

## A Deep Ecological Drought

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### Abstract

*Ecosophy* is not a literary approach but the researcher believes that it has the capacity to become one. Accordingly, the researcher has applied some of the key concepts introduced by Arne Næss, the founder of *Ecosophy* and the *Deep Ecology Movement*, to *The Drought*, a novel by J. G. Ballard. Næss puts “diversity”, “complexity”, and “symbiosis” under the umbrella term “Self-realization”; “truth” and “fearlessness” go under “nonviolent resistance”. In general, the main and subsequent concepts applied to the text indicate the kinds of ecological catastrophes and the practical methods to deal with them in Næss’s view and Ballard’s imagination. The chosen scenes of the novel show how some of the main characters, especially the lead character, seek self-realization through finding themselves one with their own species as well as with other species, trying to accomplish this goal through nonviolent actions. As a conclusion, this essay seeks to prove that “Ecosophy”, as a literary approach, can help writers to warn human beings against the consequences of their greedy actions on Earth.

**Keywords:** Ecosophy, the Deep Ecology Movement, Self-realization, nonviolent resistance, fearlessness.

### Introduction

Arne Næss, the Norwegian philosopher, coined the term “Ecosophy” in 1970. His philosophy is the basis of a political movement called “the Deep Ecology Movement”. The emphasis on the word “deep” is to suggest that the movement seeks to make fundamental changes in the way people think and act toward nature. Also, “Ecosophy” asserts that its followers can permanently review and revise their thoughts and actions (Chalquist online). The ultimate goal of “the Deep Ecology Movement” is “self-realization” through “nonviolent resistance”. Each member of the movement can create her own “Ecosophy” as long as she includes Næss-Sessions platform. Næss’s personal “ecosophy” is “Ecosophy T”. T stands for *Tvergastein* (cross the stones) which is Næss’s mountain hut in *Hallingskarvet*, Norway. *Tvergastein* was a symbol of his devotion to nature and its elements (Drengson, Schroll, Devall, 2011).

In his article, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary.” Næss accuses Western civilization of exploitation of nonhuman beings and separates his ideas from those of the mainstream environmentalists whom he calls followers of the Shallow Movement (Nelson, 2009). He penetrates into philosophical, religious, political, economic, and cultural beliefs of ordinary people to refute the possibility of finding short-term shallow solutions to ecological crises. He states that the only way to solve these crises is to

believe in life being valuable in itself and the premise that all living beings on the Earth are one. If human beings realized these notions, all beings could live a joyful, dignified life.

Following the above ideas, in his novel *The Drought*, J.G. Ballard introduces a critical situation which includes both humans and nature. He depicts a natural disaster which is caused by dumping industrial waste into the ocean over a fifty-year period that eventually thwarts the evaporation of water and therefore causes lack of precipitation (Ballard, 31). This catastrophe is the result of human greed and ambitions which are against nature's order and generosity. At the end of the novel, the disaster seems to be removed but it is not human knowledge and wisdom that solves the problem but nature, again, shows its giving side.

The main character of the novel identifies (or realizes, in terms of ecosophy) himself with the ecology and natural elements around him as well as people. Charles Ransom's quest for his self and the way to reach it is not totally compatible with Næss's definition of the terms self-realization and nonviolence but there are similarities that make it possible to read Ballard's novel with "Ecosophical" concepts in mind.

From pastoral pieces to postmodern poems, much has been said about the mutual effect of environment and literature. Most of these writings have "used nature as a location or as a reflection of human predicaments, rather than sustaining an interest in nature in and for itself" (Garrard, 2004). In this essay an effort has been made to detect a profound relation between an apocalyptic novel and an environmental philosophy which tries to define the bonds among all beings and give practical solutions for environmental problems. This essay tries to show how literature can show us our environmental crises as deeply as life does and how the action of literature can help us to understand a philosophical idea more accurately.

### Deep Ecology and Ecosophy

Spinoza is one of the philosophers who has influenced Næss's ecological ideas. Næss and Spinoza both find nature alive and active. They agree that humans cannot foresee the consequences of their actions; therefore, they cannot understand "the common order of Nature" perfectly. Spinoza and ecologists share the notion that "Nature is perfect in itself", whether it provides for humans or not. Ecologists do not distinguish complicated life forms as more valuable; neither does Spinoza when he states that since "Nature is not in time", it has no conceivable purpose. This is because nature is the absolute reality and not part of a greater scheme of things which needs progress.

According to Spinoza, there are no laws in Nature. Ecologists also believe that free, rational humans care about all life forms. In Spinozan way of seeing the world, defining good and evil depends on whom we are referring to. Ecologists and social anthropologists view issues from the perspective of a specific culture; so good and evil are not the same for all people (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

Arne Næss followed Gandhi's model of "nonviolent direct action". Næss appreciated Gandhi's metaphysics. To him, not only was Gandhi after India's liberation, but also he wanted

people to gain individual freedom. Gandhi believed in oneness of all beings, which led him to nonviolent selfless action (3812). To him, all individuals have the potential to act and the sole thing they need is confidence (Næss, Haukeland, 2002). Gandhi as an advocate of *satyagraha* (active nonviolent resistance), believed that we should convince our opponents and compromise on what is not considered a principle; the person we know as enemy is a potential friend (134).

