American and French Revolutions, with appropriate respect for nature. Such a way began to open up in the early1980s, when I first encountered Ken Wilber's books, *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (1977) and *Up From Eden: A Transpersonal View of Human Evolution* (1981). In these and later books, Wilber offers a developmental narrative according to which human consciousness and culture have gradually evolved in ways that are largely beneficial, although each wave of development also contains its own dark side or pathology.[31] For instance, in moving from pre-modernity to modernity, moderns typically dissociate themselves from traditional religious views as well as from nature. God (the transcendent domain) now appears as the object of superstition, while nature shows up as raw material for exploitation.

Likewise, as postmodernists transcend modernity, they often engage in totalizing critiques of modernity. In so doing, they fail to appreciate the positive achievements modernity, and there are many. The retro-romantic longing for a pre-industrial, even pre-agricultural era typically overlooks the down side of those eras, including short lifespans, slavery, widespread violence, and deeply problematic treatment of women. Much was lost when tribal societies were eclipsed by agricultural societies, and much was lost when modernity challenged medieval institutions, including traditional religions. There are good reasons for feeling nostalgic for simpler times when human ties were closer and when people did in fact live closer to the land. There are good reasons as well, however, for appreciating what modernity has made possible, including the possibility of leaving life on the farm and related social ties for a new kind of life in the city.

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[30] See, for example, Anna Peterson, "Environmental Ethics and the Social Construction of Nature," *Environmental Ethics*, 21 (Winter 1999): 339-357.

[31] In many ways, Wilber's approach resembles the "new universe story" told by Brian Thomas Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Journey of the University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011). See also Swimme and Tucker's PBS special with the same title.

Major (and typically slow-motion) socio-cultural transitions are typically wrenching and replete with conflict. One reason for this is that as people move to another phase of development, they typically portray the previous phase negatively, so as to make it easier to leave behind. Healthy personal and cultural development involves not only *transcending* the previous wave of development, however, but also *integrating* what was positive about that wave. This is never easy to do, because the tendency is to *dissociate* oneself from the developmental wave with which one previously identified.

During the 1990s I discovered that just as I could no longer wholly identify with modernity, I also could no longer wholly identify with those variants of postmodernism and environmentalism that engaged in totalizing critiques of modernity. Deep Ecology's relation to pre-modernity, modernity, and postmodernity is complex. Some varieties of Deep Ecology exhibit mistrust and even contempt for modernity, while revealing nostalgia for the *tribal* version of pre-modernity. At the same time, however, Deep Ecology is often suspicious of traditional religious versions of pre-modernity. The latter are not only based on agriculture, the spread of which vastly increased human population while dramatically reducing habitat for non-humans, but also regard humankind as the centerpiece of Creation. Regarding modernity, Deep Ecology is ambivalent. On the one hand, modernity not only made possible the science of ecology that reveals the interdependent complexity of the biosphere, but also set in place civil liberties allowing people to openly criticize modern governments and related institutions for mistreatment of the natural world. On the other hand, the growth of modern science and technology threaten the integrity of the biosphere on which modern institutions, wealth, and individual liberties depend. Deep Ecology is also ambivalent about postmodernity. While agreeing with the latter's critique of modernity – as an anthropocentrism drive for total control over nature – Deep Ecology is skeptical about postmodern theory's deconstructive practices, according to which there is no one, true "Nature," but instead many ways in which nature shows up within this or that culture, and for this or that purpose.

I appreciate the passion of pre-modernists, modernists, Deep Ecologists, and postmodernists, as well as the ways in which they disagree with one another. Each is an important way of making sense of complex matters. My attempts to reconcile whenever possible aspects of modernity, environmentalism, and postmodernism appear in my book, *Contesting Earth's Future* as well as in "On Reconciling Progressivism and

Environmentalism," a version of which I presented in 1996.[32] There remain important differences among these three positions, however.

