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What would a deep ecological sport look like? The example of Arne Naess

Abstract

Since the 1960s environmental problems have increasingly been on the agenda in Western countries. Global warming and climate change have increased concerns among scientists, politicians and the general population. While elite sport as well as mass sport are parts of the consumer culture that leads to ecological problems sport philosophers have with a few exceptions not discussed what an ecological acceptable sport would look like. My goal in this article is to present a radical model of ecological sport based on Arne Naess version of deep ecology called ecosophy_T. After having outlined the Naessian ecocentric view of biospheric egalitarianism I present the consequences for sports and physical activities. I also give examples from Arne Naess's own practice of sports which was guided by the principle "Richness in ends, simplicity in means!" I discuss whether Naessian deep ecological sport is what we all will have to end up with after the ecocatastrophe or whether it can be an inspiring ideal for many of us right now.

KEYWORDS: Naess, sport, nature, deep ecology, ecocentrism

Introduction

Global warming and climate change concern us all. Ecological problems should therefore be a central topic in discussions about the future of sport. It is time for sport philosophers to give it an important place on the agenda. My goal in this article is to contribute to this by trying to find out what type of consequences environmental concerns may have for sporting practices. More specifically I turn to Norwegian philosopher, climber and founder of 'deep ecology' Arne Naess (1973; 1986; 1990; 1995) and discuss what a radical version of deep ecological sport would look like (Naess 1994; Breivik 1994), using examples from Naess' own sport practice.

It is a bit surprising that the increasing environmental problems and concerns to a great extent are absent in sport philosophical discussions. The leading textbooks and sport ethical anthologies have few, if any, discussions of environmental problems. In the sport philosophical journals there are a few articles most of which do not address sport as a problem for the environment; rather they look at problems that are intra-mural to the sport development. Exceptions are articles by Breivik (1994) and Loland (1996) which discuss

Naess' views on deep ecology and consequences for sport. Two contributions by Loland discuss how record sports (Loland 2001) and Olympic sports (Loland 2006) could be reformed and be made more sustainable, but on sport's premises.

Contributions by Howe (2008; 2012) and Krein (2008; 2014) discuss various aspects of 'nature sports', such as the possibility for self-knowledge and ecological awareness among the participants. Ecological aspects of various new movement activities were raised by Eichberg (2009), while Berg (2015) discussed a possible 'gaming up' of wilderness trips. The feeling of discontent with modern anti-ecological alpine ski resorts is part of Zwart's (2017) discussion of the movie 'Tulist'. A recent contribution by Long, Bazin and Bai (2017) discusses environmental ethics based on Jonas's philosophy.

In my presentation in the following I will first give a background for the shift from individualistic to holistic philosophical views on environmental issues. I will then move on to a presentation of deep ecology and Naess' own version called 'ecosophy_T' as background for a Naessian philosophy of sport. In my presentation of deep ecological sport I will show more concretely what deep ecology can and should imply for sport practices. I will end with a discussion on whether deep ecological sport is a realistic or rather a Utopian idea.

My reason for using Naess as an example are firstly because his views for many are quite radical, or even extreme, and are therefore interesting as an example how far one can go in developing deep ecological sport. Secondly Naess was not only a philosopher of deep ecology but a practitioner of sport and it is therefore interesting, and maybe for some inspiring, to see if, and how, one could lead a deep ecological sporting life according to one's ideas.

Let me add that in the following presentation I will be sympathetic to Naess' views and present them on his own premises. I will towards the end of the article discuss some points where I am skeptical or disagree.

From anthropocentrism to ecocentrism

Let me first place Naess' ecocentric view in a wider perspective. Most debates about environmental issues or ecological problems still start from anthropocentric premises. But during the last decades we have seen a growing number of advocates for ecocentric views. Naess was one of them. According to Argyrou (2005) it was still possible in the early 1950s to speak about 'man and nature'. Then came a shift in terminology which included a shift in ontology. Instead of *man* and *nature* one started to talk about the *human being* and the

environment. The environment came to include not only the environment of humans, but the environment of all life forms. Life then came to include more than living things encompassing rivers, landscapes, cultures, ecosystems. One started to talk about the living earth. Protesters against dams for hydroelectric production had slogans such as “Let the river live (Argyrou 2005, 52).” The new philosophies moved from a focus on humans to a focus on ecosystems.