### Næss-Sessions Platform

There is a platform of eight points provided by Arne Næss and George Sessions which forms the basic ideas all “ecosophies”, including “Ecosophy T”, share:

- (1) The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes.
- (2) Richness and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth.
- (3) Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
- (4) Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
- (5) The flourishing of the human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.
- (6) Significant change of life conditions for the better requires change in policies. These affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures.
- (7) The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating *life quality* (swelling in situations of intrinsic value) rather than adhering to a high standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
- (8) Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.

Bringing a summary of Næss’s explanation on each one of these points can help to familiarize with “Ecosophy”’s key terms:

(1) The word “ecosphere” is a better substitute for “biosphere” in the sense that it contains not only biological life forms but also “rivers, landscapes, cultures, ecosystems, the living earth”.

(2) All life forms even the so-called primitive ones are valuable existences because they are part of evolution and help with diversity. Intrinsic value of life-forms is not dependent on their scarcity or usefulness, so all life-forms need to be protected.

(3) The term “vital need” is purposefully vague. How to define it depends on factors like the situation and country we are concerned about.

(4) Humans have the right to modify ecosystems just like other species, but we need to moderate our modification over time.

(5) Excessive human population does not allow other species to flourish so it is necessary that humans reduce their number in the long run. The claim that the change in economy and life style makes redundant the reduction of human population cannot be taken into account by deep ecologists because it does not seem that deep changes can happen either in economy system of the world or in technology.

(6) Human beings should change their policy. Consumption, seeing everything as commodity, and “short-range interests” should be pronounced abolished values. Non-governmental organizations can “think globally” and “act locally” by refusing the negative interference of governments. Appropriate technologies can help cultural diversity.

(7) The term “quality of life” seems vague to some economists. Quality per se is not quantifiable. In his book, *Ecology, Community, and Life Style*, Næss differentiates between “life quality” and standards of living, and mentions that what is the standard of the market does not necessarily cause life to be qualitative. Modern life has defined artificial needs for us. A change in economic system is the only way to make a change in production-consumption ideology (Næss, Rothenberg, 1989).

(8) To distinguish priorities, we need different opinions to cooperate and we need to act locally (29-32).

“The Deep Ecology Movement” does not want to reform the current political, economic and social system, but it is after finding answers to deeper ontological questions about the relationship between nature and humanity. This relationship to work needs Self-realization and ecocentric egalitarianism. Egalitarianism does not mean that human needs have no priority over nonhuman needs; of course we should care more about what is nearer to us. However, what we should keep in mind is to slay as few nonhumans as possible and only to satisfy our vital needs (170). One of the highlighted goals of “Ecosophy”, as “Deep Ecology”’s philosophy, is to help wildlife continue evolution relieved from the suffering human beings impose on it (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

### **Nature, pragmatism, and pluralism**

Næss gives us three possible types of definition of nature: subjective, objective, and phenomenological. Subjective definition is: people having a variety of feelings and perceptions toward the same thing (Næss, 1973). He defines objective nature as an approach shared by everybody. Of course, it is clear that the phrase “in common” is abstract (49). A phenomenological definition is neither instrumental nor utilitarian; actually it is an immediate experience. Næss suggests us to apply the last type of definition to experience the joyful quality of nature (51).

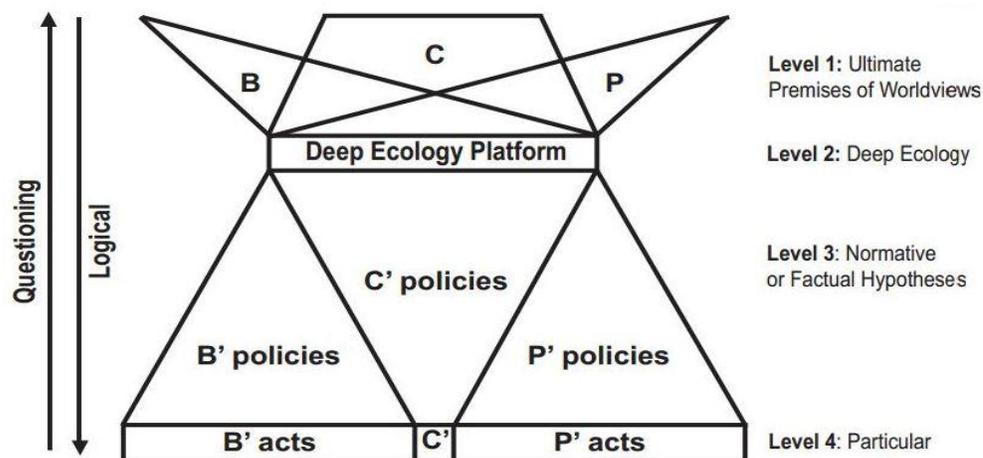
“The Deep Ecology Movement” seeks practical answers to political and economic problems, especially in the third world, in order to reduce migration to rich countries and transformation of the third world population into consumerists. As an example, Næss believes that the people who are extremely suffering should be prioritized to those suffering less to be able to immigrate to rich countries. Also, if rich countries help solve the main problems like housing in poor countries, fewer people will leave their homes; therefore, they do not incorporate

rich countries' cultures which encourage them to consume more and damage the planet (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

