

Arne Naess' Ecosophy T: Its Norms, Hypotheses and Systematization

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Abstract

Ecosophy as a philosophical construct has its origins in Naess' philosophy. As a position, it foregrounds humanity's capacity to harmoniously live with the environment and see the self within the landscape of a continuously growing and evolving milieu. Armed with such appraisal of human nature, Naess posits a challenge to humanity to find his/her place within nature, and be introspective about what it means to be human within such complex and diverse ecological space. In *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (1989), responding to such challenge means finding the balance between norms and hypotheses, or between evaluative positions and scientific explanations on humanity's relation with nature. Expressed in his Ecosophy T, Naess reveals the mindset and values needed to systematize an ecosophy that outlines the intricate and necessary relation between ethics and science of ecology. More importantly, what Naess' position has accomplished is that it sets the tone and gives a sense of direction as to where humanity's sense of respect should be located – in-between the environment and himself/herself, and the community of species that purposefully participates in the unfolding of life as a whole.

Keywords: Ecosophy T, norms, hypotheses, systematization, Naess

Introduction

Ecosophy T is Arne Naess' personal ecosophy. The letter T represents his mountain hut Tvergastein in Norway, which literally

means 'across the stones'.¹ It also indicates the personal character of his ecosophy while suggesting that there are other possible ecosophies like ecosophy A, B, C, etc. Though other personal ecosophies might not be as well articulated and systematized as Ecosophy T, Naess says that what is most important in a personal ecosophy is its potential to make an individual realise that he/she must begin to care for the well-being of the ecosphere.² Naess' consistent emphasis on the formulation of a personal ecosophy can be interpreted as suggestive of two things: (a) Naess trusts each human being as capable of articulating a personal point of view, and (b) Naess hopes that humanity may begin to develop or further cultivate his/her capacity for reflective thinking contemplating on what is most essential in life, especially in view of an ecosophical lifestyle.

Armed with hope, Naess systemized his Ecosophy T to serve as an inspiration and a challenge for others to do the same. The process of systematization can be gleaned in the key-points in his ecosophy, namely, (1) the notion of Self-realisation and identification; and (2) the derivation of norms and hypotheses in an ecosophy. These points, as shall be later explained, ground the critical character of Ecosophy T which may serve as resource in re-visiting and re-calibrating personal positions, especially in view of present environmental problems. Demanding a philosophical bent in cultivating personal ecosophies is an invite which Naess underscores in his work, *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle* (1989). This is a celebrated work, which functions as the backbone of the deep ecology movement³ in Norway based on Naess' philosophy, and as the primary delimitation of this paper's exposition.

Following the two key aspects in Naess Ecosophy T, this paper, hence, seeks to discuss the meaning and scope of each point, and further reflect on how such positions ground the deep ecology movement of Naess. These points as shall be elucidated reveal the basic positions of Naess' ecosophy on the value of each entity in nature, and how such value is at par with the value that human beings confer to himself/herself as one of the species in the environment. This is also the fundamental claim of the deep ecology movement. Is

¹ Arne Dekke Eide Naess. *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. David Rothenberg, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 4.

² *Ibid.*, 176.

³ Michael P. Nelson. "Deep Ecology," *Encyclopaedia and Environment Ethics* (2008): 164, <http://www.uky.edu/OtherOrgs/AppalFor/Readings/240%20-%20Reading%20-%20Deep%20Ecology.pdf>.

this a workable philosophical position? This is the query that shall condition the critical component and concluding part of this work.

A. Self-Realisation through Identification

The term self for Naess can be interpreted in three ways: as ego, self, and Self.⁴

The 'ego' refers to the narrow selfish self. This type of self is primarily concerned with satisfying the bodily or biological needs of an individual. In this case, priority is afforded to the fulfilment of a desire which is intertwined to what the body demands or considers important. Its satisfaction, however, may not necessarily imply the well-being of other selves or entities.

In a more inclusive way than the ego, the 'self' is not limited to the satisfaction of biological needs. The 'self' equally cares for the welfare of the immediate family and closest friends. This means that the immediate or nearby surroundings are cared for and nourished as they are now reckoned significant to an individual's well-being. Between the self and ego, it is easy to recognize how the notion of self blurs the boundaries of the ego's notion of fulfilment, and how the ego is disposed to re-think of itself once thrown into a location where it needs to acknowledge or at least deal with other entities aside from its own self-gratifying cravings.