The Brundtland commission with its report “Our Common Future” (1987) lagged somewhat behind this development with its focus still on the human society. The Brundtland commission thus argued for what in Naessian terms was typical of the shallow ecological movement. In an important article in 1973 Naess distinguished between *shallow* and *deep* ecology. He defined the ‘shallow ecology movement’ as the “fight against pollution and resource depletion”, the central objective of which was “the health and affluence of people in the developed countries (Naess 1973, 95).” The ‘deep ecology movement’, in contrast, endorses ‘biospheric egalitarianism’, the view that all living things are alike in having value in their own right, independent of their usefulness to others.

Whereas shallow ecology focuses on repair for human development, the focus of deep ecology is holistic and ecocentric.

Deep ecology was born in Scandinavia (Brennan & Lo 2016). To be more precise it was born in Norway during the late 1960s and early 1970s in discussion between Naess and some of his co-workers such as Sigmund Kvaløy and Nils Faarlund. Other philosophies also developed during the same period, for example *ecofeminism* which argued that patriarchal models of thinking encouraged not only the colonizing of women and, thus, sexism, but also racism, class exploitation and ecological destruction (Brennan & Lo 2016; Collins 1974).

Other theories, working in the footsteps of the *neo-Marxist Frankfurt School* advocated a combination of enlightenment and romanticism. Adorno advocated a re-enchantment of nature: “natural things, always involve an ‘excess’, something more than their mere materiality and exchange value (Brennan & Lo 2016, 17; see Vogel 1996).” Yet another direction is taken in the *social ecology* developed by Bookchin (1996) who thinks that ecological problems are social problems which must be solved by human interventions that help nature restore its balance and development. In contrast to deep ecology’s adaptive strategy towards nature this direction provides a more interventionist position.

The various new environmental philosophies have, as a general and common feature, left behind an overly anthropocentric focus and moved towards ecocentrism, while value, respect and even rights are ascribed to non-human living beings and entire ecosystems.

Naessian ecological approaches typically adopt a holistic perspective. Other theories, like some utilitarian ones, have focused on animal liberation and reduction of suffering and have thus been individualistic in their approach (Singer 1993). Naess is sympathetic to the reduction of suffering but not to the individualism. He is closer to some deontological theories where all natural entities have intrinsic value and where nature as a whole deserves moral respect (Elliot 1997). Virtue ethical theories may seem to be unavoidably anthropocentric and individualistic since they focus on developing single human lives. But some argue that an Aristotelian ‘flourishing life’ can include the “moral capacities to value, love, respect, and care for the non-human natural world as an end in itself (Brennan and Lo 2016,29; see O’Neill 1993).” I think Naess is sympathetic to the idea of an ecological ‘Bildung’ of our moral capacities. But it is not the starting point for Naess, but rather a consequence of deep ecological living.

After having placed Naess in the broader picture of environmental philosophies and ecophilosophical movements it is time to take a closer look at Naess’ deep ecological views and what they may entail for sport philosophy.

A deep ecological view –Naess and Ecosophy

In my presentation and discussion of Naessian deep ecological sport I will start by presenting Naess’ views on ontology and values, since his views on sport are a consequence of his general philosophical views.

Ontology

Whereas shallow ecology is concerned with resource depletion, pollution, degradation of infrastructure, loss of natural habitats and so on, deep ecology rejects the picture of ‘man against nature’ or in more modern terms ‘the human being over or against the natural environment’. Instead deep ecology adopts a relational total-field view. Organisms are knots in a field or web of intrinsic relations. Naess advocates egalitarianism in the biosphere – in principle. This implies the same right to live and blossom for all organisms, for all knots in the relational web. This means that humans have the right to kill in order to satisfy vital needs, but the same holds for all species (Naess 1990). As a consequence fox hunting, bull fighting

and all human hunting ‘for pleasure’ must be considered as unacceptable pursuits. Instead Naess advocates friendly, and if possible, peaceful togetherness with animals, birds and living beings in general. Gandhian pacifism is relevant not only among humans but in relation to living beings. Live and let live! Animal sports are only acceptable if they include togetherness instead of dominance and killing. To swim with dolphins and fishes, dive with sea birds, inspect small insects and flowers, run with animals are suitable pursuits instead of blood sports. The slogan is: biospheric egalitarianism!

