

# Becoming Home: Revisiting Arne Naess Toward an Ecophilosophy and a Depth Ecology for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century

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*Philosophy begins and ends with wonder – profound wonder. On that account we ought to consider life, indeed our very existence, as a flowing current...feeling at home in life is for me one of the many purposes in living [that] requires both the willpower and the desire to participate in it actively.*

Arne Naess (in Naess and Haukeland 2002, 1-2)

## **Introduction**

In this article, I revisit the life and work of the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess (1912-2009), toward an ecophilosophy and a depth ecology of becoming home for the 22<sup>nd</sup> century. When Naess retired as a professor at the University of Oslo in 1969 at 57 years old, it was largely to develop a philosophical response to the eco-crisis, which became “ecosophy” and “deep ecology.” An ecosophy is an individual (personal) total view, inspired by overcoming the eco-crisis, while deep ecology refers to a collective (social) movement for eco-friendly change. Naess thought the century we are in now would be difficult, with loss of nature and species, climate change, wars, social injustices, and alienation, but he was optimistic for the 22<sup>nd</sup> century (Drengson 2008, 308). Toward the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he thought, humanity will awaken to the interconnections in life, deepen its care of fellow humans, and widen its care of fellow creatures. In his view, humans can become a creative power of eco-friendly change in the world, but how worse it gets before it gets better depends on what you and I do today!

The prefix “eco” (from the Greek *oikos*) is translated as “house” or “home,” and I interpret it here as “home in life.” The eco-crisis, in this view, is a home in life crisis. I see this “home in life” as the interconnections between life in nature, culture, community, and self, which extends from the human to the more-than-human world. To feel at home in life, as Naess finds is one purpose of living, is not so much being or coming home to some dwelling, like a house, as it is a process of “becoming home” as an on-going process of belonging. Home is something I do. The word “home” can be used as a verb, “to home” or “homeing,” like “to nest” and “nesting” is for birds.

To deal with the eco-crisis, we need to understand better what it entails to becoming home in life.

The aim of the article is three-fold. I will identify key aspects in Naess's life and work that can be helpful in developing his response further in becoming home in life. In so doing, I will put "philo" back into ecosophy as "ecophilosophy" and highlight the depths of deep ecology as "depth ecology." Further, I will discuss the common ground in the land for becoming home to an eco-friendly future.

### **A Personal Backdrop**

I discovered Naess's writing as a master student at the University of Oregon in 1989. I found inspiring both his thoughts on the ecological Self (with capital S) and the deep ecology approach to the eco-crisis that combined lifeview and lifestyle. Naess said we need to train ourselves in standing up for what we believe in, "Defenders of nature, please rise!" (Naess 1986, 1). When I returned to Norway in the summer of 1990, I visited Naess at the University of Oslo. After a trip to his mountain hut, Tvergastein in Hallingskarvet mountain, he asked me to share an office with him, which I did from 1990 to 1992, and again from 1997 to 1998. Among the things we collaborated on was a report and an article on an integrative approach to sustainability for the Norwegian delegation to the Rio-conference (Naess 1992).

Tvergastein is the place in life Naess felt the most at home in. He became home there, seeing what is valuable and how to live. He co-formed that place and the life there. Naess wrote in 1995 a wonderful book in Norwegian, *Det gode lange livs far* (*The Good Long Life's Father*), which outlines how he combines mythopoetry, science, and phenomenology.<sup>1</sup> Life at Tvergastein is a "rich life with simple means!" Walking half a mile in a cold winter storm, to pick through the ice to fill two buckets with water, I feel Naess' words, "Two buckets of water make me rich!" (Haukeland and Naess 2008, 261-265). Quality of life is not about what we have, but how we feel. It was a life full of qualities, joy, and play, but with a serious undertone of training for eco-friendly living. Naess told me already on our first trip, "Even though life is not a play, it is important to play in life!"

I left Norway in 1992 to do my PhD at UC Berkeley. Naess came often to visit. He especially loved the blooming of the desert, which reminded him how life blossoms even in the harshest conditions, including at Tvergastein. Upon my return in 1997, Naess and I began a series of talks on the relationship between feelings and reason, which became the book, *Livsfilosofi* in 1998, translated as *Life's Philosophy* in 2002 (Naess and Haukeland 2002). I wrote the book in a

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<sup>1</sup> A summary is found in Volume X, part 33, in *Selected Works of Arne Naess* (Drengson and Glasser 2005).

narrative style, like our conversations. He was unsure of it, but when it did well, he was deeply grateful. It helped him reach out to a new and broader audience.

Naess encouraged all to find *their way* of becoming home in life (*Sva Marga* in Sanskrit). My way was combining ecophilosophy and ecopedagogy with an ecospiritual approach. When we founded the Alliance for Wild Ethics (AWE) in Norway in 2006, initiated by David Abram, we visited Naess to honor his life and work. He gave us a thumbs up, lit up, and reminded us to nourish the deep joy. The last book Naess and I collaborated on was, *Dyp Glede: Inn i dypøkologien (Deep Joy: Into the Depths of Deep Ecology)* (Haukeland and Naess 2008). Naess passed away in 2009, 96 years old.

### **Integrating Life and Work**

A “true philosopher,” Naess said, is someone who integrates life and work (Bodian 1982, 2). How does this play out for Naess himself? In the foreword to Volume X of *Selected Works of Arne Naess (SWAN)* on ecosophy and deep ecology, Naess writes, “All of my work comes together in SWAN X” (Drengson and Glasser 2005, xxv). What this work entails can be found in the unpublished article Naess wrote in 1998, “What did Arne Naess stand for as a philosopher?”. Later it was reworked in 2005 for SWAN Volume IX, Chapter 17, titled “How my philosophy seemed to develop”. He mentions eight areas: 1) positive sense of uncertainty, wrong and diversity, 2) Pyrrhonic skepticism, 3) possibilism, 4) pluralism, 5) Spinoza, 6) Gandhian non-violence, 7) empirical semantics, and 8) gestalt ontology. These areas all went into ecosophy and deep ecology. A ninth area is life’s philosophy. Below, I will discuss how this work and his life come together.

