

The Weaving Wold of Deep Ecology and Textile Design:

*Locating Principles of Sustainability at
Austvatn Craft Central*

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Ideas

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The Weaving World of Deep Ecology and Textile Design

Locating Principles of Sustainability at Austvatn Craft Central

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Abstract

In 1970, a social scientific research project, mapping the socio-political conditions of Nord-Odal municipality, put into effect their vision of a craft central that would offer employment, solidarity and community self-reliance. The project was named Austvatn Craft Central. With Austvatn Craft Central, traditions of home craft as supplementary income and potential for social betterment, was revitalized. This thesis seeks to locate principles of sustainability within the ideology and practise of Austvatn Craft Central, analysing the enterprise in light of the philosophy of Arne Næss and the ideas of William Morris.

What seems to unite the philosophical assessment of Næss, the poetics of William Morris and the practical design endeavours of Austvatn Craft Central, is a deep-founded respect for nature. These principles might not have been explicitly articulated at Austvatn Craft Central, as they were by Morris and Næss—but the focus on local production, natural raw materials, respect for the local community, and the pursuit of re-orienting craft towards social responsibility, testifies to an understanding of interconnectedness and co-dependence—key concepts in both Morris and Næss.

For Morris and his compatriots, human well-being could only take place within a system that was established in close connection to nature. Nature was understood as their home and source of inspiration, in all practical as well as ideological endeavours. Næss realised that ecological principles, such as that of symbiosis and diversity, had to be incorporated into every aspect of social systems as well. In relation to production of commodities, local, climatic, cultural, and geographical particularities had to be incorporated into the whole production process.

The key to designing for a sustainable future lies in the past—or at least so it has been suggested by ecologically concerned design theorists from William Morris to David Orr. This thesis seeks to investigate this claim by taking a close look at how historical technologies and practices informed the social design initiative of Austvatn Craft Central, the ecophilosophy of Arne Næss and the design ideology of William Morris. If the question as put forward by Orr is, how we can “[...] reimagine and remake the human presence on earth in ways that work over the long haul?”, then the thoughts and visions of the designer, the philosopher and the craft central may provide a history lesson for design today.

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Central definitions and terminology

Before going further, it is necessary to define some central terms and how they will be understood in this thesis. The terminology relating to ecophilosophy are based on how Arne Næss uses these terms.

Ecophilosophy

This term describes philosophy that deals with problems common to ecology and philosophy. There are several central figures within the field of ecophilosophy, most famously are Arne Næss, Félix Guattari and Gregory Bateson. This thesis will only deal with the concept of ecophilosophy suggested by Arne Næss. This is in no way to dismiss the further advancements made by recent developments within this field, but due to the scope and aim of this work, other perspectives had to be excluded.

Ecosophy

Ecosophy is Næss's term used to describe a personal ecophilosophy, that takes its point of departure from intuition and value priorities. Ecosophy is our personal philosophical inquiries into questions surrounding ourselves and nature. Ecophilosophy is descriptive, but ecosophy can afford normative judgements and be governed by value priorities. Ecosophies can be individual, and Næss proposes his own personal variant called Ecosophy-T.

Deep ecology

This term refers more to attitudes and approaches, than to a philosophy itself. Næss first used the term in the 1972 World Future Research Conference in Bucharest, then later in his 1973 article "The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary". Deep ecology refers to attitudes towards nature that aims at making clear that reducing the negative impact of humans on earth requires more than short term pragmatic solutions. Deep ecology is to ask questions that goes deeper and broader into the reason for environmental problems. It was presented as an alternative to what Næss saw as shallow ecology. A thorough description of deep ecology will be given in a later section of this thesis.

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1. Loom

1.1 Project Presentation

Handcrafted objects have long been associated with the notion of sustainability. The reason of which is rooted in many different ideas and ideology. Craft objects seems to inhabit aspects of slowness, and the materials themselves are often regarded as natural and authentic. The Arts and Crafts movement has been embraced by environmentalists, much due to their critique of industrialization and their fondness of nature. But more recent endeavours where social responsibility and craft intersect might also be considered in relation to sustainability.