More encompassing than the self, however, is the 'Self'. Naess holds that this kind of self refers to all entities or all life forms in the milieu. This means that, unlike the ego, it is not limited to the interest of an entity, and unlike the self it is not confined to the immediate environment upon which the self subsists. What the Self entails is that it seeks to uphold, hence identify with the well-being of the whole of the environment.⁵ As Naess holds, "The identity of the individual, 'that I am something', is developed through interaction with a broad manifold, organic and inorganic. There is no completely isolatable I, no isolatable social unit."⁶

But why is Naess making a trouble of the three-tiered distinction of the self? In *ECL* (1989), a quick response to such question is that the intricate connection of an individual with nature is evident, which Naess wants each person to be mindful of, as he asserts that no identity exists completely free from the influence of the environment.⁷

⁴ Naess, *ECL*, 174.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁶ *Ibid.* 164.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Because of such assumption, Naess hence desires that individuals – in relation to notions of fulfilment and self-identification – will transition from the sensibilities of the ego, to the self and the Self. It is these transitions which help define what the Ecosophy T also underscores.

Thus, the importance of the environment in the formation of an individual's identity is a point which Naess stresses in an ecosophical lifestyle. Conscious of the integrated process by which nature develops,⁸ Naess acknowledges that all life forms participate in the continuous development of life in the ecosphere. It is this same spectrum of process where a person figures and importantly participates. Heeding Naess' point, he reiterates that "Human beings who wish to attain a maximum perspective in the comprehension of their cosmic condition can scarcely refrain from a proud feeling of genuine participation in something immensely greater than their individual and social career."⁹ If this processual context remains oblivious to individuals, Naess thinks that human beings are missing a crucial feature of human existence. How do we participate in the way nature unfolds, creates and recreates itself? This is another question which Naess hopes persons can reflect upon. In asserting such query, what Naess also underscores is that human beings play a role in fulfilling or carrying out nature's capacity to grow and develop.¹⁰ This means that humanity is simply not an observer or a passive entity with regard to nature's unfolding. Rather, each person has a contribution or role to play in the unfolding or emergence of such design. Hence, Naess points out that, if persons could only become aware of and understand such processes, he/she can experience a sense of delight in realising that he/she participates in the unfolding of life in the ecosphere.¹¹ It is this human potential to delight in such processes which ecosophy hopes to cultivate among human beings.

Another important point in Self-unfolding or Self-realisation is Naess' claim that all life forms have the right to live.¹² This is the ontological claim of Naess' position. This means that such right stands for the equal claim of all organisms to fulfil specific capacities and contribute to the design of the environment. The right to live and unfold inherent potentials of each life form is the core meaning of Naess' concept of equal rights in nature.¹³ This is the same position

⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹² *Ibid.*, 166.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 167.

which other environmentalists such as Taylor (1986) and Rolston (1986) stress, affirming the intrinsic value in nature.¹⁴ Owing to nature its own worth and value, the ecosophical point of view, however, does not stand for value's quantification. Equality, on such note for Naess, refers to an egalitarian attitude which means that each life form is to be considered vital to the fulfilment of potentials for development of other life forms in nature. In Ecosophy T, this egalitarian attitude hopes to inspire or motivate individuals to be critical of activities that might hinder the growth and development of other life forms. It is this egalitarian attitude towards nature which also grounds Naess' idea that no single entity is more important or more valuable in the environment. He adds that if it is accepted that a particular species has a higher value over other species, the more important entities will consequently have the privilege to injure and kill the less important entities. For Naess, a hierarchy of value between life forms does not exist in nature.¹⁵