We can truly suppose that ecological problems along with Peace and Human Rights problems are the main issues of the world and these two movements are interconnected with "the Deep Ecology Movement" in the sense that if violence and war exist, environmental responsibility becomes irrelevant. Besides, an ill environment causes social injustice just like wars that remove freedom and equality. The three movements find individuals responsible for the world they are living in (Drengson, Devall, Schroll, 2011).

"The Deep Ecology Movement" applies reformatory steps to gain revolutionary results. In doing so, deep ecologists are closer to nonviolent anarchists than to any other activists (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). Deep Ecologists do not believe that ongoing damages to ecology can be recovered in the short term. They also think that national identity should be based on local communities and green education should be expanded. Moreover, Green Politics rejects social classes regionally and globally (3500).

To gather different proponents of "the Deep Ecology Movement", Næss created his Apron Diagram. The diagram is supposed to have the ability to include believers in all religions and philosophies incorporating each individual's deep ideas and feelings. It also helps them to design pragmatic solutions for environmental issues in their homelands due to the fact that the diversity in many languages and cultures is dependent on ecological variety. Apron Diagram is defined in four levels: 1. the ultimate premises of world view of each individual; 2. the platform of "the Deep Ecology Movement"; 3. normative or factual hypotheses derived from the platform; 4. tangible situations and practical solutions for them (Drengson, Devall, Schroll 2011).



The deep ecology movement can bring together diverse groups and individuals situated within different philosophical, cultural, and religious contexts who share common platform principles and coordinate to act in response to local instances of global problems. B = Buddhist, C = Christian, P = Personal Philosophy (after Drengson & Devall, 2010, p. 61)

### Deep Ecology's Utopia

The green community is the desirable society for the followers of "Deep Ecology". Næss has developed ten positive features for such a community:

- (1) The members are not so numerous that they cannot know each other by acquaintance and there are inherent stabilizing factors that keep the population at a fairly constant level.
- (2) Decisions in areas which affect all the members are taken through direct communication, so there can be a direct form of democracy.
- (3) Counteracting antisocial behavior is done directly with friendliness. There is little direct influence from the outside which interferes with that order inside.
- (4) The ways and means of production relate most strongly to primary production. This has as a result a high economic self-reliance.
- (5) Technology is essentially soft. We could also use the term “near”, because what things are made of must come from the neighborhood, or at least from areas as near as possible, preferably not from outside the country.
- (6) Culture and entertainment have to a high degree local color and this holds for work as well.
- (7) Schooling is directed towards acquaintance with technology needed in the local area but of course the possibilities for formal literary and artistic education should be present.
- (8) Differences in income and wealth are small. Those at the bottom and those at the top are sufficiently near in ways of life that they can go together and work together.
- (9) The geographical extension is small enough so that personal transport such as bicycling is sufficient to go from one end to the other.
- (10) In some of the communities there may be institutions which belong to a greater unit, such as hospitals and international research, law, and technical institutes. Some local communities must take care of the central institutions necessary for the function of society at large. This fact is not incompatible with the notion of local communities.

Næss points out the obstacles against organizing the green communities:

1. The centrality of economics in such communities can make their economic policy so fragile and unable to criticize economic opportunities.
2. Media can centralize the culture.
3. To grow economically, the centralized entertainment tramples grass root creativity.
4. Local communities need money to stay intact, so they need central authorities for health care system, while the mainstream specialists focus on symptoms rather than causes.
5. Distant technologies and large firms move workers to places the world market wants them to be and it can destroy local communities.
6. Soft technology is unprofitable; therefore, local resources are exploited by firms from other nations.
7. World has set material standards which are considered the basis of a good life and the local ones are unprofitable (Næss, Rothenberg, 1989).

### Critiques and Justifications

Points 3, 4, and 7 of Næss and Sessions' platform are assumed utopian and although historically contingent, Næss's bonds to Heidegger through the doctrine of "let nature be" are considered neo-fascistic. Also, Næss and Sessions' holism is believed to be an indiscriminate lumping and authoritative. Since the philosophy of "Deep Ecology" is influenced by various philosophical ideas, it cannot be said that the concept of Self-realization that this philosophy introduces is ecocentric. "Deep Ecology" as aesthetics or ontology seems persuasive. It persuades us to accept that Self-realization is impossible unless we admit the interrelation between all living beings (Buell, 2005). Another criticism of "Deep Ecology" is that the number of manifestations its proponents have added to the movement is so huge that it is difficult to find a common body among them. Furthermore, "Deep Ecology" has not provided a complete system and it has already exhausted its logic.