The 1970s is a central decade in the history of environmentalism and social responsibility. It saw the rise of the social justice movements, the peace movements and the environmentalist movements. Ruth Oldenziel and Helmuth Trischler writes that the 1970s have been regarded as a “ground zero” for the planet, a sudden and seismic rupture in history.¹ However, the great movements of the 1970s was informed and had roots in traditions and practises predating the twentieth century. Oldenziel and Trischler writes that:

The 1970s were culturally reframed as radically different from earlier decades. At the same time, the period witnessed the celebration and resurrection of older practices and technologies, suggesting continuities to rather than a radical break from the past. Indeed, recently there has been an interest in recovering older notions of sustainability.²

The scepticism towards technology and established power structures, that grew during the 1960s and 70s, informed movements that searched the past for viable options for the future. This was also true for artists and designers. Art historian Jorunn Veiteberg writes that, the counterculture of the 1960s and 70s also informed and inspired craft practitioners. Craft encompassed values and attitudes that symbolized the natural and authentic, this was especially true of the crafts of weaving and pottery.³ Considering the long traditions of craft

¹ Oldenziel, Ruth and Helmuth Trischler. “How Old Technologies Became Sustainable: An Introduction”. In *Cycling and recycling: histories of sustainable practices*. Eds. Ruth Oldenziel and Helmuth Trischler. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016. 3.

² Ibid.

³ Veiteberg, Jorunn. *Kunsthåndverk: Frå tause ting til talande objekt*. Oslo: Pax forlag, 2005. 21.

and home craft, it was natural that this way of production was associated with a lifestyle closer to nature, than to life in the city. Thus, many craft practitioners left the city in favour of the countryside.⁴

In 1970, a social scientific research project, mapping the socio-political conditions of Nord-Odal municipality, put into effect their vision of a craft central that would offer employment, solidarity and community self-reliance. The project had two objectives. First, to uncover and study social conditions within the municipality. Second, to implement a practical venture for social aid, that would counteract unemployment, and attend to social needs. Textile designer and craft practitioner, Sigrun Berg was the chief consultant designer for the project. The craft central was named Austvatn Craft Central after the discontinued Austvatn School, which buildings the craft central now occupied. With Austvatn Craft Central, traditions of home craft as supplementary income and potential for social betterment, was revitalized. This thesis aims to examine how principles of sustainability might be found in the ideology and practise of Austvatn Craft Central. But how does one do this in a coherent way, and what modes of thought does one base the analysis on?

In the last few decades there have been a surge of interest in the way William Morris has thought about nature, production and society. And many theorists, thinkers and critics have presented Morris as a sort of proto-environmentalist, due to his critique of industrialised production and his fondness of nature. Patrick O’Sullivan, for instance, has pointed out that some of the aspects of modern green thought that Morris anticipated was, alternative technology, simplicity of lifestyle, community self-reliance, production only for need and the lifecycle of objects.⁵ These thoughts are seamlessly intertwined with his thoughts on craft and design.

Other theorist, like Florence S. Boos, have argued that Morris, can be regarded as a precursor for modern environmentalist movements, such as ecofeminism, ecosocialism and deep ecology.⁶ This thesis will take its point of departure from the claimed environmentalism of

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ O’Sullivan, Patrick. ”The Ending of the Journey: William Morris, *News from Nowhere* and ecology”. In *William Morris and News from Nowhere: a vision for our time*, ed. Stephen Coleman and Patrick O’Sullivan. Hartland: Green Books, 1990. 169-181.

⁶ Boos, Florence S. “An Aesthetic Ecocommunist: Morris the Red and Morris the Green”. In *William Morris: Centenary Essays*, eds. Peter Faulkner and Peter Preston. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999. 21- 46. 22.

William Morris, and juxtapose this with the ideology and practice of Austvatn Craft Central. However, merely harmonizing two ideologies of the revival of craft as way of production, does not give the necessary weight to an analysis of how environmental principles might be voiced in the ideology and practise of Austvatn Craft Central. To take the claim, that Morris might be a precursor of the deep ecology movement seriously, it is necessary to take a closer look at the tropes and philosophy that informed this movement. More concretely in the ecosophy of Arne Næss. The objective of this thesis, thus becomes; to juxtapose and harmonise the philosophy of Arne Næss, the thoughts and ideology of William Morris and the ideology and practice of Austvatn Craft Central.