Naess was born January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1912, as the youngest of four children. His father died when he was an infant and he developed a strained relationship with his mother, who could say in an authoritative voice, “It is just how it is!” or “You cannot do that!” when, for example, he walked to school with two socks of different colors. He answered, “Yes, I can! Look, I am doing it!” He was an early skeptic of adults and any authoritarian position. His self-confidence came from being a good climber. If someone said, “You cannot climb that tree!” he would try climbing it to prove them right or wrong. This led to a *positive sense of uncertainty (1)*, described as *Pyrrhonic skepticism (2)*: a skepticism to what one has no experience of, but with an openness to the possibility of experiencing it. Such openness to a world where all is possible, he called *possibilism (3)*. We can find ourselves stuck in a hopeless situation, but a possibilist life attitude sees possibilities from places not yet known. It meant for Naess to take different perspectives on an issue, so to come deeper into the heart of the matter, which he saw as *pluralism (4)*. Naess was a wide open possibilist and radical pluralist. He once told me, “When people think the same, not

much is thought!"

Nature played an important role throughout Naess's life. One important experience he recalls was when he, as a child, played with tiny crabs and fishes in the shallow waters along the coast. He noticed that if he stood still, they curiously sought him out, but if he chased them, they disappeared. It told him that it is not irrelevant what we do to others as what they do to us. Naess grasped early on how humans are integral to what Abram (1996) calls the "more-than-human world." Abram (1996) puts it well: "we are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human" (16). Another experience was of the tree line, which he passed as a child travelling by train from the city and narrow valleys to the open and high mountains where his family had a cabin. It became a symbol of freedom for him. It represented a move from the enclosed life in the lowlands to an open and free life in the highlands (Drengson 2008, 53). This experience of the tree-line echoes a distinction made by the Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen, who in a 1859 poem, "Paa vidderne," spoke of the highland life as *friluftsliv* (*free-air-life*), contrasted with the enclosed routine-life in the lowlands. It can be interpreted as an existentialist (Kierkegaardian) either/or position between necessity and possibility, but something we need to balance. After prolonged stays in the mountains, Naess longed for the city, and vice versa, but he could find that balance between work and play anywhere, even though something about mountains invited in him a stronger sense of home in life.

Naess's interests in *Spinoza* (5) and *Gandhi* (6) started in his formative years. On a climbing trip alone in Jotunheimen, 15-years old, he met an old climber and judge who suggested he read Spinoza. He liked how Spinoza lived as he taught. Naess knew he wanted to be a philosopher in high school, *Gymnasium Artium*, and afterwards in 1930, he travelled to study the three main philosophical traditions: the French, the Austrian/German, and the English. He went to Paris first, where Bergson (1859-1941) was a philosophical authority. He could have joined one of his final public lectures, but triggered by his anti-authoritarian sentiment, he declined. He was more interested in Gandhi, whose Salt March of 1930 was widely discussed in Europe, also among philosophers. He liked Gandhi's concept of *satyagraha* (*to hold fast in truth*), in which he found a platform for non-violent resistance to oppression. Gandhi was also an authority, but he set out to be the change that he sought. Naess completed his *Magister Artium* in philosophy in 1933 at the University of Oslo, before he travelled to Vienna in 1934. He was invited to participate in the Vienna Circle, a rare possibility for a young philosopher. He enjoyed how the members of the circle discussed philosophy, with their emphasis on clarity, precision, interpretations, logical systems, an open and friendly atmosphere, and a shared quest to find the truth of the matter. This found its way into Naess' later work on *empirical semantics* (7). He was, however, more influenced by American pragmatism than logical positivism. Naess did not travel to England but returned instead to Norway to complete his doctorate in philosophy in 1936. In 1937, he got married, finished his cabin at Tvergastein, and spent a cold winter there with his wife, before

taking a position in 1938 under Professor Tolman at UC Berkeley, studying the behavior of behavioral psychologists studying the behavior of rats. In 1939, at 27 years old, he was offered a position as a professor in philosophy at the University of Oslo.

During World War II, Naess was involved in the resistance movement, especially no-cooperation at the University of Oslo. After the war, he initiated reconciliation programs. In 1958, he founded *Inquiry – an Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy and the Social Sciences* from a pragmatic interest in relating multiple disciplines, including philosophy, to social problems. Also in the 1950s, he became interested in gestalt psychology, which inspired his later work on *gestalt ontology* (8), a relational alternative to the dualistic thinking in Western culture.

For Naess, it was difficult to balance life and work as a professor. He retired in 1969, not only to develop a philosophical response to the eco-crisis, but also “to live, not simply to be lived” (Haukeland and Naess 2008, 19). Naess spent the next three decades developing, sharing, and defending his views on ecosophy and deep ecology, while *life’s philosophy* (9) came more into focus the last 10 years of his life.

## **Ecosophy and Deep Ecology**

Naess said that if he is the father of the deep ecology movement, then Rachel Carson (1907-1964) is its mother. Her book, *Silent Spring*, from 1962, lifted the science of ecology into a public and moral realm. If we pollute nature, we pollute ourselves. Some younger colleagues, students, and friends of Naess, like Sigmund Kvaløy (later also Setreng) and Nils Faarlund, became important for Naess. They shared his interest in climbing, ecology, and philosophy. Faarlund started a school for teaching *friluftsliv* in Hemsedal in 1967, as a “joyful way home” in nature, while Kvaløy became Naess’s assistant and travelling companion throughout the 1960s. Naess had led major climbing expeditions to the Himalayas in 1950 and 1964, but in 1971, these three friends went on an “anti-expedition” to Nepal in support of Sherpas protecting their sacred mountain, Tseringma, called “The good long life’s mother”; this inspired Naess’s mythopoetic view on Hallingskarvet in the book, *The Good, Long Life’s Father* (Naess 1995).