Based on the principle of equal rights, does this mean that nobody is allowed to kill any life form because all life forms have the equal right to live? This is an important question which often delineates environmentalists in their appraisal of nature as having instrumental value such as resource value and cultural value or non-instrumental value such as intrinsic value or value as ends in themselves (Norton, 1995).¹⁶ Given this basic dual approach to value, Naess holds that killing or death is part of the natural process in the environment. Death, when reckoned as the converse of life in nature, is part of the environment's facticity. With such reality, however, he stresses that a life form can only be killed if it is justifiable to kill.¹⁷ Since this point is difficult to rigidly qualify, Naess instead provides an example to hopefully present some important conditions for justifiable killing in his account of the *'Hunter and Bear Dialogue'*: "The hunter has a long discussion with the spirit of the bear, and explains apologetically that the larder is bare and that he must now kill the bear to nourish his family. In return, the hunter reminds the bear's spirit that both he and his family will die one day, and turn to dust, and so to vegetation, sustenance for the descendants of the bear."¹⁸

¹⁴ R. Sandler, "Intrinsic Value, Ecology, and Conservation," *Nature Education Knowledge* 3, no. 10 (2012): 4, <https://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/intrinsic-value-ecology-and-conservation-25815400>.

¹⁵ Naess, *ECL*, 176.

¹⁶ Sandler, "Intrinsic Value, Ecology, and Conservation," 4.

¹⁷ Naess, *ECL*, 168.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

Based on the example, it can be observed that killing happens in the following conditions: (1) An implicit regret in killing which the hunter makes manifest in killing the bear; (2) One does not kill another entity because he/she sees himself as more important than other life forms; and (3) there is a valid reason for killing a life form, since the hunter kills for the survival of his family.¹⁹ In the *Dialogue*, the hunter acknowledges that he is just a participant in the cycle of life knowing that one day, he will also die uttering that he will 'turn to dust and so to vegetation, sustenance for the descendants of the bear.' This is where the perspective of the Self comes in as the hunter acknowledges the broader location of his identity, and his transitory location in such picture. Because of such deep sense of awareness of the interconnectedness that subsists in nature, the hunter does not dwell on his significance over other life forms. In contrast, what the hunter conveys is that he and his family exist as part and parcel of the complex network in the environment. The hunter contributes to death which is essential in nature, but he also sees himself as contributory to nature's growth. This is the cyclical perspective that allows the hunter to be mindful of his place and relations to the bear in the dialogue. As a pedagogical tool, the story also conveys how the egalitarian disposition remains confident of the capacity of human beings to be capable of such complex forms of understanding, which is a reminder of a key assumption in the egalitarian attitude: a person's oneness or identification with the environment.

To elaborate the foregoing point, Naess provides another example to explain the notion of identification in a story given to children: 'In the glass veranda, insects are trapped flying against the wall. Spraying makes them dramatically fall to the floor. A grown-up appears, picks up an insect and looks at it with care, and utters: perhaps those animals might, like you, prefer to live rather than die?' The point is immediately grasped: the children for a moment see and experience spontaneously and immediately the insects not as something different but in an important sense like themselves.²⁰ With this illustration, the children for a moment see and experience the suffering of the insects as their own. From an ecosophical point of view, the children had a momentary oneness or identification with a life form in nature. In Ecosophy T, it is this experience of identification with nature that should be cultivated and expanded to a point that the identification becomes an identification with all life forms.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 172.

B. The Systematisation and Hypotheses of Ecosophy T

In order to systematize the hypothesis or assumptions of Naess' ecosophy, he outlined its key formulations of basic norms that help spell out the detailed features of an elaborate ecosophy which consists of four levels of norms and hypothesis:

(a) *Formulation of the Most Basic Norms and Hypothesis.* Naess compares his ecosophy to a pyramid.²¹ The top portion corresponds to the general and abstract starting point of Ecosophy T, and the wide horizontal base of the pyramid refers to the singular and concrete actions used in particular situations. On the one hand, the breadth of the horizontal base of the pyramid suggests that from the abstract and general starting point of Ecosophy T, many particular norms and hypotheses are derived which give rise to various decisions in different concrete situations.²² The narrow or top part of the pyramid, on the other hand, stands for the definitive position, end or ideal which functions as the originary claim for all the other derivative norms and hypothesis. Here is a presentation of the top most part of Naess' ecosophy.

N1: Self-realisation!

H1: The higher the Self-realisation attained by anyone, the broader and deeper the identification with others.

H2: The higher the level of Self-realisation attained by anyone, the more its further increase depends upon the Self-realisation of others.

H3: Complete Self-realisation of anyone depends on that of all.

N2: Self-realisation for all living beings!