Some scholars disclaim "Deep Ecology" as a normative system and believe that it is more of a moral philosophy. Some regard "Deep Ecology"'s egalitarianism as nonsensical because if all organisms are equally valuable, value distinctions prevent us from prescribing environmental ethics. Also, what if biocentric egalitarianism makes the entire ecosystem inconsistent? If it happens that individuals have different utility, we need to ignore egalitarianism in order to keep metaphysical holism.

Social ecologists excoriate biocentric egalitarianism as misanthropic. Murray Bukchin, an anarchist, did not accept reducing humans to species. He regards humans as complex social beings and criticizes the fact that "Deep Ecological" ideas are so ahistorical that have been blind to cultural causes of environmental issues. Val Plumwood, ecological feminist, found Self-realization subordinating. She means that in a situation of conflict, the interests of members remain unseen in favor of the holistic interests. In such a situation the holist approach does not find individuals qualified to understand their true interests. In that case, the whole can imperialistically control the selves just like what happens in patriarchal societies (Nelson, 2009).

Deep Ecologists' emphasis on Gandhian nonviolence and cultural, social, economic and political plurality distinguishes them from ecofascism (Zimmerman, 1993). What Arne Næss hoped "the Deep Ecology Movement" would be able to achieve, is to synthesize intuition with knowledge and insights to reach a rational form (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2002). According to Nicolas Labarre, what we find in J. G. Ballard's works is the effort to achieve a personal quest (48) and the natural disaster the main characters involve in is their mental situation materialized. *The Drought* is one of Ballard's apocalyptic quartets and it is categorized as a New Wave science fiction (Gomel, 2010). New Wave science fiction writers get rid of the conventions of the genre. In *The Drought* we can see that unlike traditional science fiction novels, the protagonist loses hope and then finds salvation (Labarre, 200-2001). The drought stands for the inner landscape of the main character (Gomel, 2010). "God's grace would come to them only through this final purging fire" (Ballard, 1974) is the satisfying reason for religious fanatics to burn the city. The novel shows how time and events give meaning to human beings' identity through Ransom's feeling of losing time when he lives by the ocean (Gomel, 2010).

Prison seems to be one of the motifs of the novel. Once Ransom and his companions understand that they cannot go further than the fences to reach the sea, the camp by the ocean

becomes more like a prison (Labarre, 2000-2001). In the contrary, it seems that when on the houseboat, Ransom struggles to delve into his own psyche, the houseboat and its stuff act as pieces of his memories that finally lead him to his new persona (59).

Ballard creates an anti-anima feminine character by portraying Miranda Lomax as a “fat pig” (Ballard, 1974). As Labarre quotes Michael Delville, such feminine characters in some of Ballard’s novels can be interpreted as his disability to create sophisticated women (63). Lots of coincidences happen in Ballard’s novel that help us accept the sequence of events. For instance, Ransom knows all the main characters in advance while he is not portrayed as a charismatic character who has the upper hand. So the chain of coincidences as a way of “suspension of disbelief” is the technique the writer uses to make the story believable (72- 73).

The surrealistic paintings Ransom has in his boat remind us of his suicidal desires. The landscape of Tanguy’s painting is noticeably described by the writer. Ballard also refers to Dali’s painting *The Persistence of Memory* when he is describing the beach landscape where time has lost its meaning (79- 80). One can also distinguish the influence of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* in *The Drought*. Miranda’s name reminds us of the magician’s daughter’s name and by Quilter, the writer alludes to Caliban (86). There are more instances of such references in the text like biblical allusions.

### ***The Drought: Self-realization, Diversity, Complexity, Symbiosis***

In his novel *The Drought* (1965), Ballard portrays a disaster. Dr. Charles Ransom, who has separated from his wife, must leave his houseboat to join the others who want to settle by the ocean because the drought has become seriously long. He stays beside the sea for ten years, five of which are spent with his wife, and struggles along with others against the shortage of water. When Ransom and his companions decide to go back to their town, they face a band of religious fanatics who control and burn the town down. Ransom revisits his capitalist acquaintance and his sister who had stayed in the town during the drought years. At the end, when the forces which control the drought-stricken town are removed, he carries out his intention of continuing his way alone through the dried land, and right then rain starts pouring.

The term “Self-realization!” is normally used in metaphysics. It, starting with capital S, the relationship between self-realization of an individual, not in isolation but in her interaction with other people and life forms. It means that if life forms are given the chance to manifest their potential for self-realization, “Self-realization!” occurs. One source of this idea is the essentiality of the existence of microcosm (as self-realization potential) in macrocosm (as Self-realization), a concept which was introduced during the Renaissance. Complete or *Maximum Self-realization!* means “continuous evolution in all levels” of life. The exclamation mark at the end of the term points out to the changeability of the definition and its openness to new interpretations (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

Although living beings do not reach Self-realization at the same level, if only one of the beings we identify with fails to attain self-realization, the whole will also fail. If human beings

continue violating the planet, all beings lose the chance to realize their potentials and their Self (Næss 1986). The inquiry of “Ecosophy” is to help us understand our ecological self better in order to attain monism (7). Self-realization is a process that changes one from within and in interaction with the environment, and it stands against alienation (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). In this sense, ‘Selves are frequently recurring entities, or “knots,” in the structure of contents, but they do not have the concreteness of contents!’ (2827).