A forerunner to Naess’s ecosophical position was written in 1965 under the title “Nature ebbs away,” a chapter in a book to support the protection of Innerdalen, a beautiful river-valley in Norway that was threatened to be dammed. Naess writes, “If you want to protect anything, you must have a holistic view on what is taking place everywhere” (Naess 1965, 8; my translation). This holistic view included an aesthetic and an ethical position. He used beauty as an argument for protection, and he argued that nature has value independent of its use-value for humans. In the summer of 1966, a gathering was held at the base of Stetind mountain in Norway, where the relations between ecology and philosophy was explored further. This seminar was revisited and

recognized with the book, *Nature and Culture: Change Empowered by Joy* (2023), compiled by the Council of Eco-philosophy in Norway. In 1969, Naess and Kvaløy decided on putting together a course at the University of Oslo with the title “Humans and Nature.” Kvaløy led the course. He developed with his students “ecophilosophy” and “ecopolitics” as two complementary strategies for personal and political change. Naess proposed later in the course that they change the word “ecophilosophy” to “ecosophy.” The Norwegian existential philosopher and climber, Peter Wessel Zapffe, used the word “biosophy” already in the 1930s (Zapffe 1961). This may have inspired Naess to use the word “ecosophy.” Naess writes,

Ecosophy is a merging of ecology and philosophy, aimed at two usages: 1) a descriptive use cutting across the fields of ecology and philosophy (of Kvaløy called eco-philosophy) and 2) a normative use, ‘normative ecosophy,’ philosophical synthesis (systems) based on nature as a whole and humans as parts of nature, and further, that claim that fundamentally all life is one (Naess 1971, 5).

The suggestion did not sit well with Kvaløy and the students, since they saw it as the same thing. In addition, Kvaløy did not like taking “philo” out of the word, which he found to inspire individual and collective commitment (Kvaløy Setreng 2002). When the Norwegian government gave a green light to dam the Mardøla river, Kvaløy and his students joined local activists in protest. They argued that the river is alive with a right to exist independent of its use-value for humans. It was, if not the first, one of the first direct-actions in the ecological movement based on Gandhian non-violent principles. Naess participated in the final part of the action, but it was Kvaløy Setreng who led it. Ten years later, in the conflict over the damming of the Alta river, which would harm the Sami way of life, the famous slogan was, *Let the river live!*

Naess held in 1972 a lecture-series in Hong Kong titled “Ecosophy: Lectures on philosophy and the ecological movement.” He had by then articulated his ideas on ecosophy and the deep approach to the ecological movement. He called his personal ecosophy “Ecosophy T” (T for Tvergastein), laid out as a normative system with “Self-realization!” as the ultimate norm. It was not about realizing some ego, but rather the larger self, inspired by the Hindu “atman,” found in *Mohatma* Gandhi. Naess (1974) spoke of two kinds of selves: the smaller self, which he understood as the “I,” and the larger Self (capital S), which he saw as a field of relations. The larger Self included the smaller self. He used an example of a young Sami demonstrator in the Alta action in 1980, a non-violent direct-action 10 years after Mardøla to protect a river and the Indigenous rights of those Sami people who were dependent on the area for reindeer herding, who claimed that “The river is part of my self” (Naess 1987, 37). He would care for the river as he cared for himself, since the river and he are intrinsically related. Later he called the larger, relational self for the “ecological Self” (with capital S) (Naess 1987).

In 1972, Naess presented a paper on a future studies conference in Romania with the title “The

shallow and deep, long-range ecology movement.” A summary was published in *Inquiry* the year after (Naess 1973). This was the first time Naess introduced in text the deep, long-range approach to the ecological movement. He juxtaposes the deep approach with a shallow approach. The shallow approach works to protect nature for the sake of humans. It sees nature from an anthropocentric position as having instrumental value, and that solutions to the eco-crisis must come from technology, economic incentives, and political reforms. The deep approach works to protect nature for its own sake. It sees nature from an eco-centric position as having intrinsic value, independent of the use-value it has for humans, and that the solutions to the eco-crisis need a paradigmatic shift in our thinking and acting. Capra (1996) and Drengson (2011) see this “deep ecology” as the new paradigm we need. It attunes us to the web of life, to Gaia, and to our shared home in life.

Naess’s classic book on the subject, *Økologi, samfunn og livsstil*, came in 1974 (translated by David Rothenberg as *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* in 1989). In it he is clear on how the deep ecology movement needs to balance between individual and collective/institutional change. When he held the keynote lecture on the opening conference the same year for establishing the organization, *Future in our Hands*, he said:

Individual change of attitudes is a necessity, but not a sufficient presupposition for political change in Norway. In the struggle to change lifestyles, there is thus a need to take initiative from the one to the other, from the one individual to organizations, from organizations to individuals and from organizations to organizations (Naess 1978, 131).

To illustrate how deep ecology approach integrates the individual and personal (ecosophy) and the collective and political (deep ecology approach), he presented an illustration he called the “Apron diagram” (see Figure 1). It consists of four levels. Level 1 gets at the personal ecosophies (B, P, C), e.g., inspired by Buddhism, Christianity, or philosophers, such as Spinoza (Naess) and A.N. Whitehead (Kvaløy). From this plurality of ecosophies, we need to come together to agree on the direction of the movement, which is Level 2 and what is referred to as the “Deep Ecology Platform.” It was articulated in 1984 by Naess and George Sessions in eight points, including shared values, visions, statements, and principles.<sup>2</sup> Level 3 addresses the consequences from the

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<sup>2</sup> Naess and I made a shorter version for the book *Life’s Philosophy*: 1) All living beings have intrinsic value, 2) The richness and diversity of life has intrinsic value, 3) Except to satisfy vital needs, humans do not have the right to reduce this diversity and richness, 4) It would be better for humans if there were fewer of us, and also better for other living creatures, 5) The extent and nature of human interference in the various ecosystems is not sustainable, and the lack of sustainability is rising, 6) Decisive improvement requires considerable social, economic, technological, and ideological change, 7) An ideological change entails seeking a better quality of life rather than a raised standard of living, and 8) Those who accept these points are responsible for trying to contribute directly or indirectly to the necessary changes (Naess and Haukeland 2002, 107-108).

platform, both in terms of what helps and hinders change in certain lifestyle areas. Level 4 entails the concrete decisions, choices, and actions in particular situations in those lifestyle areas.