While in earlier versions of deep ecology Naess talked about the *right* of all living things to flourish he later focused more on the equal *value* of all knots in the ecological web. According to some critics he “failed to explain in any detail how to make sense of the idea that oysters or barnacles, termites or bacteria could have interests of any morally relevant sort at all (Brennan & Lo 2016, 12).” I think he realized this. But even if biospheric egalitarianism was an indeterminate principle in practical terms, it stayed important as an ideal for equal value among living beings.

The value of living beings was for Naess also based on his reading of a Spinozistic ontology. Spinoza distinguishes between *natura naturata*, all existing things or entities, and the *natura naturans*, the active force or principle in the universe. Spinoza identifies *natura naturans* with God. He also uses Substance or Nature and can therefore say Deus sive Substantia sive Natura. Although there is a religious-like admiration for nature in Naess’ own thinking, Naess does not follow Spinoza in his religious identification of *natura naturans* (Rothenberg 1992). But like Spinoza, Naess thinks that all beings are interconnected in an intrinsic manner. All beings are in principle dependent on the others. Like Spinoza he also believes that nature itself is infinitely rich, diversified and many-sided, rather than our experience of nature being so. He therefore rejects the distinction between primary and secondary qualities in nature. Instead he thinks of a field involving not only primary qualities like weight or size, but secondary qualities like color, and even tertiary qualities of Gestalt-type like the strength of a storm or the beauty of a landscape. The primary qualities are not primary in an absolute sense but are seen rather as abstractions of a scientific model-type. The world is thus in Naess’ expression ‘a world of concrete content’. And the content is not subjective, created or constructed by us, but exists objectively.

Values

A consequence of Naess' ontological objectivism is that values also have an objective foundation. The values are not created by us but exist independently from us. The values are inherent in single living beings as well as in complex ecosystems. Since values are objectively anchored in the world around us they 'demand' something from us. As Nozick (1981) argues: values pull and push, they attract us and 'demand' something from us: "My value fixes what behavior should flow from me; your value fixes which behavior should flow toward you. Value manifests itself as a push and as a pull" (Nozick 1981, 401). Naess extends this idea to encompass all living beings. Parfit's (2011) ethics is similarly built upon the idea that 'some things really matter'. Also Frankfurt (1988) thinks that there are things that 'deserve to be taken care of', which he expresses beautifully in saying: "A person who cares about something is, as it were, invested in it. He identifies himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending upon whether what he cares about is diminished or enhanced (Frankfurt 1988, 83)."ⁱ For Naess this is true of all living beings. We see here that Naess has a wider view of what is valuable, what needs to be taken care of, than what is commonly focused on by philosophers.

For Naess the objectivism of values means that the derived norms should be expressed forcefully. They are more than expressions of mere subjective feelings. At the same time a respect for other beings restricts us from imposing norms on others (Naess, 1990). A respect for others means that Naess would accept and even encourage people to express their own ecological value system. Buddhists would differ from Christians, feminist ecologists from social ecologists. But Naess argues that from different sources and views one could agree on a common platform for deep ecological action. The platform includes values and norms as well as statements of the present situation and guidelines for what to do. The platform has eight points:

- (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 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 (dwelling in situations of intrinsic values) 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 (Naess 1990, 29).

For sport the guidelines of the common platform would mean a total reconstruction of modern sports and a reduction in the use of economic and technological resources. It would lead to a shallow ecological overhaul; but more than that it would increase the diversity of simpler and enjoyable forms of play and sport while reducing the thoughtless mass sport consumption. This would be in line with the platform's focus on the importance of diversity and life quality as opposed to standard of living. But one could be more ambitious. Naess developed his own version of deep ecology which in many ways is more extreme than the platform and would lead to a more radical version of deep ecological sport.

Norms according to Ecosophy_T

Naess distinguished between ecophilosophy and ecosophy. While ecophilosophy is a branch of philosophy which contains specific philosophical problems and arguments inside a common debate forum, Naess opened up for more specific versions which included personal views and experiences. He called these 'ecosophies' and his own version was called ecosophy_T, with T referring to Tvergastein, his 'expedition cottage' in the Hallingskarvet mountain range. Naess held here, as also in other matters, a pluralist view, which opened up for different views and positions. But as we saw earlier, he also wanted to have common platforms for agreement and action. He expressed the backbone of his own ecosophy_T as a

hierarchical system where both hypotheses and norms alternate. If N denotes norms and H hypotheses a basic part of ecosophy_T may be expressed like this:

N1: Self-realization!