The questions that have guided my research have been; how have theorists writing about Morris's environmentalist dealt with this theme? What are the claims of Morris being a precursor of deep ecology, based on? How are principles of production, community and technology, articulated by Arne Næss? By relying on the principles of deep ecology (in relation to production, local communities and self-reliance), can there be principles in the ideology and practice of Austvatn Craft Central, that voice similar concerns? And finally, is it possible to identify within these ideologies, practises and philosophies, a constitutive size, that is, ideas that that seems to stretch beyond disciplines, institutions and time?

Weaving was the main activity of Austvatn Craft Central, and weaving has always lent itself as a metaphor for storytelling. According to Arthur Danto:

Weaving remains a powerful metaphor for certain integrative activities –we weave stories, for example, and poets, speaking in a metaphysical voice have spoken of the way Will “has woven with an absent heed/ since life first was; and ever so will weave.”⁷

Weaving can be understood as a way of harmonizing all the skills and knowledge that goes in to making a fabric. In weaving, all elements of the act of cloth making, from the husbandry of sheep to the Spindler and carders, and the carpenter that makes the loom, is harmonized by the act of weaving. As an analogy to storytelling or history writing, weaving brings together different materials, in different directions, thus building bridges between different disciplines,

⁷Danto, Arthur C. “Weaving as a Metaphor”. In *Sheila Hicks: Weaving as a Metaphor*. Ed. Nina Stritzler-Levine. New York: Yale University Press, 2006. 22- 36. 33.

to make a stronger fabric. In this thesis, I will rely on the metaphor of weaving to weave together the different narratives, ideas and practices (this will be further discussed in chapter 1.6). The craft ideology of William Morris, the ecosophy of Arne Næss and the ideology of Austvatn Craft Central, will be described and discussed separately in the first two chapters, before finally weaving them together in the thesis discussion part.

The subject matter of this thesis will be ideologies, philosophies and practice. The products produced by Austvatn Craft Central or William Morris will therefore fall outside of the scope and aim of this thesis. This means that, though the signature object from Austvatn Craft Central –the Odal carpet– will be mentioned, it will not be further analysed.

As the thesis title indicates, the subject matter takes its point of departure from a present understanding of what might constitute sustainable design. However, this is not to project contemporary definition of the term on to historical material. The point of using the word sustainability here, is to show that our present understanding of the word, in fact incorporates a host of different attitudes, values and definitions. The word sustainability was not yet used to describe environmental or socially responsible ethos, when Næss developed his deep ecology or Austvatn Craft Central was established. So, my claim is not that these actors explicitly used the term sustainability. But as this thesis is submitted in the subject area of the design history of sustainability, it seemed important to argue that these modes of thought, and the social design initiative of Austvatn Craft Central, today can be understood as a case of sustainable design. An understanding that looks at the holistic aspect of production, consumption and lifestyle, instead of direct focus on the materials or objects themselves. This pairing of ecophilosophy and craft is based on subsequent thinking on what sustainable design is, can be or has been.

Before moving on to the thesis body text, it is necessary to give an outline of the subject area of the design history of sustainability, its relation to design history and the relationship between design history and craft history. Thus, it is first necessary to introduce the term sustainability, and to discuss why this term might be problematic.