Ken Wilber argues that after modernity and postmodernity, the next wave of development is integral thinking. From this perspective, a person appreciates the contributions made by every previous wave of consciousness and culture, without identifying strongly with any of those waves. Postmoderns and many Green postmodernists (that is, postmodernists concerned about environmental damage arising from modernist attitudes and practices) anticipate the integral wave of development by contesting modernity's Euro-centric, patriarchal, and anthropocentric attitudes, and by celebrating multiculturalism and multi-perspectivalism. Concerned about hierarchy, however, many postmoderns and postmodern Greens end up promoting a "flatland" worldview according to which nothing is better than anything else, thereby denying the reality and significance of cosmic, terrestrial, organic, and human evolution. Like Holmes Rolston, III and Ken Wilber, I envision the cosmos as unfolding in a hierarchical sequence, according to which earlier stages (atoms and molecules) are more fundamental, but that later stages (cells, organisms, and so on) have greater significance and value.[33] This developmental-hierarchical concept, proves to be a stumbling block for postmoderns, postmodern Greens, and many Deep Ecologists, who reject hierarchy because it allegedly justifies exploitation of things on the lower rungs of a given hierarchy.

It is important, however, to distinguish between *dominator* hierarchies which justify exploitation, and *categorical* hierarchies, which articulate levels of complexity and development without thereby justifying of the "lower" by the "higher."[34] A dominator hierarchy underpins not only exploitation of nature, but also racism, which – in the guise of white supremacy – helped to justify colonialism ("the white man's burden") and later on the Holocaust. Cultural development exhibits certain major trends, moving for example from tribal societies to larger social organizations that would later becomes modern nations. Eventually, moderns would develop the intellectual stance needed to

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[32] Michael E. Zimmerman, "On Reconciling Progressivism and Environmentalism," in *Explorations in Environmental Political Theory*, ed. Joel J. Kassiola (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 149-177.

[33] Michael E. Zimmerman, "Integral Ecology's Debt to Holmes Rolston, III," in *Integral Ecologies: Nature, Culture, and Knowledge in the Planetary Era*, ed. by Sam Mickey, Sean Kelly, and Adam Robbert (Albany: SUNY Press), forthcoming.

[34] On this matter, see Karen J. Warren, "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism," in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, ed. Michael E. Zimmerman (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993).

call into question the principles of modernity itself. Modernity espouses a world-centric creed of universal human rights, but has often failed to extend rights to some humans, such as slaves and women. Liberation movements in the 19th, 20th, and 21st century still call on modernity's ideals in pursuit of emancipatory goals. Indeed, environmentalism itself, which calls in effect for the "liberation" of nature, may be regarded as an expression of modern ideals.

Many postmodern Greens criticize hierarchy, but nevertheless assume that their view of nature is in fact *superior to*, that is, *better than*, the views of traditionalists and modernists. In some respects, of course, Green views of nature *are* superior because they are more *inclusive*. They integrate non-humans into the domain of what counts morally and what deserves respect. At the same time, however, many Greens and postmoderns speak with contempt for moderns and premodern social organization oriented around traditionalist religious beliefs, such as Christianity. The contributions of traditional and modern waves of development are important; hence, they should be regarded with respect not with disdain. People whose developmental "center of gravity" is traditional or modern will take seriously the concerns expressed by Green postmodernists and Deep Ecologists only when the latter take seriously the concerns and contributions of traditionalists and modernists. Mutual respect is a precondition for accomplishing anything significant, especially in a contentious democracy.

Today, 70% of the human population remains at the traditional/premodern mode of consciousness and culture. Given that many premodern people were subjected to European and American colonization, little wonder that such people are wary of modernity. According to the integral approach, moderns and postmoderns should affirm traditional culture, even while being willing to criticize pathological forms of it. Likewise, it is important to encourage premodern or traditional peoples to develop *their own versions of modernity*. This, for example, is the challenge and opportunity facing many Islamic societies today.

Wilber's integral developmental model provides an alternative to Heidegger's contention, shared by a number of Deep Ecologists, that Western civilization is little more than the story of decline from ancient beginnings.[35] In contrast, the integral developmental model maintains that nature reveals itself differently to people at various waves of development. During medieval times, for instance, nature was

[35] See Andrew R. Murphy, "Environmentalism, Antimodernism, and the Recurrent Rhetoric of Decline," *Environmental Ethics*, 25, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 79-98.

regarded as Mother Earth. During this era, mining was widely regarded as a violation because it dug into Earth's body. In disenchanting the world, however, moderns gradually dismissed such attitudes as superstitions that impeded progress.[36] To take the place of modern anthropocentrism, many Deep Ecologists promote biocentrism, according to which humans have no special status, but instead are merely members of one species among millions of others.