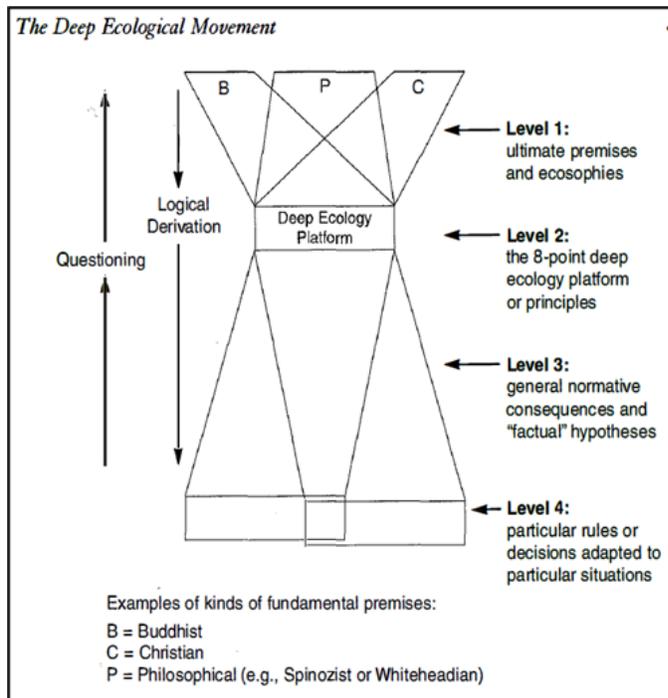


Figure 1: Apron Diagram. George Sessions. 1995. *Deep Ecology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 212.

Naess's ideas on ecosophy and deep ecology spread to the English-speaking world, thanks in part to Alan Drengson and his journal *the Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy*, established in 1983, and to Bill Devall and George Sessions' book, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Matters*, from 1985. Each supporter of the movement has its personal way home in life, but the platform gives the movement direction. The diagram balances unity and plurality in deep ecology. It illustrates a logical derivation from ultimate premises to concrete action, and a process of deep questioning, from concrete actions to ultimate premises. It was used by Naess to illustrate his relational thinking. I use it with my students as a frame for developing an eco(philo)sophy and for organizing deep ecology group work.

### Critiques and Responses

Naess welcomed critiques, but he hoped his critics would share his interest in avoiding polemics and help getting deeper into the issue at hand. I will here address three critiques and how Naess responded to them: the shallow vs. deep distinction, accusation of being anti-human/anti-culture, and an ecofeminist/ecocultural critique.

Naess was criticized for making a distinction between "shallow ecology" and "deep ecology."

Critics felt it stigmatized people as “shallow” and “deep,” even though Naess made it clear that he was not speaking about people, but about depths of argumentation. Yet who would say they are working on a shallow approach? Naess regretted that he used the word, and later he called shallow ecology “reform ecology.” It is also important to note that he thought that both approaches could supplement each other. We now know that without reform ecology, the situation for our home in life today would be much worse. However, it does not mean that we should not also work on radical paradigmatic shifts in how we think and act, individually and collectively.

Deep ecology was also criticized for being anti-human and ignoring class struggle. The social ecologist, Murray Bookchin (1993), was one of the first that raised this critique. It was more directed to the founder of Earth First!, Dave Foreman, than to Naess. Foreman had been interpreted as saying that AIDS was nature’s way of dealing with humans (in Brennan and Witoszek 1999). Naess wrote letters to both, saying to Bookchin that he though deep ecology is also a social ecology, referring to the integration of the personal and the political in Norway (Haukeland and Naess 2008, 207). Interestingly, Bookchin and Foreman collaborated later on the book, *Defending the Earth*, from 1999. A related, but a much harsher critique, was the accusation of fascism, among other by the French philosopher, Luc Ferry, in the early 1990s. This was difficult for Naess, given his radical pluralist position and engagement against fascist and totalitarian regimes and for social justice, peace, and non-violence.

To grasp better the anti-human critique, I will say more on Naess’s view of the human being. He did not exclude the human from the more-than-human world, but he was interested in how they were interrelated. His relational thinking refused to divide humans and nature. Critics focused on two of Naess’s views: nature’s intrinsic value and biological egalitarianism (Haukeland and Naess 2008, 209). Naess’s view was, first, that any living being has value in itself (intrinsic value) independent of the use-value for humans, and second, that all beings have a right to exist and flourish independent of the usefulness to humans. Critics argued that only humans can assign value and that it would give the mosquito an equal value to a human. However, for Naess these were not ethical claims, but rather ontological ones. He wanted to point out that if a being is alive, it is no more or less alive than another living being. All living beings have their place in the home in life independent of their use-value for humans. Naess wanted to move beyond a narrow anthropocentrism that saw all beings revolve around human use. It is difficult, since no being exists in isolation, but his point was to acknowledge that each being and the richness and diversity of beings have their unique home in life. That a tree has intrinsic value does not mean it cannot also have use-value, like a beam in the house. Instead, Naess’s position is about the attitude towards the tree, which changes if I see the tree as a unique self or as cubic-metres of lumber. Besides being critical to what I above referred to as “narrow anthropocentrism,” he supported what I would call an “open anthropocentrism,” which places humans in the center of their

lifeworld of experience and responsibility. It is from this view he once proclaimed, “We are all anthropocentrist!” (in Brennan and Witoszek 1999, 328). He did also not oppose anthropomorphism, i.e., seeing human forms in nature, such as the arms of the trees, the mouth of the river, the face of the mountain. He found that to be a way to connect and make metaphorical sense of our encounters with others, but he also advocated our ability to identify with others, which gives us a feeling for how they see the world. We know that the world does not exist for my purposes. He advocated instead the “eco-centric” position, which is more of a home in life-centered position.

Another version of the anti-human critique concerned developing countries, such as critiques raised by Ramachandra Guha (in Brennan and Witoszek 1999). He argues that deep ecology supports rich countries buying up land in developing countries to preserve nature, which excludes the poor people living there. The Deep Ecology Foundation, led by Doug Tompkins, did buy up land in South America, but not to exclude local people or Indigenous people, but to prevent multinational corporations from destroying nature. The Indian scientist and supporter of the deep ecology approach, Vandana Shiva, participated in the Chipko movement in India to prevent multinational corporations to deforest their areas. Guha pointed also to how easy it is to blame developing countries in terms of overpopulation, since it is the people in the rich countries that live on a standard of living that threatens nature. Naess agrees in his response to Guha that the main responsibility for necessary changes is among the rich (in Brennan and Witoszek 1999). At the same time, we should not underestimate, he says, how overpopulation effects the quality of life of the poor.