According to Naess, the four formulations in the first level of Ecosophy T, namely N1, H1, H2 and H3, make up the most basic norm and hypotheses of Ecosophy T. On this level, N1 and H1 are ultimate formulations in the sense that these formulations are not derivable from other norms and hypotheses.²³ More to the point, N1 pertains to the identification with and care for all life forms in the environment being the ultimate norm in Ecosophy T. As the ultimate norm, it demands or requires individuals to broaden and increase his/her areas of identification. This means that the person should not be confined to the consciousness of the ego and self. The increase in

²¹ *Ibid.*, 196.

²² *Ibid.*, 196.

²³ *Ibid.*, 197.

identification of an individual can also be analogical to expanding circles of interest and care wherein the first circle of identification begins with the family, which then expands to the clan or village, and branches out to the tribe and to humanity.²⁴

The ultimate hypothesis (H1) in ecosophy T also means that when human being A identifies with life form B, the wider self of A includes B, and vice-versa. Hence, in Self-realisation, A is intrinsically related to B in the sense that the Self-realisation of A will also depend on the Self-realisation of B, and the actuations of both A and B should be in aid to their respective growth or unfolding in the environment. Since the expanded identity of A consists of life form B, the interdependence in Self-realisation between relating life forms provides the condition for the derivation of H2. This means that H2 is derived from H1, while H3 is a derivation from both H1 and H2. In H3, therefore, Naess provides a more precise formulation: 'Complete Self-realisation of anyone depends on that of all beings, which in principle are capable of Self-realisation'.²⁵ Based on H3's more precise formulation, Naess articulates humanity's unique capacity to identify with all life forms in nature, which is constitutive to the fulfilment of his/her potentials to identify with all life forms in the ecosphere.

Thus, N2, according to Naess, follows from an unconditional yes to N1, which means that each living being is good and important on its own. 'Self-Realisation!' therefore entails the intrinsic valuation of all life forms.²⁶

(b) *Norms and Hypotheses Originating from Ecology*. For the second level in Naess' ecosophy, its elements include the following norms:

H4: Diversity of life increases Self-realisation potentials.

N3: Diversity of life!

H5: Complexity of life increases Self-realisation potentials.

N4: Complexity!

H6: Life Resources of the Earth are limited.

H7: Symbiosis maximises Self-realisation potentials.

N5: Symbiosis!

These seven formulations make up the second part of the survey of norms and hypothesis in Ecosophy T. It can be observed that this part of the survey utilizes concepts derived from the discipline of

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 198.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

ecology, namely: diversity, complexity and symbiosis.²⁷ To provide the ecosophical context to such terms, Naess in *ECL* (1989) elucidates two terms in H4: potential and life. The term potential refers to the possibilities or capacities of entities to develop. This means that each life form possesses an indefinite number of potentials for growth and development. For the term life, it refers to a vast kind of wholeness which pertains to the network of living relations or the interdependence of all life forms in an environmental milieu. In his reflection, Naess compares the network of relations to the spirit of Gaia to emphasize the living status of planet earth.²⁸ This comparison also helps Naess underscore the symbolic value of life which overflows into each entity, thereby re-affirming its role in constituting, creating and re-creating the life pulse in the environment.

With the context provided by the terms potential and life, the concepts taken from the discipline of ecology gain a different lease of life. The first concept borrowed from ecology is diversity, which refers to the qualitative differences of entities in the environment. He specifies two aspects when discussing diversity: (1) the differences that every life form has as a member of a species; and (2) the differences that a species has compared to other species present in the environment. These conditions make it clear for Naess that diversity is different from plurality, given that the latter refers to numerical abundance which is not necessarily diversity. Plurality also is incapable of acknowledging the uniqueness in each member in a given species.²⁹

The second concept taken from ecology is complexity. To illustrate its meaning, Naess provides an analogy on the relation of three factors which are horizontally arranged - for instance, factors a, b, and c. From this arrangement, six different patterns can be formed, reflected in these patterns or combinations: abc, acb, bac, bca, cab, and cba. If another factor, say factor d, is added in the set of given factors, more patterns can be formed. The numbers of the given factors which are different in quality (a, b, c) increases, which essentially stands for diversity, and now, complexity. In this respect, complexity refers to the set of possible combinations (abc, acb, etc.) given the number of qualitatively different factors available in a given environmental milieu.³⁰

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 201.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 201.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 202.