In Ballard’s story, although meaningless and as linear as time, the river tide with its nonstop movement looks like a permanent evolution. The real evolution, of course, is continually happening in the relation between the river and beings dependent on it. Without the river, there is no bond and all life forms try to survive individually (Ballard, 1974). All beings define themselves according to the ecosystem of the river, so without it they become isolated and Self-realization will not occur and survival will be put at risk as well. Catherine Austen, the daughter of the late curator of the zoo, thinks water is their smallest problem (16). That is true because if they cared about Self-realization, they would not harm nature too much to be deprived of its generosity. It can be concluded that Catherine is in a higher level of Self-realization.

The motivation for Self-realization is maturity of human beings in moving from selfishness toward a deep self and this is different from dutiful altruism. This motivation can be achieved by living a simple life in which the materiality of what industrial societies call standards of living has no place (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). Self-realization in its higher levels requires helping any suffering being to know its potentials (3454).

One has to discriminate between self as ego and Self, which is oneness with humanity and other beings. Therefore, to realize one’s self, one needs to understand others (realizes herself in relation to others) and avoid hurting them. Accordingly, one can only reach freedom and remove pain if others are liberated and relieved from pain. Regarding this, selfless action is a kind of embodiment of God or truth and helps all beings to attain self-realization, starting with those suffering the most (1977-1980).

At the beginning of the novel, Ransom refuses to spare water to save the oily swan’s life but Philip insists on doing so (Ballard, 1974) because the swan is suffering more than other creatures, so it must be the first to be relieved. Ransom reasons that priorities must be considered (21). He cares about the ones who are nearer to him, that is, fellow human beings. Consistently, he thinks the same when he asks Whitman if the zoo keepers have destroyed the animals for their own good (46).

The terms Diversity, Complexity, and Symbiosis are used in ecology. “Diversity” of species is a biological term (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). It refers to our need for biodiversity to sustain and develop ecology; besides, it helps humanity to satisfy her vital needs, and, of course, preserving the diversity of species is valuable in itself. A gradual reduction in human population in the long term can help to protect biodiversity, sustainable development, cultural diversity, and provide for vital human needs (3466).

To reach diversity, humans must take the whole ecosphere into consideration, not a limited time and specific places (3870). Diversity of life forms, functions, environments, niches,

traditions and practices is basic to change and particularly to the evolution of new life forms and cultures. It is politically urgent to respect and tolerate diversity in a crowded planet like ours (3746). A diversity of species lives in the zoo. Catherine tends to preserve the diversity of life forms as long as there is water and food and she prioritizes mammals as closer to humans. Ransom warns her that Lomax has spared his water on the zoo animals to serve his own purposes (Ballard, 1974). Lomax is not even anthropocentric, since he does not care about anything but his dominance over all other life forms whether human or nonhuman.

A complete or mature ecosystem contains maximum diversity (Næss, Glasser, Drengron, 2005). Næss's historical, empirical research showed him that it is impossible to find certainties and our spontaneous perception of things is so diverse that makes us conceive innumerable values (64). We should welcome all these values and do not assume them as threatening (543). Accepting diversity in all aspects of life indicates humans' maturity (616) and accepting different cultures leads us to sustain a greater diversity which means to sustain energy and reach global unity; that is, to be generous to the Earth and to our community (618). It is not wise to have only one philosophy or religion as it is not nature's way (691). To Næss, even if human beings can once form societies absolutely compatible with nature, the diversity of cultures should be sustained (3365).

The existence of diverse species is not enough to follow the diverse norm; we should preserve the community and places where the very species traditionally live. Not only the diversity of life forms but also the diversity of landscapes must be preserved (3416-3417). From the cultural point of view, even if we accept that reality is only one, it does not mean that different verbal accounts of this oneness are translatable to each other; therefore, we still need cultural diversity to avoid similar ultimate views, because what we perceive as reality always passes through things like personal experience and social matrix (3585).

Rich cultures, intentionally or unintentionally, coerce weaker ones culturally, technically, economically, and territorially. This coercion also happens within poor nations where more powerful tribes suppress cultures with less power (3523). To save cultural diversity, the peace, social justice, and *Deep Ecology* movements should cooperate (3536). In *The Drought*, diversity of cultures from community to community and from past to present is evident. Sometimes this diversity is deep. For example, in the Reverend's community the effect of the new way of life depending totally on the sea shows itself in fish symbolism seen everywhere, especially in religious ornaments in the ship on which he lives. The Reverend Johnstone's symbol is a swordfish with its blade pointed heavenward (Ballard 1974).