The last critique I will touch on comes from an ecofeminist/ecocultural position from those such as Carolyn Merchant (1980), Patsy Hallen (1987), Karen Warren (1997), Val Plumwood (1993), Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (2014), who all point out that the problem of anthropocentrism is really a problem of “androcentrism” (man-centeredness). This problem was not addressed explicitly enough, they said, in deep ecology’s critique of anthropocentrism. Merchant (1980) shows how men in power and science produce the culture of separation, separating humans and nature and imposing a gendered position that oppresses both nature and women. Plumwood (1993) speaks of the underlying “hyper-separation” in Western modern culture. It separates not only humans from nature, but men from women, rationality and emotion, and places the power of control in the hands of men with narrow interests. Naess admitted in his response to ecofeminists Ariel Salleh and Karen Warren that he had not addressed the ecofeminist positions fully in his work on deep ecology, but that he sees them as close allies (in Brennan and Witoszek 1999). My advisor in Oregon, C.A. Bowers, critiqued Naess for not taking enough into account how modern cultural tenets are reproduced in language and metaphorical way of thinking, such as individualism, scientism, progressivism, rationalism, dualism, mechanism. Since it is mostly men who are the drivers of these tenets, according to Bowers (2012), it excludes other ways of

knowing from marginalized groups, such as women, children, and Indigenous people. I brought Naess and Bowers together in a hope that they would find some common ground in a deep ecocultural approach, as I did, but it did not come to fruition (Haukeland 2021).

### **Toward an Ecophilosophy and a Death Ecology for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century**

The philosopher Bruno Latour (2017) made an interesting image in his Gifford lectures on “Facing Gaia.” He drew a straight line, from the past to the future, with the present moment at the middle of the line. He said, we cannot continue forward as we have been, nor can we return to some archaic past. Instead, he suggested, we need to take a sidestep off the trajectory traditional-modern, to re-ground ourselves to Earth as Gaia, and in so doing, we can draw on both traditional wisdom and modern insights. We need to act urgently, but concrete actions need to be guided by care and wisdom. Naess’s long-range perspective is close to the phenomenon the Iroquois call the “seventh generation”; that we need to keep in mind the seventh generation in the past and in the future in what we do in the present (in Haukeland and Naess, 2008). In what follows, I will look at some changes that can contribute to the sidestep in an eco-friendly direction for the 22<sup>nd</sup> century.

#### *Ways of Becoming Home*

Naess spoke much of his sense of home at Tvergastein, the place of his hut in Hallingskarvet mountain, where he felt he belonged (Naess 1995; Drengson 2008, 45-64). I want to relate this sensation and imagination of belonging to two ways of becoming home: an awakening to the interconnections between natures, cultures, communities and selves in my home in life and an actualizing of what matters in both how I see and what I do in that home. Becoming home is always in the making. It is a co-creation with others I share my home in life with. The anthropologist, Tim Ingold (2011), speaks of people and places as knots in a “meshwork,” formed and re-formed by lines with open ends, which is how I also conceptualize my home in life. I see it as a living landscape that emerges in-between myself and others I encounter in a place-in-time. I use the phrase “place-in-time” to include the spatial and temporal aspects of the landscape. It extends from the local to the cosmological, from the ancient past to the distant future. This landscape is the changing “face of place.” It is what or who I meet, greet, and commit to. It integrates an outer and inner, physical and mental landscape, that emerge from what I do in a co-creative process of landscaping with others, and always in flux.

Let me give an example of that place-in-time I belong to, at the foothill of Lifjell mountains in Telemark, Norway. Our house is located near a creek at the edge of a forest with mountains rising above. My home, however, extends beyond my house. What I call “home office,” for example, is

a beautiful sit spot along the creek in the forest behind the house, and the best guest room is in between some old Norwegian pine trees with a great view, perfect for hammocks! The creek connects the water in me to the water planet, and the air to the atmosphere, the ground to the land that sustain me, and the mountains to a sense of openness and freedom. It stretches far back to the formation of Earth's bedrock and enfolding life, and to the vision of what is possible. It is most of all a neighborhood of all beings, with a myriad of plants, animals, birds, humans, insects, rocks, and minerals. We may, however, become home-blind to the values and qualities in my home, just as it is all too easy to see the home simply in a human perspective. We share our home in life with other beings that the qualities of the place depends on; it is a home of homes. On my daily walks with Arja and Mira, our two Alaska huskies, I go in and out of the home of other-than-human neighbors. Sometimes I feel welcome, other times I feel like an intruder. Awakening to the home of homes, I walk more slowly, more attentive to the home of others, "knocking" before entering. I bring a gift of gratitude to those neighbors. It is a storied land, and my walks are like storied wanderings in a more-than-human neighborhood of enfolding stories, which connects the past, present and future. Becoming home is landscaping together!

#### *From Ecosophy to Ecophilosophy*

I share Kvaløy Setreng's (2002) reluctance to take out *philo* from the word "ecophilosophy." The word "philo" denotes a "lover of, friend of," which can be related to our search for insight and wisdom, as *philosophy*, or to our search for home in life, as *ecophilia*. It is, in other words, the love, friendship and care that binds together eco and sophy. I discussed this with Kvaløy Setreng in the early 1990s, who held this position already back in 1970, and I find that in the work ahead, we need to put *philo* back into ecosophy.

An ecophilosophy, as I see it, can be described as a "home in life's philosophy." Naess said, "the future is so open and undefined that there is simply no question of having a ready-made philosophy...that fact that it is constantly evolving excludes any finished construction (Naess and Haukeland 2002, 115). An ecophilosophy is that personal total view, but it is more clearly driven by love, friendship and care toward both life insight and wisdom as well as to home in life. There are in ecophilosophy many relevant topics to those Naess and I discussed in *Life's Philosophy* (2002). I will here dwell on two: the ecological Self and the relationship between reasons and feelings.

The ecological Self can be written, in short, as "ecoSelf," since it is mostly seeing our home in life as integral to our ecoSelf. We may recall this distinction above between the smaller and larger Self, and how the larger Self extends to encompass those interconnections between nature, culture, and community. I refer to the smaller self as the "unique self" and the larger Self as the

relational Self, and I speak of two kinds of relations: intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic relations are relations we *have*, while intrinsic relations are relations we *are*. Naess said we expand our larger Self through that in which we identify with, which I see as an intrinsic relation that becomes part of our ecoSelf-identity. An intrinsic relation can be both positive, as friendship and care, and negative, as hate and apathy. As I see it, negative relations undermine the unique self, while positive relations help make it flourish. We relate to other beings as we do to our home in life. The challenge, as I see it, is to transform negative relations to positive ones, as we do when we humans move from being a destructive force that inhibits life to a creative vital force that help the richness and diversity of life to flourish.