The third concept borrowed from ecology is symbiosis. In Ecosophy T, symbiosis is the beneficial interdependence of all life forms.³¹ This means that interdependence can only be authentic when diversity and complexity guarantees and furthers the growth and development of relating organisms. Through symbiosis, the potentials that originate from the interaction of different species in diversity and complexity are not only favourable for the development of relating entities but also beneficial for the entire field of relations in the environment. This also conversely implies that an increase in diversity may not be entirely beneficial for the environment especially if the presence of certain life forms in a given milieu reduces the conditions for the fulfilment of potentials in other entities;³² and more complex patterns (or more complex species) do not mean that they are more important in value compared to patterns that are less complex. According to Naess, each pattern or species - whether complex or less complex - fulfils an important function in the network of relations in the environment.³³

(c) *Derivation of the Norms of the Local Community.* The third level of Naess' Ecosophy T stands for the more particular guideposts in making community-based decisions when confronted with questions on the value and use of the environment. The norms and hypotheses are as follows:

H8: Local self-sufficiency and cooperation favour increase of Self-realisation.

H9: Local autonomy increases the chances of maintaining local self-sufficiency.

H10: Centralisation decreases local self-sufficiency and autonomy.

N6: Local self-sufficiency and cooperation!

N7: Local autonomy!

N8: No centralisation!

It is important to reiterate that every life form relates or interacts to a variety of stimuli in the environment. Naess points out, however, that two unbalanced cases of interaction may happen if the organism interacts with too many stimuli, or if the life form interacts with too less stimuli. In the first case, interacting with too many stimuli in nature results in a too erratic experience for an organism. Naess says that the experience is too erratic when the organism is overwhelmed

³¹ *Ibid.*, 203.

³² *Ibid.*, 201.

³³ *Ibid.*, 202.

by the number of stimuli in the milieu resulting to a life form's frequent uncertain disposition. In the second case, having too little stimuli to interact with results in a too monotonous or isolated existence for the organism.³⁴ This monotonous condition happens if a life form is almost kept in isolation from the rest of the entities in the environment. Upon reflection, the first unbalanced case means that the organism has lesser control over the stimuli or influences from nature, while the imbalance in the second case emerges from the lack of control over the stimuli in the milieu, since it is almost not part of an entity's consideration.

In view of an organism's interaction with the stimuli in nature, Naess proposes that it is important for a life form to have a 'fairly high degree of control'.³⁵ Such a proposal, however, forecasts these conditions: (1) a rich environment has more number of stimuli which a life form might have to interact with; and (2) the limited possibilities of control in a rich environment makes it important to limit the life form to its nearby surroundings as long as the nearby environment is able to satisfy the vital needs of the life form.³⁶ This discussion on an organism's interaction in its milieu is intended so Naess can further explain the ultimate norm in Ecosophy T: Self-realisation! According to Naess, maximum Self-realisation can only happen if each organism can balance its interaction to the stimuli in the environment.³⁷ While the term balance can be precarious, it can take place when a life form is able to limit itself the part of the milieu that is capable in providing its vital needs. This means that a life form need not deal or challenge itself with additional stimuli if its immediate environment can already provide for its needs.

In the context of humanity's relationship with the environment, Naess' proposal for a balanced interaction with the milieu is realised in the formation of local communities. This is the third level of derivation of norms and hypotheses in Ecosophy T which makes use of social principles, namely: self-sufficiency, autonomy and decentralisation.³⁸ These are derivations of norms and hypotheses articulated in H8, H9, H10 and N6, N7, N8. Affirming Kurt Lewin's life space model,³⁹ an organism living in a two-dimensional life space acknowledges its

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 204.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 33-36.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 204

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

³⁹ A.J. Marrow, *The practical theorist: The life and work of Kurt Lewis* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1969), 225-226.

nearby milieu that is able to satisfy and fulfil its vital needs, and the needs which the nearby environment is unable to provide. Applying Naess' appropriation of symbiosis, the life space model of organism A which has four vital needs is interpreted in this manner: When the immediate environment satisfies the four vital needs of A, then life form A can limit itself to its nearby life space. This also means that organism A is able to master and control the four sources that satisfy A's vital needs which can be symbolised in $a1/1$, $a1/2$, $a1/3$ and $a1/4$. If the sources that satisfy the vital needs of life form A are not found in the nearby environment but located in sources $a2/1$, $a2/3$, $a2/5$, and $a2/7$, then A can extend its control over such sources belonging to the second dimension of its life space.