1.2 The problematic “sustainability”

Sustainability can be a diffuse, multifaceted and general term that needs proper clarification. Chris Park and Michael Allaby states that “The search for a single definition of

`sustainability` seems elusive, partly because it embodies a number of ideas imported from different disciplines [...].”⁸ The word Sustainability derives from the Latin word *sustinere*, which means to hold or keep. Oxford dictionary defines sustainable as: “supportable, bearable, able to be maintained at a certain level”.⁹ In ecology, sustainability, or carrying capacity, is the property of biological systems to remain diverse and productive indefinitely.¹⁰ Sustainability is thus, a built-in feature of all natural systems, relating to the capacity of a system to maintain a continuous flow of whatever is needed for the system as a whole to have a healthy existence.¹¹

However, in 1987 the Brundtland Commission, on appointment of the United Nations released their rapport *Our Common Future*, coning and defining the concept of sustainable development. As Ida Kamilla Lie writes it in her MA thesis: “[...] the word `sustainable` was popularized by the Brundtland Commission in 1987, and soon became a key concept within the environmental movement of the 1980’s and 90’s”.¹² Today the word sustainable is mostly associated with the notion of human sustainability on the earth, giving rise to the most widely paraphrased definition of sustainability as a part of the concept of sustainable development.

However significant and constitutive the Brundtland commission`s introduction of the concept of sustainable development, it has not been without criticism. Environmentalist movements and thinkers have since its inauguration been aware and outspoken about the weaknesses and inadequacy of the concept of sustainable development. George Sessions, one of the key figures of the deep ecology movement, labelled sustainable development `reform environmentalism`. A sort of environmentalism that does nothing to promote radical change

⁸ Park, Chris, and Michael Allaby. s.v. "sustainable development." In *A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. 22.05.2017. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199641666.001.0001/acref-9780199641666-e-8034>.

⁹ *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: on historical principles*, s.v. "Sustain". Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

¹⁰ Park, Chris, and Michael Allaby. s.v. "ecology." In *A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation*. : Oxford University Press, 2013. 22.05.2017. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199641666.001.0001/acref-9780199641666-e-2372>.

¹¹ Park and Allaby, "sustainable development."

¹² (My translation) “Begrepet bærekraftighet ble popularisert av Brundtland-kommisjonen i 1987, og ble raskt et nøkkelegrep for miljøbevegelsen på 1980 og 90-tallet”. Lie, Ida Kamilla ““Vardagsvaror” for den virkelige verden: Victor Papaneks relasjon til det nordiske designmiljøet på 1960- og 70-tallet”. Master’s thesis. University of Oslo. 2014. 2.

in society, but is rather trying to reform society environmentally. So, the essence is that development will not stop, we will just try to develop sustainably.¹³ And after decades in the wake of mobilizing efforts of sustainable development “[...] there is a sense that the codex of ‘sustainable development’ has not resulted in a greener, fairer, and more equal world.”¹⁴

Needless to reiterate, there are several approaches and attitudes towards the term sustainability. The key point is that, when speaking about sustainable design, there is not one single type of design that is targeted. It is more of an umbrella term, used to describe aspects of design practice, objects ect. that in some way or another touch upon the notion of green, environment, sustainable development or social issues.

The notion of sustainability has already established itself as an integral part of all design practises, education, research and mediation. And it is necessary for the field of design history to finally give this “green revolution” its proper scholarly treatment. Historical research on sustainable design requires interdisciplinary collaboration and approaches.¹⁵ The emergence of environmentalism and the climate debate have roots in many different fields. As with the problematic definition of the term “sustainability”, views on what constitutes both problem and solution to an environmental crisis differs from field to field, and per angle of incidence.

The insight that the production of knowledge is historically contingent and distinctly social is crucial to studies of sustainability in design history.¹⁶ As Design historian Kjetil Fallan puts it:

The history of how sustainable solutions have been envisioned in design discourse provides precisely such a real-life setting where decision-making and practical action takes place with more or less constant reference to a constantly changing, complex, chaotic and partial knowledge base.¹⁷

¹³ Boeckel, Jan van. "The Call of the Mountain: Arne Næss and the Deep Ecology Movement," (Netherlands: ReRun Productions, 1997) Video. 04.11.2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf3cXTAqS2M>

¹⁴ Witoszek, Nina. "Ecomodernity as a Cultural Programme: Combining Green Transition with an Educational Paradigm Shift," *Forum for Development Studies* 43, no. 1 (2016).135 – 154. 136.

¹⁵ Fallan, Kjetil. "Our Common Future: Joining Forces for Histories of Sustainable Design," *Tecnoscienza, Italian Journal of Science & Technology Studies* 5, no. 2 (2014). 13 - 44. 16-17.