To awaken the creative vital force, we need to understand better the relationship between reasons and feelings. According to Naess, feelings move us while reasons guide us. In *Life's Philosophy* (2002), I presented the metaphor of a sailboat, where feelings are the sail and reasons the rudder. Without feelings there is no movement, but it is the reasons that provide direction. Inspired by Spinoza, Naess pointed at two kinds of reasons: reason by logic and reason by intuition (*ratio*). The distinction is, more popularly speaking, between the head and the heart. Blaise Pascal, a contemporary of Spinoza, said the position succinctly in *Pensées* from 1669, "The heart has its reasons that the reason knows nothing of" (1669/1958, 79). According to Naess interpreting Spinoza, the reason of the heart (*ratio*) says something is reasonable if it coincides with our deeper values (in Naess and Haukeland 2002). Turning a green area in the city into a parking lot may be reasonable by logic, if there are more cars, and it is technically feasible, financed and politically supported, but unreasonable if we intuit it as going against what I deeply value, such as green spaces, fresh air, less congestion, and a greening of the cities. Similar to the two kinds of relations, Naess highlights in Spinoza two kinds of feelings, active and passive. Active feelings are friendship, love, joy, and care, which activate the whole of my ecoSelf, while passive feelings, like hate, hopelessness, discourage, pacifies me. There is something in me, equivalent to *ratio*, that helps me move from passive to active feelings. It is like an inner compass, voice or light that shows me the direction that coincides with what I deeply value. Naess and I used the term "activeness" to describe how we are active in the whole of our ecoSelf, physically, mentally and spiritually.

The focus on the positive relations and feelings of love, friendship and care towards my home in life, *ecophilia*, is important in the work ahead. More recently, *ecophilia* has been discussed Ruyu Hung (2017), who says "ecophilia refers to the love of nature" (45). For her, "ecophilia can be understood as the human affective bond with the surroundings and all living and non-living beings within" (45). I find her perspective promising, but as I see it, it is not only about nature nor our "surroundings," which can allude to dualist thinking. Hung refers to the work of David Abram, which I find reassuring, since that expands the humanist position to include the more-than-human. Hung proposes an ecopedagogy "to establish human affinity with the place and all lifelike

processes” (51).<sup>3</sup> Hung also draws on E.O. Wilson’s (1984) *biophilia* and Yi-Fu Tuan’s (1990) *topophilia*. I find Tuan’s work inspiring, even though I see a need for humanistic geography to expand into the more-than-human world. Bowers (2002) critiques Wilson’s scientism for excluding other ways of knowing, even looking down on Indigenous knowledge as primitive and backwards. Yet, I adhere to Naess’s position that the front of the movement needs to be broad. At the same time, Bowers does have an important point. We should not underestimate the impact language has on the way we relate to the world. We need a shift from a culture of separation to a culture of relation, which we find among certain writers, such as Gregory Bateson, and among Indigenous cultures.

All his life Bowers was interested in developing an education more responsive to the eco-crisis, and towards the end of his life, he became a strong advocate of *ecojustice* education. It was not enough with a pedagogy of hope and care, Bowers (2005) advocates for an ecojustice pedagogy that addresses eco-racism, the exploitation and colonization of the South, revitalization of the commons, critique of globalization and industrial culture, and the enhancement of “earth democracy.” Indigenous ways of knowing help us move forward to an ecojustice education that is responsive to the land.

In the context of morality, Naess made a distinction, inspired by Kant, between “moral” and “beautiful acts” (Drengson 2008, 133-139). Moral acts are those we do despite of our natural inclinations, while beautiful acts we do out of natural inclinations. Kant favored moral acts, saying we cannot trust beautiful acts, while Naess was more interested in beautiful acts, which he found to be more lasting. Yet, for the times ahead, there is a need to combine them. The one does not exclude the other. We need both.

However, for a minority or disempowered group, human or other-than-human, to have rights is one thing, getting their rights is another. For example, the Supreme Court in Norway ruled in 2021 that wind-turbines built on Fosen, an area in mid-Norway where Sami people herd reindeer, violated the Sami rights to practice their culture. After two years, the turbines are still there. The government tried to find a solution not to tear them down. The Sami struggle is not about having rights, but about getting rights. A false dichotomy is also constructed in the public between Indigenous rights and the green shift. The Swedish activist, Greta Thunberg, was present on the Sami demonstrations in Oslo, who said one cannot have a green shift that violates Indigenous rights (NRK 2023). Another issue is animal rights, which we will clearly be more in focus in the decades ahead, as we awaken to how we see our fellow creatures and how we treat them. We will see a shift from a mechanistic culture, which see other beings as instruments for our

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<sup>3</sup> In Norway, the term “*økopedagogikk*” (*ecopedagogy*) was coined in book with that title from 1975 by two educators, Bjørndalen and Lieberg. Inspired by Naess, they set out to combine ecosophy and pedagogy.

purposes, to an animistic culture that sees all beings as unique and relational ecoSelves.

An ecophilosophy for the 22<sup>nd</sup> century still needs to bridge the gap between what we deeply value and how we live our lives. In so doing, it is important to combine ecophilia and ecojustice, care and rights. The personal and systemic changes need to be addressed, but underlying the struggle for change is committed people. The system will not change itself, at least not yet. It still requires people who are committed to change and who are willing to go that extra mile for the sake of others. Such people are in Norwegian called “ildsjeler,” literally “fire-souls,” who burn for what they believe in. They are not going “out of their way,” it *is* their way. They demonstrate an unconditional commitment for the care of others that actualizes in practice what they deeply value. It bridges in an ecosophy thought and action. To know where fire-souls come from, we can study what brings about and maintains the fire using five images from making a campfire: spark, glow, flame, fire, and tending. First, there is no fire without a spark. This relates to their life experiences. For example, my deep commitment to protect old-growth forest is because of my experiences as a child in Norway playing in and with old, enchanted trees that I developed a personal relationship to. Second, the spark needs to land on some material, such as char cloth, to make a glow. It can be seen as the awareness of what matters, i.e., both in terms of what is valued and envisioned. Third, if I put the glow in a tinder bundle and blow carefully at it, it can create a flame. This is when I start to burn for something that has consequences for my life. Fourth, as the tinder bundle is put together with other wooden material, it can turn into a campfire in the soul which gives light and warmth to others. The fifth aspect is to maintain the fire, which can be done by taking time to revisit such experiences that sparked the fire. If not, there is a real challenge of getting burned out of the commitment, and the fire may die out. For Naess, it was joy from continued experiences that maintained his fire.