The capacity to control the sources that satisfy the vital needs of an organism, according to Naess, becomes more difficult if the sources are more remote from the immediate life space of the organism.⁴⁰ More to the point, remoteness implies an increase in types of danger that a life form has to face, and self-preservation will become insufficient to adequately deal with the corresponding increase in danger. With Naess' emphasis for control and mastery over the sources that satisfy the vital needs of a life form, and his adaptation of the life space model of Kurt Lewin, the meanings of the social principles employed in the third level of derivation of norms and hypotheses in Ecosophy T are as follows:

(1) Self-sufficiency is synonymous to self-reliance. On this note, to be self-sufficient means emphasizing the possibility of maximum self-activity of an individual which is oriented towards creation rather than consumption.⁴¹ To create means controlling or becoming a master of nearby sources that satisfies its vital needs. To consume, in contrast, is to have no mastery or control over sources in the nearby milieu, resulting in direct dependence on sources that are situated in the second or third dimension of an organism's life space.⁴² Mindful of the dangers of stressing plurality over diversity and complexity, Naess is quick to note that control and mastery does not mean that the organism exhausts the sources in the nearby milieu to satisfy its vital needs, and the organism utilises the sources to the detriment of other species. Instead, control and mastery in Ecosophy T pertains to an individual's capacity to utilise available resources for the satisfaction of its vital needs, to protect such sources from depletion, and to

⁴⁰ Naess, *ECL*, 205.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 205.

nourish continued growth and development of its immediate environment.

(2) Decentralisation emphasises local autonomy in contrast to standardisation of resources.⁴³ Since Naess relates standardisation to the centralisation of resources to address vital needs, he interprets it as an upshot of the following circumstances: (a) the individual is unable to master or control the sources available in its nearby surroundings, and (b) the person becomes highly dependent on sources that are provided in a life space remote to the consuming individual. Such are the types of dispositions that Naess' Ecosophy T seeks to avoid. Thus, he looks at decentralisation as the right approach which does not only encourage the individual to limit itself with its initial life space. It also only recommends moving beyond the immediate environment when such life space is unable to satisfy the vital needs. This dependence on the nearby life space is what Naess proposes as the proper notion of local autonomy, which may only be embodied in the formation of local communities.⁴⁴

(d) *Norms and Hypotheses against Exploitation*. The fourth level in Naess' ecosophy specifically addresses issues surrounding abuse and exploitation of the environment. This set of derivation moves towards self-sufficiency that is idealised in a local community and towards the realm of politics wherein laws can be crafted to penalize exploitation, or incentivize enabling actions.⁴⁵ Here is Naess' fourth level of norms and hypotheses:

H11: Self-realisation requires realisation of all potentials.

H12: Exploitation reduces or eliminates potentials.

N9: No exploitation!

H13: Subjection reduces potentials.

N10: No subjection!

N11: All have equal rights to Self-realisation!

H14: Class societies deny equal rights to Self-realisation!

N12: No class societies!

H15: Self-determination favours Self-realisation.

N13: Self-determination!

In *ECL* (1989), Naess defines exploitation as the presence of structures in society that reduce the possibilities of Self-realisation of some groups in favour of the others. The exploitative set-up is

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 207.

something which he explains using the differing social conditions of the upper social class and lower social class.⁴⁶ While the upper social class lives with high material standard of living, the members of the lower social class are mostly worried about surviving, which means needing to still look for the next meal within the day.⁴⁷ It is these social classes, according to Naess, which reinforce exploitation in society. To help address the issue of exploitation, the following political norms are specified: (1) minimum conditions of Self-realisation should be prioritized over and before other conditions, and (2) resources used for keeping some at a higher level should be re-assigned to reduce the number of those struggling to live at or below the minimum.⁴⁸ In advocating these political norms, Naess reiterates the ultimate norm in Ecosophy T - Self-realisation! As an ultimate norm, it can be recalled that it favours the fulfilment of potentials of all life forms. This means that it remains as a top priority against structures, policies or set-ups in society that cater to the development of a limited members of a species.