One popular expression of this leveling, anti-hierarchical viewpoint is found in the novel *Ishmael*, in which a talking ape condemns the human civilization that followed from the invention of agriculture.[37] The conceit of a talking ape is clever, but the author does not underscore the irony involved in using *human* linguistic capacity to describe environmental problems caused by humankind. No ape could ever do this, although to say this is not to find any shortcoming with apes. Indeed, they are whole and complete in their own way. Moreover, environmentalists rightly condemn human actions that threaten apes with extinction. What must be emphasized, however, is that – so far as we know –only humans can disclose the world's history, interpret its complex structures, envision its possible futures, and encounter its possibly divine aspects. Those who claim that humans are just one species among others, and this is how I understand Quinn's thesis, must then agree that humans are merely trying to maximize their reproductive fitness just as any other species does. White-tailed deer would take over the entire planet, for example, if conditions would permit them to do so. What is wrong for humans – just another organism – to take over the planet?

The only animal capable of posing and answering this question is the human animal. One answer: taking over might be prudentially wrong, given that we might end up destroying the conditions needed for our very survival. Another answer: taking over might be morally wrong, because humans are capable of discerning and respecting the inherent worthy of other life forms and even the biosphere as such. *Only human beings* can provide such answers, however. White-tailed deer in the process of catastrophically overshooting their resource base do not pause to reflect upon either the prudential or moral wisdom of such behavior. That humans can pause to reflect in such ways indicates how humans differ from other animals. The steady success of the animal rights movement and the environmental movement show that humans are capable of evolving their moral attitudes toward non-human beings. The core of my disagreements with

[36] On these and related matters see Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: HarperOne, 1990).

[37] Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit* (New York: Bantam, 1995).

Sessions and Devall, then, had to do with the human place in the cosmos. Humans are gifted with an extraordinary capacity of awareness that lends itself to good as well as to evil. We hold open the historical-linguistic clearing within which things can manifest themselves and thus "be" in various ways.

Wilber and I shared aspects of this view. He had read my first book on Heidegger, *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity* (1981).[38] I continued to read his many works with ecological themes, including *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution* (1995)[39] and *A Brief History of Everything* (1996)[40]. Having corresponded with Wilber for years, I finally met him in 1998. After several brainstorming sessions with Wilber, Sean Esbjörn-Hargens and I wrote *Integral Ecology: Uniting Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World*.[41] Mark Bekoff, the noted biologist and animal rights proponent, agreed to write an introduction to the book, because he appreciated its emphasis on the *interiority* of all life forms, not merely human life.

Underscoring the importance of interiority, collective and individual, human and non-human, is another important feature of integral ecology. According to integral ecology, every phenomenon has both an exterior and an interior. For example, a living cell has a chemical structure and can be photographed if sufficiently magnified. In other words, the cell can be understood from the third-person perspective as an object. Each such cell, however, also has an interior aspect, that is, the cell takes into account is environment. A cell has proto-experiential capability. More complex organisms have even greater interiority, which includes an increasing capacity for pleasure and pain. Influenced by ecological science, which tends to emphasize the importance of species and thus to discount the importance of individual members of species, and wary of mentioning interiority because humans are so richly endowed with it, Deep Ecologists tend to neglect interiority, even though it may go "all the way down" as philosopher of mind David J. Chalmers has suggested.[42]

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[38] Michael E. Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981).

[39] Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995).

[40] Ken Wilber, *A Brief History of Everything* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1996).

[41] Sean Esbjörn-Hargens and Michael E. Zimmerman, *Integral Ecology* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2009).