### *From Deep Ecology to Depth Ecology*

Deep ecology, according to Naess, is “to go right down to assumptions that we support wholeheartedly” (Næss and Haukeland 2002, 7), but perhaps what people find more inspiring than normative systems and the principles of the deep ecology platform, is the process of delving deep into the depths of becoming home in life. David Abram, who initiated the Alliance of Wild Ethics, writes,

Depth ecology [...] insists on the primacy of our bodily embedment in the encompassing ecology, on our thorough entanglement within the earthly web of life. It suggests that we are utterly immersed in, and dependent upon the world. [...] Depth ecology opens a new (and perhaps also very old) sense of the sacred (Abram 2011, para. 8, 10).

These depths of immersion, entanglement, reciprocity, interdependencies, and the sacred

inspire people. They are closely related to the five aspects of the “firesoul” above, and to the different levels of the Apron diagram (see Figure 1) in a social movement of change. Preparing for a workshop at Schumacher college in 1994, I tried to use a different metaphor than that of an apron, which ended up as the “tree of life” (see Figure 2). As I see it, the tree of life depicting the depth ecology movement consists of five depths. First, *depth of experience* (Roots, Level 1), which I see as the source of inspiration to our personal eco(philosophies). Second, *depth of awareness* (Trunk, Level 2), which awakens shared values and visions we can articulate in a depth ecology platform. Third, *depth of consequence* (Branches, Level 3), which I relate to the lifestyle options in various areas we are living and working. Fourth, *depth of commitment* (Fruits, Level 4), which entails all those concrete actions and choices we make in the various areas we live and work, to realize what we deeply value and envision. Fifth, *depth of joy* (Sap), which is what gives nourishment from the ground and air to the tree. Naess said that there may be times when the work is full of setbacks, but “when joy is involved, you want to do more of the same work” (Naess and Haukeland 2002, 170).

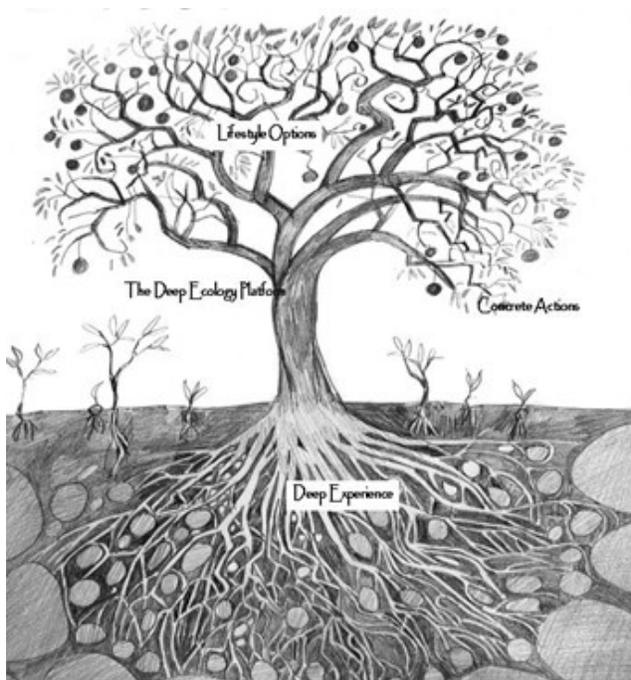


Figure 2: The Tree of Life. Stephan Harding. 2006. *Animate Earth: Science, Intuition and Gaia*, 240.

A depth ecology movement would put more emphasis on how these depths in the tree of life play out. They illustrate the process of becoming home in something we do, not only by ourselves but together with others. There is that aspect of togetherness in becoming home that involves both shared awakenings, or awareness, and shared practices of actualization. In the depth ecology platform, the focus is on what it entails to be becoming home in life. It is rooted in how we experience life, what matters to us, how we grapple with the consequences of what matters,

and what we do together to make to sustain life and make it flourish.

### *Finding Common Ground in the Land*

If we follow Latour's (2017) suggestion to take a sidestep from the traditional-modern trajectory, what is the common ground for an eco-friendly future? Aldo Leopold (1949) says, "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect" (viii). Leopold's (1949) famous land ethics says, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (224-225). The land is, however, not only a biotic community, but an eco-community in its broadest sense. It is close to that land-based orientation we find in Kirkpatrick Sale classic book, *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision*, from 1985. A bioregion, or an eco-region, has open boundaries from the interplay between natures, cultures, communities, and selves that emerge from the common ground in the land. An eco-friendly future, as I see it, needs to *take* place-in time, drawing on past experiences and future visions for what is necessary and possible in the present.

To find common ground in the land, I see a need to go balance our notions (maps) of the land and our direct experiences in the land (as territory). The anthropologist Gregory Bateson is quoted in a film by his daughter, Nora Bateson, saying, "The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think" (in Bateson, 2010). Maps are not the territory. If we think sharing the land means to cut it up into shares, we have a problem in the way we think. We then make what A. N. Whitehead (1925, 58) called the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness", i.e., taking something abstract for something concrete. Mental walls are just as rigid as physical walls, as we see in many current conflicts between "us" and "them." If we cannot find some common ground on the level of maps, we may need to reassess our maps from within the territory. If we only draw maps on maps, initial mistakes are reproduced without knowing it.

To bring maps and territory closer together, we need to train ourselves to both learn from and with the the land and to learn from different maps of the land. The Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hahn (1926-2022), who I spent joyful time with at Green Gluch Buddhist Centre during the summer of 1987, helps me be mindful of the powers of the land. He uses breathing as a way of opening oneself to the present moment and to what he calls "interbeing." All beings are interbeings, or "interbecoming," according to Nhat Hahn, since to be immersed in each other is both something we are and a process of becoming. In the book, *At Home in the World* (2016), he says he first missed his home in Vietnam after he was exiled because of demonstrating against the war in the 1960s, but his practice of breathing helped him also develop a sense of home in

himself, anywhere and anytime. It is a way of becoming home in oneself as an interbeing. Yet, he too found a sense of home in a place-in-time called Plum Village in France, a home of homes for practicing mindful living, peace, compassion, and interbeing. We need to be learning with the powers of the land, and with those cultures who have done so for millennia and certain helpful modern maps of science.