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

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

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

N2: Self-realization for all living beings!

H4: Diversity of life increases Self-realization potentials.

N3: Diversity of life!

H5: Complexity of life increases Self-realization potentials.

N4: Complexity!

H6: Life resources of the Earth are limited.

H7: Symbiosis maximizes Self-realization potentials under conditions of limited resources.

N5: Symbiosis!

H8: Local self-sufficiency and cooperation favors increase of Self-realization.

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

H10: Centralization decreases local self-sufficiency and autonomy.

N6: Local self-sufficiency and cooperation!

N7: Local autonomy!

N8: No centralization!

H11: Complete self-realization requires realization of all potentials.

H12: Exploitation reduces or eliminates potentials.

N9: No exploitation! (Naess 1990, 197-207).

The norms are, in accordance with his own ideal, expressed forcefully and objectively and are based on hypotheses and at least one initial norm. The key ideas are expressed by the key terms *self-realization*, *diversity*, *complexity*, *symbiosis*, *autonomy*, *no centralization*, *no exploitation*. Naess is aware that the terms are general and vague and need interpretation and definition. Let me follow up with some remarks.

Self-realization is the basic term of Naess' system (Naess 1986). Naess distinguishes between 'the small self', which is the individual self, and 'the wider and deeper self', which is the social and the ecological self. Following Spinoza and some versions of Hinduism one can also speak about reaching the universal or 'cosmic self'. Whereas the narrow individual self, the ego, considers only this body, this life, these narrow interests, the social and ecological self is part of an expanding perspective where other humans and non-human beings become parts. By widening the perspective other beings become part of my life, my interest sphere and I am able to respect their right to self-realization. The goal is a self-realization of all.

The *diversity* norm includes not only humans but living beings, ecosystems and landscapes. It also encourages a diversity of lifestyles according to ecological guidelines, including lifestyles in sport. The *complexity* norm focuses on qualitative differences and not only on superficial 'complication', a distinction elaborated by Naess' philosopher and climber friend Sigmund Kvaløy Sterng (1993). Sterng considered modern industrial societies to be characterized by complicated systems but not the qualitative complexity typical for ecosystems.

The *symbiosis* norm invites close living together and respect between different human beings, in different cultures and societies, as well as the living together of human beings and the entire ecosphere. In accordance with the green political movement in Norway and other countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Naess advocates local self-sufficiency and *autonomy* and is critical of *centralization*, which aligns with the thinking of Sterng and his deep ecological climbing partner Faarlund (1993). The *no exploitation* norm is a consequence of the same attitude. Exploitation is totally unacceptable from not only a political and social viewpoint but from an ecological one. Natural resources should not be exploited unnecessarily

and solely for human purposes. The same should apply to sport and would therefore influence the construction of facilities and arenas that negatively impacts the natural environment.

Even if human beings do not have special rights in the universe, the uniqueness of humankind should not be underestimated. Humans are aware of their own and other beings' interests and therefore have a special responsibility. 'Cooperation' and 'togetherness' become key terms in what Naess calls 'ecospheric belonging'. A universal right to live and blossom, to unfold one's potentials, is a central part of the belonging.

Deep ecological sport

In a paper called 'Notes on the Philosophy of Sport' Naess uses Spinoza's terminology to express some of his basic ideas about the philosophy of sport (Naess 1994)ⁱⁱ. Two central terms are 'movement' and 'joy'.

Joy in sport

Spinoza derived many of his theorems from the proposition that 'our body has many parts'. According to Naess what he meant was that our body has a variety of kinds of capacities, including capacities of different kinds of movement. *Hilaritas*, the all-embracing joy, is experienced when all parts of body and mind are active, none of them hampered by excesses of the other parts. *Titillatio*, the smaller or partial joy, is experienced when only some parts are active. Without activity one experiences *tristitia* which is a negative affect.