There are new and minor cultures at the beach. For instance, there are huts made of old cars, but chimneys still release gray smoke that brings warmth and industry to Ransom's mind (117). In spite of the Reverend's disapproval, people have formed the culture of visiting Mrs. Quilter for her fortunetelling which links them to their previous identities by reminding them of the existence of time and chance (127). They would rather see her than a doctor like Ransom because none of the patients he had during the early years of settling at the beach, survived (128). Economic system, as a part of culture, has not welcomed diversity. Although the commodity has changed a little, the culture of trade has not changed to the least (119).

Economically dependent nations are the result of lifestyle and entertainment import that replaces creativity and diversity with passivity and mass consumption (Næss, Rothenberg, 1989). Diversity in cultures has caused diversity of technology or the other way round. Accepting any one of these cases, one thing is for sure: different cultures decide about what techniques have the priority to be developed (169). During the story, the way to use the technology changes just like the ecology. Cars, once used as vehicles, are taken apart to be used as construction material for people's shacks (Ballard, 1974). Cars are also tombs for the dead (154) and their seats and fabrics are moved into people's shacks (127).

Sometimes, there are complicated situations in which the diversity norm can be suspended. For example, we need to control AIDS because it can put human species in danger. In cases like this, deep ecologists use their sense of judgment but they should also keep "the Deep Ecology" principles in mind and do not reduce them to specific occasions (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

Exploitation of nature by humans without paying attention to the complex relation they have with it causes drought all over the world. For the past fifty years, they had been dumping industrial wastes into the oceans. Polymers generated from these wastes on the surface of oceans prevent evaporation. Removing these polymers is only possible by creating violent disturbances in the water, but it is not worth doing because the wastes reproduce themselves using the surrounding wastes (Ballard, 1974). Here, the wastes are represented like living beings that one cannot live with symbiotically. Like AIDS, they jeopardize human race as well as other life forms i.e. the oceans. Our sense of judgment tells us that we need to suspend symbiosis norm in this particular situation.

Ecologically, complexity and symbiosis contribute to diversity. Even primitive species count in diversity because they have intrinsic value just like rational life forms. Complexity as named in principle two of Næss-Session platform, is different from complication. Urban life is complicated but living in nature is complex in the sense that it is multi-faceted; in other words, "Complicated social relations reduce many-sidedness" (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

In the first chapter of *The Drought* the complex relation between the fishermen and nature is pictured by the two carps fastened to the rowlocks of the fishing boat. The carps are their totems and a sign to indicate their existence (Ballard, 1974). The damaged landscape is causing complicated relations, which are different from the old complex ones. This complicatedness is affecting the society. An example of this is Ransom's difficulty to come to terms with Catherine (18). He is unable to make her understand his concerns since it is only water that matters to her. Their relationship is complicated but not complex because it is only human needs that relates them to each other, not being two parts of nature's body.

Complexity means the relation between organisms and their environment; interdependence among elements. This kind of interdependence is not intrinsically valuable in "Ecosophy T" because in some life forms it can be a sign of parasitism. Every being may become capable of conscious understanding of pain and suffer through parasitism. A dead rhinoceros is a complicated habitat for trillions of less complex organisms; or flagellates living in

a sick person's body have fathomable structures but we still make the mistake of calling a human body complex (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

Judith is a double-sided being. On the one hand, since she came to stay with Ransom five years after settling at the beach, she is a sort of parasite considering that she does not feed herself and Ransom. On the other hand, she guards their fish and water while Ransom is away. However, the main reason the couple stay together is that it is the only way they can preserve their former personalities. They try to save their diversity of characters, not to become hollow and dissolve in the empty, monotonous landscape (112-113).

Evolutionary symbiosis has been important since Darwin and it means: "the capacity of living together with or without mutual benefit" (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). Symbiosis as "living together" without oppressing each other's potentials implies that gaining individual freedom requires freedom of all beings (3691). Here we can refer to *symbiosis* in terms of human ecology and human cultural anthropology. According to Gandhi, in a caste system, "dignity, respect, and the material standard of living should be the same". This is Gandhi's ideal system and it illustrates symbiosis and egalitarianism in a community (3821-3823).

Within the first chapter, Ransom forms relations with all living beings of his environment. Although she seems crazy, Mrs. Quilter is admired by Ransom and he also mixes up with her son who has a deformed skull and others ignore him because he monitors them (Ballard, 1974). Actually, he is ready to have complex and symbiotic relationships as if he knows that all the creatures that have survived the drought are interdependent.

Modern ecology does not define symbiotic coexistence as one hundred percent avoidance of killing. Wolves keep the population of elks stable and at the same time they are living in complete symbiosis (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). Næss states that coexistence or symbiosis between humans and animals which are assumed dangerous happens when these animals have economic value. One of his examples is snake catchers in Hong Kong who gain knowledge about snakes' habits and are not scared of them. Therefore, materializing the relation between humans and animals can cause coexistence (Power, 1990).