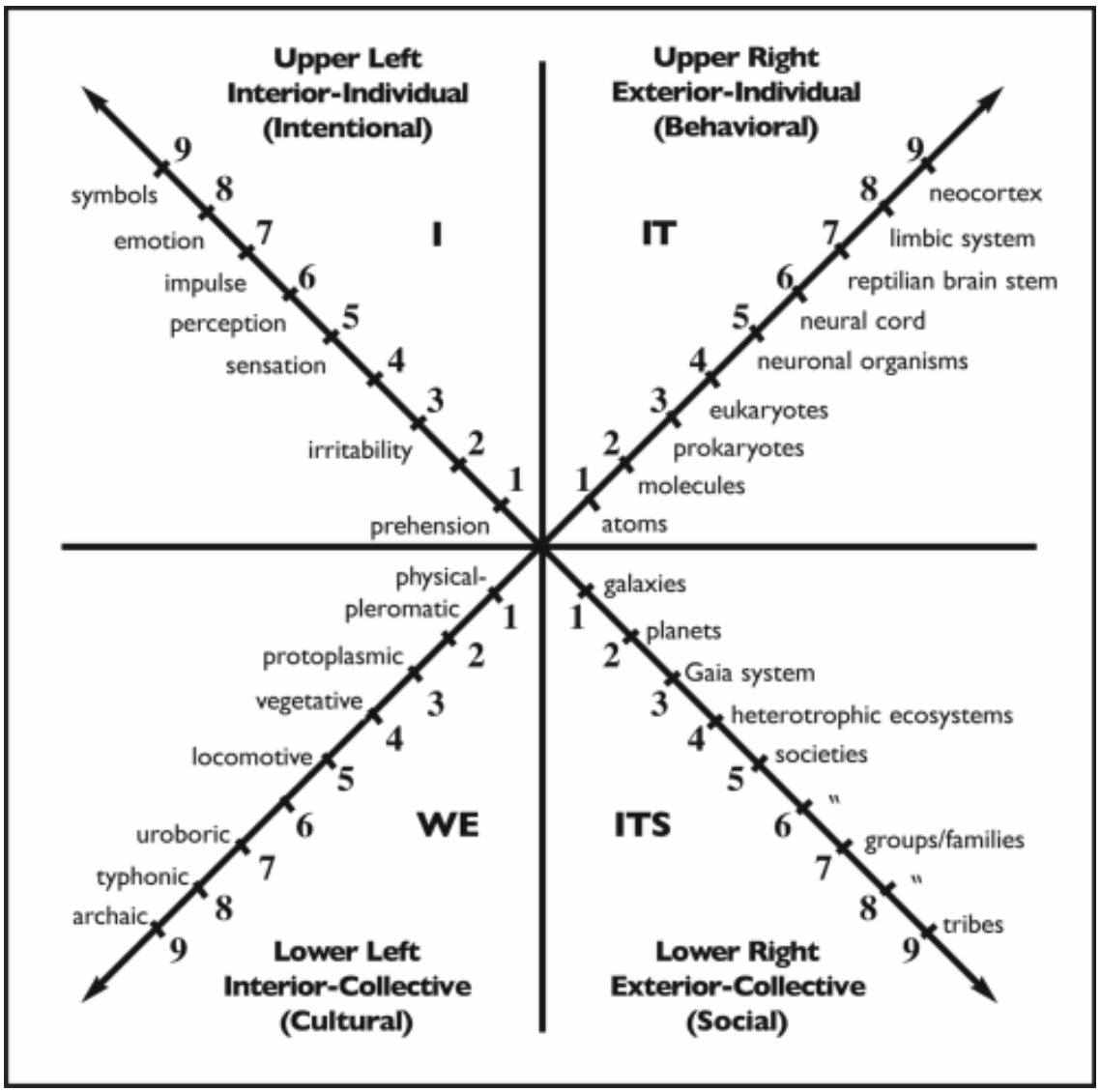
[42] David J. Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). See also Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinist Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Contesting the Cartesian atomism held responsible for disintegrating the cosmos, some Deep Ecologists have promoted as an alternative to it systems theory, according to which everything is merely a strand of the interconnected web of life, or Gaia. As valuable as systems theory is, however, it still omits any reference to the interior aspect of things. One of Aldo Leopold's major contributions in *A Sand County Almanac* was to describe what amounts to the first-person life of animals in Sand County, thereby encouraging readers to identity with them. Likewise, Holmes Rolston, III maintains that because of their interior depth organisms have importance of their own, as well as being tokens of species.[43] Organisms are not merely "parts" of the whole, nor are they merely "strands in the cosmic web," but are also members of what Leopold called the land community. There are times when the needs of individual organisms must be sacrificed to more inclusive goods, but taking into account the well being of individual organisms ought to be an important aspect of Deep Ecology, just as it is of integral ecology.[44]

In addition to including the interior as well as the exterior aspects of individual phenomena, integral ecology also includes the interior and exterior aspects of collectives. These four domains, or the quadrants, must be taken into account when representing or interpreting things. For example, a frog can be understood in terms of four basic domains: its first-hand experience, its structure as an organism, its intersubjective relations among other frogs in its pond, and finally in terms of its role in the pond's ecosystem. If one over lays these four domains with the evolutionary history of phenomena since the Big Bang, the result is what Ken Wilber calls the AQAL diagram (all quadrants, all [developmental] levels), reproduced below. Organisms always tetra-evolve, that is, the conditions needed for an individual organism to emerge must include all four domains as they pertain to that organism. The organism and its niche--frog and frog pond--are correlated with and depend upon one another. Details do not concern us here, but they are explored in *Integral Ecology*.