When I grew up in the small town, Kongsberg, Norway, I thought the way to live close to nature was to adopt other Indigenous ways, such as the Sami and Native American. I felt at home in those ways in which all things in nature speak, and alien in a modern society that saw the forest only as lumber. My view of the Indigenous ways expanded in 1989 when I met the Hopi prophet Thomas Banyacya (1909-1999) on a rally to protect the Big Mountain from being mined. I got to spend some time alone with him. He told me, "The white man has stolen our land, and many seek now to steal our stories." We need, he says, to find common ground without appropriating each other's ways. He shared the Hopi prophecy that the white man and red man were once brothers that lived together in respect to the land, before they went separate ways. The white man distanced himself from his past and from the land and his mother, Earth; which follows the androcentric critique. We need to come together and respect each other and our mother. If not, it may be both our ruin. He advised me to return to Norway, to reconnect to my ancestors and own sense of indigeneity, and to enter a dialogue with other Indigenous people, like the Sami. It was at the time I also encountered Naess's writing.

Returning to Norway, I did not have to go far back, since my grandfather told me he knew the nature spirits as a young adult. Only two generations back, the animistic outlook was still there in Norway, especially in the rural peripheries. However, modernization had almost eradicated it, and my grandfather told me he did not speak of it as it was considered backward, superstitious, and outdated. Yet, it was also a way to collaborate with the powers in nature, to survive. In Norway, there are three groups that first settled the land 12-13 000 years ago, which are the lineage of the Norse, who came from the south and southwest, the Sami, who came from the northeast and the Kven, who came from the southeast. They lived as neighbors, in peace and conflict, throughout the millennia, and learned much from each other. Even though they have different cultural maps, there are also many similarities in both what they thought and how they lived, including mythology, handcraft skills, hunting and fishing skills, shamanic practices, and music. Through the domination of the church, kingdom, and later the State, the Sami and Kven people were the minority that were persecuted, killed, colonized, and forcefully "Norwegianized." The ruling elite did also attack the traditional animistic ways of Norse culture, of which remnants are still found in rural folk culture. Many people that were not Sami were also burned at the stake accused of so-called witchcraft, and modernization, urbanization, and globalization has made traditional practices of all three groups ways endangered. There is a need to bring into the light the atrocities that has been put on these traditional cultures, and especially

those of the Sami and Kven. To find common ground, we need to learn from the different maps, and to learn from the powers of the land we share. In addition, there is also much to learn from what modernity has brought forth of useful maps, both in terms of science, health, rights, and technology, but seen in the context of what contributes to the integrity, stability, and beauty of the land community.

Finally, I will mention one last aspect in finding common ground in the land, an eco-animism that re-grounds our sense of the sacred. An animistic view brings the soul back to all beings and thereby enlivens the land. What I call “eco-animism” draws on cultural, scientific, and philosophical animism (Haukeland 2023a). Cultural animism relates to Indigenous cultures, while scientific animism opens new scientific ways of understanding life. The Gaia-scientist Stephan Harding (2006), for example, urges us in *Animate Earth* “to find ways of speaking and acting that allow us to consciously re-animate the Earth so that we bring her back to life as a sensitive and sentient Being” (39). Similarly, the Australian ecofeminist, Val Plumwood (2014), proposed a “philosophical animism” that, according to Bird Rose (2013), “opens the door to a world in which we can begin to negotiate life membership of an ecological community of kindred beings” (93). We are becoming home together in a neighborhood of all beings. Naess (1989) speaks of a mixed community in which all beings interact. Suzanne Simard (2021) speaks of forests as a family where the mother tree cares not only for her offsprings, but also for the children of other tree mothers, and Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) combines in a beautiful way Indigenous wisdom and modern science in reanimating our relationships to plants, which becomes a community of all beings. I see this work as ways of grounding a sense of the sacred in the land, something that has for Indigenous people always meant a sense of kinship, reverence, awe, care, and respect for the powers that uphold and make life flourish in the land. I see a need for an eco-spiritual approach without dogma. Still, many people in the existing religious communities are close allies in finding common ground. I have found a path in the Quaker tradition, which advocate a non-dogmatic “pantheistic” view of God as a creative vital force in all living beings. It combines, as I see it, the material and spiritual aspects of the land as “heavenearth” (Haukeland 2010), close to what Abram (2010) calls “Eairth,” i.e., the “I” is immersed in the “air” immersed in the “Earth.” It grounds our sense of the sacred in the land as creative practices of humility, care and gratitude.

## Conclusions

In the last couple of decades, there has been a renewed interest in the work of Naess on ecosophy and deep ecology. Some reasons for this are found in the worsening of the eco-crisis, the anti-anthropocentric position in what is called “the posthumanist turn” (Braidotti 2013), and an explosion of interest in and wonderful studies of the more-than-human world. In these areas, people re-discover the writings of Naess. He was, towards the end of his life, concerned about

the need to collaborate across the three great movements: the eco-movement, peace movement, and social justice movement (in Drengson 2008, 311-312), something that is so urgent. To develop Naess's response to the eco-crisis further, as an ecophilosophy and a depth ecology of becoming home in life and finding common ground in the land, there is a need to deepen our care and respect for human life and to widen our care and respect for other-than-human life. They are mutually dependent. There is, furthermore, a need to draw on both traditional and modern ways for a sidestep in an eco-friendly direction. Drengson provides a way of becoming home in the land in his inspiring book, *Wild Way Home: Spiritual Life in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millenium*, from 2010, which outlines both an ecosophy (Blue Mountain Ecosophy) and a platform of values, visions and land-based practices attuned to both the wild powers of the land and past and new cultural expressions that deepen a sense of becoming home. Drengson contributes to an ecophilosophy of the more-than-human and a depth ecology that sustains the integrity, stability and beauty of the land as our shared home of homes. In Drengson's words, "Our land is our home place and is a gift to us from many beings. [...] A deep place is actualized when all who dwell therein realize themselves and are flourishing together in co-evolving communities of natural diversity. May this diversity and all beings flourish!" (2010, 164, 186).

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