After moving to the beach, Ransom and Philip have turned into enemies. Ransom and his gang have not accepted to live under the Reverend (Ballard, 1974), so they are deprived of the water source and have to steal water and fish from Philip and his men who are in charge of them. Fights between these men happen very often and they hurt each other, even the ones who were once close friends: Ransom and Philip (107). Although tough to each other, they still live symbiotically. Philip injures Ransom but lets him go. However, if the fight had continued, they both would have been aware of the fact that murder would be unavoidable.

### **Nonviolent Resistance: Truth, Fearlessness**

Næss's approach toward nonviolence is based on Gandhi's understanding of the notion (Arne Næss, 2000). "Truth" and "fearlessness" are concepts directly related to nonviolence and here

they are used the way Gandhi and Næss define them. “Truth” is the concept related to nonviolent resistance in action, so it is not a sheer philosophical concept.

If we assume that Self-realization is the ultimate goal of life, the only way to reach it is through a nonviolent society in which all non-ultimate means and ends are judged by these two concepts. Gandhi believed one can only know God through nonviolence, that is, through love. So a person in a violent society cannot reach this ultimate end unless the whole society adhere to nonviolence and Self-realization (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). To him, to see the truth face to face was to love the meanest beings and identify with them (Power, 1990). The Reverend Johnstone does not act according to love. He keeps frightening the man who wants water from the church font. Therefore, even in his own system of belief, which is also based on love, he is not walking toward truth (Ballard, 1974).

Nonviolent action is Gandhi’s hypothesis to solve conflicts in the long run. We, people, are Gandhi’s addressees not politicians who he thinks are under the influence of others (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). Nonviolence has a vast meaning in Hindu belief: it means one should avoid violence in thought, word, and deed; therefore, one shouldn’t injure things even if they do not belong to anyone or keep something one does not need while somebody else may do (1981). Accordingly, the means cannot be justified by the ends because there is a cause-and-effect relation between them which means it is not always true that certain means lead to certain ends. For example, a rebellion does not necessarily lead to independence (2001).

Gandhi’s belief in nonviolence had a basis in his experience with human beings (1949). He believed that if only one person could learn how to be entirely nonviolent, all the world’s clashes would vanish but none of us can be perfect and there are just degrees of perfection (1952). Gandhi believed that if a person were certain of her righteousness taking the norms and hypotheses she has accepted into account, she could justify committing violence but *knowing* perfectly is impossible. Another point is that if we accept the oneness of life, we reach the point that hurting an opponent is hurting ourselves (1967-1068).

While everybody looks thin and pale because of bad nutrition, Miranda Lomax shows off her fat body by wearing a black nightdress (Ballard, 1974). If this is her reason for putting on such a dress, it can be assumed provocative and insulting to those suffering and an example of violence in thought as Hinduism suggests. Whitman, the zoo driver, is violent in thought, too; he laughs when he mentions that Catherine and Philip have no water with them and will be eaten by the lions (160).

The car Philip has taken care of for five years does not ignite. He gets frustrated and starts being violent toward the car but he hurts his hand. Ransom who is not a violent person calms him down (135). Violence hurts the person who practices it in the first place even if it is a nonliving thing he is hurting. In Gandhi’s view, the damage is assumed violence toward the needy person if the thing that is damaged might be useful to her.

Violence becomes severe when everybody becomes certain that there will be no end to the drought. Lomax becomes violent verbally because people at the sea have not done anything to find water from sources other than the sea (163). Quilter attacks Lomax but is injured by his

cane. Jonah and Whitman fight and Jonah flees. Ransom does not involve in violence. He holds Quilter's child and watches him and Whitman go after Jonah (169-170).

Gandhi did not present a specific theological premise because he thought any religion or faith can bring *truth* to their believers (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). Næss's presupposition is that *truth* is continually searched for but never found (23). Ransom with his long blond beard looks like a Nordic anthropologist but he would rather be known by the journey he has to take with others to the coast where there should be water (Ballard, 1974). The truth revealed here is that the journey to the coast is Ransom's inner voice. The coast is the truth and he is not predicting to reach it because he cannot be sure of attaining the truth.

Gandhi admits struggling to find out the truth differs in different situations and while he states that each individual determines what truth is, it does not confuse the concept. No one can judge how honest others are in their search for truth. That is why he sets aside indignation even toward violent opponents. He says "What a pure heart feels at a particular time is truth; by remaining firm on that, undiluted truth can be attained". He finds it difficult to reveal what nonviolence is, but he declares that it is included in truth and the only way to find it is to stick to truth. Moreover, according to Gandhi, honest striving for truth is not enough and everybody needs to form their ideas based on seeking the truth (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

Ransom comes to the point that the desperate people who cannot find a way to reach the beach are about to act instinctively. By "some dim instinct" they have understood that the officials have no plans to settle them as they announced before, so they should act even if they are not sure about the success or consequences of their action (Ballard, 1974). This idea goes shoulder to shoulder with what Næss says about the necessity of acting according to our inner voice (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005).