[43] Rolston's *Environmental Ethics* anticipated important aspects of Wilber's views on environmental philosophy. See Zimmerman, "Integral Ecology's Debt to Holmes Rolston, III," forthcoming.

[44] See Michael E. Zimmerman, "Humanity's Relation to Gaia: Part of the Whole, or Member of the Community?" *The Trumpeter* 20, no. 1 (2004): 1-20. See also Zimmerman, "The Threat of Ecofascism," *Social Theory and Practice* 21 (Summer, 1995): 207-238.



AQAL Diagram. Reprinted with permission. Originally published in Ken Wilber, *Sex Ecology Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995).

In addition to the above-mentioned characteristics, integral ecology maintains that to characterize and to offer plausible solutions to an environmental issue, multiple perspectives must be brought into play. Doing so brings up conundrums such as the following: What shows up as a problem from one cultural perspective (that of an environmentalist) might *not* show up as a problem from another perspective (that of a modernist). Consider people in developing countries whose livelihood depends on smokestack industries that produce toxic waste. Smokestacks show up for many such people as sign of economic opportunity, just as they once did for Americans in much of the 19th and 20th centuries (of course, environmentalists in developing countries also criticize industrial pollution that degrades the land and harms people). Logging activity

that shows up to a Deep Ecologist as deserving of moral condemnation shows up differently to many involved in the logging industry. During the mid-1990s when the spotted owl controversy was raging, many Oregon loggers had a bumper sticker that read: "Are you an environmentalist, or do you work for a living?"[45] Often, it is only after people achieve a certain level of prosperity that they regard smokestacks and attendant pollution as problems that must be solved.

Deep Ecologists may claim to speak for nature, but nature chooses no spokesperson. Humans make assertions that are inevitably inflected by cultural attitudes and particular interests. The interests of the Sierra Club differ from those of Exxon/Mobil, but both represent state of affairs in ways that are *inflected* by their interests. It is important to affirm that both the modernist viewpoint (represented by Exxon) and the environmentalist viewpoint (represented by the Sierra Club) contain important political and ethical truths. Teasing apart valid assertions made by such organization from assertions that are merely tendentious, of course, is no easy matter.

After forty years as an environmentalist, I still regard the Deep Ecology movement as an important intervention, not least because it reveals modernity's blind spot regarding the status of nature. My move from Deep Ecology to integral ecology was motivated in part by the insights of Green postmodernisms, namely, that there are multiple perspectives available to human beings, and that nature reveals itself only within such perspectives. Perhaps Nietzsche was right in saying that there is only perspective knowing. The fact that this assertion itself is made from a perspective does not disqualify its pertinence. Integral theory maintains that within a given subject matter some perspectives are superior to others. Experts in their own fields, such as philosophy professors grading an undergraduate's term paper, rightly assume that – at least in most cases – their perspectives are superior to those of their students. Otherwise, a professor could not feel justified in grading student work. Integral theory also maintains that perspectives representing multiple disciplines and fields are needed both to characterize something as an environmental "problem," and to resolve that problem in a way that garners needed support from multiple perspectives. In my opinion, this is the heart of integral ecology, which will eventually be surpassed by a more inclusive and integrative perspective.

[45] See Richard White, "'Are You and Environmentalist, or Do You Work for a Living?' Work and Nature," in *Uncommon Ground*, ed. William Cronon (New York: Norton, 1996), 171-185.

I would like to conclude with the following self-critical observation. As I moved away from Deep Ecology to integral thinking, I was at times too critical of Deep Ecology, just as I was too critical of modernity when I embraced Deep Ecology. The invitation to contribute to this special issue of *The Trumpeter* provided the opportunity to correct this regrettable move, in part by asserting my continuing belief that Deep Ecology represents an important voice in the conversation about humanity's relation to nature.

My journey as an environmental philosopher was immeasurably aided by the commitment and insight of George Sessions. Despite our disagreements over the years, he helped to open up for me – and for many others – the opportunities and obligations associated with environmentalism, including the Deep Ecology movement.[46]

[46] My thanks to three anonymous reviewers for comments that improved the quality of this essay.