Theoretically the activity of all parts and the corresponding *hilaritas* should be the ideal in all time intervals, whether short or long. Practically this is perhaps a fiction or even impossible. A decrease in *hilaritas* will take place if parts are activated in sequence, one after the other, through a time period, say a summer or a year. On the other hand this is more practical and easier to achieve. Under all circumstances Naess' ideal is the many-sided activity, whether it is synchronically or diachronically achieved. Consequently activities that are complex and include many different skills and capacities are preferable to more specialized activities. Specialized sports with a focus on pure bodily performance are more susceptible to *titillatio* and to being constrained or partial.

A goal should be to offer possibilities for *hilaritas* early in childhood. Naess points to the hundreds of simple bodily activities of children in physically rich and diversified environments. As one grows older one typically becomes less diverse in one's engagement

and specializes in a few sports. This also leads to more standardized rules, complicated equipment and resource-consuming practices, which according to Naess has consequences. A high degree of *hilaritas* becomes more difficult to realize as (1) more externalities are demanded in relation to the time enjoyed in sport, and (2) more limited and standardized kinds of movements are implied (a loss of many-sidedness). Many-sidedness, freedom and joy are easier to realize with simplicity in means.

An example from Naess' own life can illustrate this. As he grew older he dropped vertical climbing with ropes and technical gear. Instead he started horizontal climbing, traversing hundreds of meters along the Hallingskarvet mountain ridge. The rules were simple. Free-climb with your feet at a maximum of two meters above the ground, but imagine that there is a 200 meters abyss below your feet! Climb as far as you can without stepping on the ground or moving above two meters with your feet. Instead of handling gear and sitting on ledges belaying climbing partners, one could enjoy continuous climbing with just a pair of climbing shoes as equipment.ⁱⁱⁱ

Activeness

According to Spinoza *extension* (body) and *non-extension* (mind, thought, consciousness) are ultimately one. The capacities of the body are at the same time the capacities of the mind. Naess states that though it is difficult to give this a clear meaning in relation to sport it certainly means that “care is taken as to the mental *activeness* in sport (Naess 1994, 2).” Naess prefers the term ‘*activeness*’ rather than ‘activity’ when describing *hilaritas* in sport. It puts emphasis on the holistic character of sport where all parts are active. If too much weight is put on the physical aspects the joy in sport becomes a *titillatio*, which is joy corresponding to *activeness* of some, but not all, parts. It is in part passivity because some part of us is left “untouched or at least not wholly alive (Naess 1994, 2).” Some sports demand a wider range of motor skills and cognitive and emotional capacities than others. Some sports take place in complex and unpredictable environments which demand precise perception, fast reactions and difficult moves. The activeness norm implies that one should put value and weight upon sports that require a wide range of cognitive and emotional skills and also those characterized by complex motor skills. Often these two sets of skills come together and are dependent upon each other. For Naess rock-climbing, snow and ice-climbing or mountaineering in general were such complex sports. But the cognitive-emotional complexity of the sport itself was not always enough. For a philosopher and climber like Naess the ideal of activeness meant that

he brought philosophy books with him on expeditions. On a trip to the Himalayas he typically brought Spinoza's Ethics with him and was found in his tent 5000 meters up the mountain side absorbed in Spinozistic theorems as a complement and contrast to the hard, physical labor in thin air.

Reading difficult philosophy books in thin air demands glow and enthusiasm. Activeness can include different variants and different degrees of emotional intensity. Important competitions as well as demanding risk sports can open up very intense feelings of fear as well as joy. Sometimes fear and joy come together. For Naess intense activeness, what he calls *glow*, can also overcome negative feelings or pain. He even argued that "the level of well-being is proportional to the square of the level of glow. So, with sufficient glow, any amount of pain is overcome (Naess 1990, 81)." I think this should not be taken literally but as a metaphor for the importance of glow..^{iv}

Naess' conception of glow has some similarity to the notion of *intensity* as discussed by Krein (2015) and Howe (2017). The experience of *intensity* comes in different versions in sport, including the intense experience of "being fully present in the flow of activity and movement (Howe 2017, 2)." Naess would agree here. He would, however, disagree with Krein (2015) when he tries to link intensity to the experience of the *sublime*, as the experience of human elevation over nature. This is on a collision course with Naess' ecocentrism.

Diversity and complexity

If sport is related to the supreme norm of Self-realization (through derivation) where the self in question is not the ego but a much wider and deeper Self, the sport worthwhile encouraging, according to Naess, is one that is devoted to:

- perfectibility rather than competition
- many-sidedness rather than specialization
- playfulness rather than achievement
- if achievement, achievement related to personal and group resources, making it essentially non-quantifiable (Naess 1994, 2).