Gandhi also thinks that faith is needed because we, as mortals, cannot see truth perfectly; we can only imagine it and depending on faith is the last refuge. One who knows she can never reach the truth perfectly stays nonviolent (1988). On the other hand, one who is unable to distinguish between her own motivations and justice may resort to violence as well as a person who thinks her opponent is acting unjust (2044). Everyone should be aware of their limitations, past experience, and "the internal and external situation" to act according to their inner voice. Accordingly, pluralism is needed to avoid questioning other people's inner voices (1964).

Ransom seems to be aware of his motivations and he knows justice too. That is why he is the least violent throughout the story. He is good to his enemies, Lomax (Ballard, 1974) and Quilter (139). He cures one and wishes the other to be alive. In this sense, he is absolutely open to pluralism. He is not entirely nonviolent but closer to it than other characters.

Gandhi believes that only the fearless can attain Self-realization and search for truth. The least lack of fearlessness means cowardice to him. While Gandhi still prefers violence to cowardice, he declares that if one has a true nonviolent spirit, she never feels humiliated, so she does not need to react violently against humiliation (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). Paradoxically, Gandhi draws our attention to a situation where obviously weak people are subject to violence and the only fearless action is resorting to violence but it can only happen under a

specific situation and to a specific person. Therefore, there is no norm as “Be violent rather than a coward” (2081-2082). Under Hitler, for example, Gandhi’s nonviolence wouldn’t have been successful but if applied, the Jews wouldn’t have suffered more than they did (1953).

Ransom decides to resort to violence against Quilter. He feels frustrated with Lomax and his horrifying sister, Miranda. It drives him crazy when Quilter follows him and makes him obey Lomax. He also intends to keep Quilter away from Catherine. In a small struggle with Quilter, he conveys his message that he should stay away. Ransom even scorns him by his sarcastic words mentioning the fact that Miranda and he have a lot in common (Ballard, 1974). In this scene, Ransom chooses violence because he cares about Catherine who cannot defend herself. Besides, his violent action can be justified if we accept that not acting so in this specific situation would be cowardice.

Exploitation is the nature of violence and unjust law is a means of resorting to violence (Næss, Glasser, Drengson, 2005). A deeply nonviolent action is the one that is committed on behalf of both the exploiter and the exploited (2005). Therefore, to Gandhi, even calling a person “bad” is verbal violence. To the advocates of violence (except from fascists) violence is not an end. They assume that there will be nonviolence and harmony after succeeding to commit violence against the evil forces, but in this notion, plurality is not taken for granted. Besides, “The character of the means determines the character of the ends” (2039). The direct action norm (point 8) which intensifies the conflict is different from provoking the opponent which is acceptable by advocates of violence (2041).

Johnstone exploits a man by passing an unjust law. He believes that people should show him their courage first to receive water, and charity should not be given easily. Holding such views, he approves of Lomax whom he also detests but finds courageous (Ballard, 1974). Simultaneously, he fails to estimate the fact that Lomax consumes the water he has extravagantly without thinking of sufferers who need it.

Chapter Sixteen starts with a reference to Lomax’s fascistic nature. He is burning the whole city out of “aimless violence” (68). He is violent because he is able to be so. He does not care about other living beings and he does not aim to commit violence to remove it from the future of life forms. Furthermore, the fishermen burn the church and surprisingly, the Reverend justifies their action by defending his faith in their action using the Biblical simile "God prepared a worm and it smote the gourd" (71).'

## Conclusion

In J. G. Ballard’s *The Drought*, ecological problems put humans and other living beings into the sorts of trouble predicted by ecologists following Næss’s philosophy. The central character of the novel copes with his uneasiness. He has to bridge his personal unknown self with that of other creatures who are tightly dependent on him. He has people to take care of and, at the same time, he has a self to explore. Maximum Self-realization as the ideal of Ecosophy T does not seem to

be achieved in the novel, considering the fact that none of the concepts related to Self-realization and nonviolence are fulfilled at the maximum level.

Biological diversity is accepted by some of the characters and complexity of the relation between all beings is respected by them. The ones who share these two concepts live symbiotically with each other and what is left of the nature and try to stick to the truths each and every one of them believe in fearlessly. They keep being non-violent as long as absolute violence does not target the undefended beings and find themselves one with their environment, since humans, living beings, and the environment are all hurt equally. In the end, we can observe that, as it was expected, the leading character is not perfect because as Gandhi says, if only one person were perfect the whole world would be. Although, Ransom shows that he is determined to keep on his path to reach the Self.

This essay has tried to gather all the significant concepts Næss has introduced in his environmental philosophy and movement, having an eye on how Ballard's *The Draught* pictures them. Arne Næss's Ecosophy has never been used as a literary approach while this essay has tried to prove that it is capable of being one. On the other hand, J. G. Ballard's catastrophe novels are always read as portraying the minds of his characters and landscapes have been believed to be the symbols of their mental conditions. The role of physical environment has briefly been observed as simply the environment. In contrast, this study has tried to see Ballard's environment as one of the leading characters of the novel and extract a deeper ecological idea from it.

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