The political norms also help distinguish biological needs and social needs, from wants or wishes. The distinction is important in formulating policies that provide conditions for the fulfilment of balanced relations between life forms in the ecosphere.⁴⁹ In a society, are the members of the upper class living according to their needs or wishes? If the upper class remarks that it is their need to live with a high material standard of living, Naess considers such remark as indicative of a social calamity as the possibilities of self-realisation of the lower class are reduced in order to satisfy the interests of the few members of the upper social class.⁵⁰ The other point accomplished in Naess' political norms is the clear recommendation to have a proper distribution of resources in the world. This recommendation holds that resources used to keep the affluent lifestyle of the rich must be relocated to parts of the society that struggle to satisfy their biological needs. This is why Naess ends his Ecosophy T with Self-determination! Comparable to Sen's notion of positive freedom,⁵¹ Naess hopes that the members of the lower class will have better and enabling options for Self-realization and Self-identification, and may choose to live beyond

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁵¹ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35.

the limitations which social classes and structure impinge upon ecosophical lifestyle goals, ends and options.

Conclusion

An important assumption in Naess' Ecosophy T is the human inclination to take delight in his/her place in the big scheme of things, of life and nature. It is this assumption which conditions Naess' anticipation that when every person realizes his/her relation to the environment, the individual will be disposed to re-think his/her sense of self. This is where Naess demonstrates his optimistic appraisal of the fundamental nature of human beings.

Building on such stance, Naess elaborates in his ecosophical stance the commitment to the intrinsic value of the environment. Here, he expresses his utmost respect for the diversity and complexity which regulates nature. When confronted with the dynamic presence of nature, Naess does not hesitate to hide his admiration and wonder for such kind of phenomenon. Perhaps, this clear sense of Self-identification provides a synoptic glance to how Naess sees himself and his relation to the environment. Worth noting for this point is his remark which startled Karl Popper in their conversation when Naess said that "he learned as much from his rats as he has learned from Plato."⁵² It is in this line where one can only surmise the reflective and definitive stance of Naess when it comes to his relation with the environment and the species that make nature a complex and diverse whole.

The optimistic stance of Naess is also coupled by a critical agenda of deposing social classes which he considers causative to humanity's love affair with consumption at the expense of the on-going creation in nature. Coming from an egalitarian point of view, class differences for him breed self-serving lifestyles at the expense of the environment and the marginalized citizens. Hence, Naess considers class distinction and differences as a groundwork for anti-ecosophical habits or lifeways.

Another interesting point in Naess' Ecosophy T is its iterative manner of systematisation. This is seen in his interpretation of the relationship between first level norms to the second, third, and fourth level norms. As the level of norms and hypothesis increase, the claims in previous levels must be enhanced or made even more present. This

⁵² "Arne Naess: Philosopher who invented the concept of 'deep ecology'," Independent, accessed August 24, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/arne-naess-philosopher-who-invented-the-concept-of-deep-ecology-1680350.html>.

way of thinking functions as its built-in mechanism of checking if more particularised norms and hypothesis contradict or coincide with the more universal norms. This is how coherence is instanced and demonstrated in Ecosophy T. Should self-determination (N13), for instance, as a norm in the fourth level of reasoning uphold the previous norms (N1-N12), then such norm has to be supported. This also means that the network of relations between N1 to N13 tightens as the norm becomes more specific which is comparable to a stronger spiderweb wherein the spider stands for N1 – Self-realization! This analogy can also be taken to mean as a more nuanced reflective stance when one ponders on the relation between the self and the environment.

Finally, Naess' Ecosophy T showcases the distinction between scientific interpretation and normative positions. While the science of ecology allows humanity to understand how the world functions, Ecosophy T succeeds in pushing descriptive statements into the realm of normative positions. It is this productive overlap between the science of ecology and normative philosophical positions which constitute the distinct viewpoint of an ecosophical lifestyle. Building on the reflective capacity of humanity, Naess is confident that individuals can begin seriously rethinking their proper place in the environment as they become more mindful of an existence deeply connected to other life forms in the ecosphere. Thus, other ecosophies are expected to unfold.

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