Joy according to Spinoza is internally related to what he calls 'perfection'. The idea of perfection has a long tradition going back to Aristotle. According to a strong version of Aristotelian perfectionism (Hurka 1993) we have an obligation to develop and perfect our physical, practical and theoretical capacities. Naess builds on Spinoza who maintains that

happiness is dependent upon the active development of body and mind. One should therefore focus on perfecting one's capacities together with others rather than focus on competing against others. Perfectibility in sport is therefore a deeper norm than competition. Here, Naess in many ways agrees with coaches who try to help athletes focus on the task rather than the goal, on self-development rather than comparison with other athletes.

Furthermore, Naess argues for many-sidedness rather than specialization. One should flourish and develop one's bodily and mental capacities in a variety of sporting activities. This can be interpreted in various ways. It could mean that one should: a) favor sports that include a variety of bodily and mental skills and capacities, such as football or climbing rather than running or rifle shooting; b) practice a variety of different activities and sports from childhood onwards as far as possible into old age; c) be active in sports that include different sporting environments, social as well as physical. I think all three interpretations are reasonable and can to some extent be combined.

Moreover, Naess thinks that one's involvement in sports should be characterized by a playful attitude rather than by a narrow focus on achievement. The playful attitude is characterized by exploration and curiosity. It leads to more variety and many-sidedness and to more joy. Achievement is important in sport contexts and should not be abandoned but Naess suggests that objective results and standard comparisons are too superficial. A deeper way to measure performance is to look at talent, investment in training, the present physical and mental shape, and other relevant factors. Achievements should be evaluated according to the total sum of resources at hand. One may therefore enjoy a performance that objectively is of medium quality if the talent, training input and equipment are sub-optimal or moderate. One must evaluate performance, not least one's own, according to more refined and complex parameters than simply a measure of objective or absolute results.

Instead of achievement and objective results Naess advocates an increase in perception, sensitivity and experiential qualities in relation to sport. This means that an increase in activeness and glow is, in many cases, preferable to an increase in objective performance. This is also important since increase in achievement very often implies more advanced equipment and complex arenas and facilities. Less advanced equipment can be compensated by increased sensitivity and more nuanced evaluations of performances. One should therefore advance attitudes that promote 'richness in ends, simpleness in means'.

Taken together the Naessian principles of perfectibility, many-sidedness and simpleness favor and encourage a variety of deep ecological versions of sport and other physical activities. It is in total contrast to modern elite sport and the principle of *citius, altius, fortius*, with the focus on records and the importance of winning. In Loland's (1996) outline of an ecosophy of sport he refers to Naess' skepticism towards modern competitive sports that focus on specialization, achievement and standardization, yet Loland wants to "show that rule-governed, competitive sport can be a well-suited arena for the realization of an extended, ecological self (Loland 1996, 77)." He then goes on to show how joy, perfection, embodiment, use of technology and closeness to nature represent important parts of such a defense of an ecosophy of competitive sport. My own interpretation follows more closely Naess' own outline of deep ecology and the consequences for sporting practices in general.

It is now of interest to take a look at how Naess himself practiced ecologically sound sporting activities.

The practice of deep ecological sports

According to Nozick (1981) one's life should instantiate and illustrate one's deepest values. For a lover of wisdom or a sage this may be a crucial point if one wants to gain respect outside the academic arena. Many philosophers have been bodily clumsy. They have been precocious children, devoted to books and indoor life and have neglected play (Scharfstein, 1980). But there have also been philosophers with talent and interest for bodily activities. Naess belongs to this group. He has led a very active life in play, sport and *friluftsliv*. We are therefore lucky to have a philosopher who not only talked about how a sporting life should be conducted but was able to give instantiations and examples of deep ecological attitudes towards sporting practices.^v

Tennis

Naessian tennis was developed gradually over many years and was a process in which I took part. Our last tennis practice was played when Naess was 93 years. We did not play matches or count points, but rather engaged in an advanced form of practice sessions. We played with at least 30 balls, some of them old, at least two should be punctured since differing bouncing qualities give surprises and variations in play. Balls could be set into play anywhere on the court to give continuous play. A ball should never be given up, one gets screams of encouragement when running up an 'impossible ball'. The ball should ideally bounce only

once, but twice or more doesn't matter. A new ball is put into play wherever you are and as soon as possible after a ball is out of reach or impossible to run up. No hesitation! One does not score points in the traditional sense. One tries to place balls that are difficult to reach but not impossible. It is considered stupid to place a ball which is impossible to reach. And to play balls that are too easy to reach does not help to improve one's skills. Varied and continuous play with a lot of vigorous effort and running and with a lot of laughter and joy are important elements. After an hour or more of intense play we were typically amazed about how good we were, how well we had played, and that we were steadily improving. We left the court smiling in contrast to the 'ordinary players' for whom at least typically one was depressed about a lost match or bad play. Play should be a lifelong process and performance should be valued according to circumstantial conditions and means available. To have advanced equipment, like expensive tennis racquets, new balls and a high standard court became uninteresting. Simplesness in means, richness in ends!

Running

For many runners it is important to run fast and set personal records. For a while Naess thought so. He started to run in the mountains from his cottage in the Hallingskarvet mountains. He bought running shoes and tried to improve his personal record on a specific self-designed round-trip. But the landscape disappeared from his view as he spent all the time looking down to see where to put his feet. So he decided to stop watching the clock and trying to set personal bests. Instead he found his old boots and started to run more slowly so that he could enjoy the landscape and surroundings and could hit stones without hurting his feet. The consequence was an increase in active-ness since his mind was able to take in the varieties and beauty of the surrounding landscape.

Boxing

According to Naess no sport should be considered immutable or have fixed rules. Sports should be more like play. We should experiment more and develop new versions. In his youth and as a young professor Naess played beautifully on the piano but also experimented with playful boxing. The extreme vividness of boxing attracted him. But boxing need not take part in specific boxing rings. When he was invited to parties he often brought his boxing gloves and invited other guests to box with him. At a party he met Otto von Porat, the Olympic boxing champion, and without knowing who he was he challenged him. The result was that

after having played with Naess like a cat with a mouse von Porat out-boxed him in third round.

But boxing continued to fascinate Naess. At 80 he still boxed in his own way with students at the Norwegian University of Sport. His interest in boxing was inspired by Gandhi and the idea of non-violence. Continue to explain your case if you are physically attacked! Don't pay attention to pain! Treat the attacker as a potential friend, never as an enemy! Stay cool, look the enemy in the face and respect him! For Naess, boxing was not traditional boxing but playful boxing, which can also be quite tough. It was not only a physical practice but a mental practice where one learns to control emotions and increase empathy. Boxing should not be brutal, but realistic and play-like.

Climbing

As a young man Naess was the best climber in Norway and of a high European standard. He introduced new types of equipment in Norway, was very competitive and pioneered new difficult routes. Later he became a deep ecological climber, stating that the conquest of mountains is a contradiction in terms since one can only reach a mountain top by adapting and adjusting to the mountain, not conquer it. Instead climbing should be considered a process; climbing with simple means and with enjoyment. And climbing can be practiced everywhere. From his youth Naess climbed on the outside of buildings, up rain gutters, on brick walls, on the outside of moving trains, on stone blocks, in the mountains. Naess continued to climb until he was 90 years old.

As a 'risk-taking' climber Naess maintains that a Spinozist outlook will not go against adventure and 'controlled risk', nor against the intensely emotional experience (Naess 1994). According to Spinoza an increase in freedom or degrees of freedom can only be attained through challenges, through exposure to the unknown and the physically and mentally risky. Recklessness is however banned because the wide Self in its Self-realization has the norm 'live and let live'. Nothing should be done merely to please, amuse and impress the public at large. Here Naess obviously thinks of the highly publicized adventures of some modern 'risk-takers'.

Discussion

I think Naess is an interesting and original ecophilosopher and also interesting as sport philosopher. I have therefore presented his views so to say 'from within', from his own

perspective rather than 'from the outside'. I have therefore not engaged in a critical discussion with him. That does not mean that I agree with him on all points. I think, for instance, that his biospheric egalitarianism does not give room enough for the uniqueness, and also the responsibility of the human being. Another point is his lack of understanding of the importance and joy of fair competitions, even if he was involved in such competitions himself when he was young. But these points of disagreements can be taken up in another article.

For now it was important to present Naess' ecophilosophy and his sporting practices mainly to illustrate how deep ecological sport may a) be theoretically anchored, and b) be exemplified in practice. I used Naess as an example since I think compared with others his practice a) satisfied criteria of deep ecological consciousness, b) presented activities with simple means and low use of nonrenewable resources, and c) showed an attitude of joy in sport that is inspiring.

But is Naessian sport too radical or extreme to function as an ideal? And is modern sport so bad after all? Let me start with modern sport. Sport is in many ways a central expression of human hubris, the idea that humans should dominate, control and exploit nature for their own sake. Modern sport is in many ways characterized by individualism, competition and dominance of the environment. Sport as it is practiced in most cases, at elite level as well as mass sport level, is thus not ecologically sustainable (Chernushenko 1994). But some argue that elite sport can be made more sustainable by getting rid of narrow specialization and record-focus (Loland 2006). And mass sport can develop more sustainable alternatives – jogging, hiking, Eastern sport, lifestyle sports, wilderness sports. The wider sport culture has many faces. Not all of them are environmentally ugly. There are huge differences between jogging and Formula 1, between martial arts and ocean races, between bouldering and Himalayan climbing. A viable way in the future might be to develop only those sports or sport forms that have an acceptable ecological profile.

Even if modern sport has eco-friendly versions we need a stronger commitment to change. With increasing global warming and climate change we may have not only an option but an obligation to change present sport. Naess admonishes sport philosophers to become ecologically responsible and lead the way: "If there is anything to be said without qualification in the philosophy of sport, it might be that those who influence the development of sports have an obligation to reflect philosophically about the relation of sport to what they

consider to be the ultimate values of life, and courageously work out the consequences (Naess 1994, 3).”

Inspired by Naess’ distinction between shallow and deep ecology I suggest one could change sports through a series of steps from shallow to more deep ecological versions.

(1) As a start sport organizations should have a realistic focus on shallow ecological concerns. This is already to some extent the case with the Olympic movement, at least in theory. Minimize the use of resources and energy but inside the given sports patterns!

(2) The next step would be to support and sponsor sports and sport forms that use renewable resources and simple means, especially in educational settings. In this way a first awareness of deeper ecological concerns could be awakened.

(3) Wherever possible sporting activities in natural settings and with simple means should be developed. Outdoor education with deep ecological bases should be promoted.

(4) On the personal highest level one should try to become wise sportspersons who are able to realize deep ecological concerns through spontaneous play, by touching the Earth lightly and with an ideal of richness in ends and simpleness in means.

Conclusion

The implementation of deep ecological sports would imply a total transformation of present-day Western sports. It would mean that sports as they are staged today with huge arenas and stadiums, complicated and advanced equipment, use of huge amounts of resources, many of them non-renewable, would have to be abandoned. One might humorously say that Naessian sport is the type of sport practiced by hunter-gatherers and other Stone Age people. Or, one could say less humorously that it is the type of sport we may be forced to play after the future ecological catastrophe.

But Naessian sport is not only something that we may be forced to play. It is a type of sport one can freely choose if one is attracted by the glow and playfulness and by the moral environmental concerns that such a sport tries to meet. For those who want to become sporting sages and live playful lives leaving light ecological footprints on earth it may be a good option.

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ⁱ In a later work Parfit (2011) argues extensively for an objective foundation for our moral reasoning.

ⁱⁱ The following presentation of Naess' views on sport is mainly based on the nonpublished paper "Notes on the Philosophy of Sport" (Naess, 1994).

ⁱⁱⁱ This is not the same as bouldering since it is continuous climbing as one is not staying in one spot trying to handle a difficult problem. Naess also practiced bouldering on a huge stone block 100 meters from his cottage.

^{iv} As an example of glow Naess had practiced playful sliding down a steep snow slope on the top of a sack, with his wife sitting on his lap. They ended up in a hole in the snow, carved out by a stone warmed by the sun. Naess broke his back in three places. In huge pain, waiting for the rescue helicopter, he asked his wife to bring him the most difficult book from his cottage library, which was Einstein's theory of relativity. Totally absorbed by the book, with increasing glow and decreasing pain, some well-being was able to shine through.

^v The following presentation of Naess as an athlete and sportsman is of course incomplete. The glimpses presented here are based on my own experiences with him, talks with his other friends and on views and experiences expressed in Rothenberg (1992).