¹⁶ Ibid. 23.

¹⁷ Ibid. 23.

That is why it is important to locate some of the different discourses on the topic. Both within the field of design itself and within a broader spectre of disciplines. Both design and the notion of sustainability is not an island, they are encompassed with social, political, economic and aesthetic entanglements.

The design history of sustainability allows for the study of all forms of design practices, ideology and philosophies that in one way or another incorporates environmental and social ethos. Thus, allowing the term sustainability to encompass a wide variety of meaning. In this thesis, the subject matter will be that of deep ecology and social design, designating the sustainability term to encompass these practises and ideology.

1.3 The Design History of Sustainability

The design history of sustainability has just started its unfolding as a field of inquiry. However, the explicit interest of design history in this field is unequivocal, as the creation, production, utilization and envisionment of objects and technology is so intertwined with environmental concerns. Ben Highmore states that it is hard not to see global warming and climate change as a consequence of design processes,¹⁸ and as early as 1962, the Norwegian botanist Knut Fægri proclaimed designers to be the Plague itself.¹⁹ In his 1971 book *Design for the Real World* the Austrian - American designer Victor Papanek wrote that there are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a very few.²⁰ To face up to this reality, the notion of sustainability has become an integral part of design practice and education. But how did this paradigm come to be?

Kjetil Fallan writes: "Today environmental concerns, especially issues on sustainability, are essential parameters in all design practises. However, this 'green revolution' is a glaringly white spot on the design historical map, still awaiting its scholarly historicization."²¹ He

¹⁸ Highmore, Ben. "A Sideboard Manifesto: Design Culture in an Artificial World." In *The Design Culture Reader* edited by Ben Highmore. London: Routledge, 2009. 1-11. 1.

¹⁹ Fallan, Kjetil. "'The 'Designer'—the 11th Plague": Design Discourse from Consumer Activism to Environmentalism in 1960s Norway," *Design Issues* 27, no. 4 (2011). 30 – 42. 31.

²⁰ Lie, "'Vardagsvaror" for Den Virkelige Verden", 1.

²¹ Fallan, "Our Common Future", 15.

continues by stating that the paradox of design²², that in its problem-solving nature it in fact becomes problem-creating, has been adopted by design history: “[...] because design history largely has adopted design’s self-fashioning as an intrinsically benevolent force, this diametrically different perspective has radical implications for approaches, ideologies and politics of design history as well.”²³ The history of sustainable design, thus, needs to be different from traditional design history.²⁴

According to Fallan, the research within this field not only requires an expansion of the field’s subject matter, but it also requires a reorientation of approach to include “[...] a far less stable, tangible and contained domain dominated by ideological discourse and moral concerns seamlessly interwoven with oral, textual and visual culture.”²⁵ To write the design history of sustainability, one accordingly, must look to unforeseen situations and pair corresponding ideas. In the absence of a fixed framework, the design historian, must weave together a strong fabric consisting of different ideas, ideologies, historical perspectives and narratives. There might be solutions out there that in retrospect can be considered a case of ecological design, even if it was never originally explicated as such.

1.4 Theorizing Craft in Design History

“The designed environment, it seems, is now so extensive that it could encompass almost the entire modern world.”²⁶ Ben Highmore writes in “A Sideboard Manifesto: Design Culture in an Artificial World”. The point he is making is that design is so much more than authored objects of great aesthetic value, design is everywhere. The whole of the modern world is encompassed in design processes, and we live, as Highmore puts it, in an artificial world governed by these processes.²⁷ Our lives are accordingly intertwined with design. Whether it

²² The designer Viktor Papanek wrote in his 1971 book *Design for the Real World*; “There are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a very few of them.” Papanek, Viktor. *Design for The Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1971.

²³ Fallan, "Our Common Future", 16.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. 18.

²⁶ Highmore, "A Sideboard Manifesto", 1.

²⁷ Ibid.

be objects, processes, technology, medicine or services. Thus, everyday things are essential to understanding society and culture.²⁸ Kjetil Fallan writes that, perhaps the:

[...] most interesting aspect of design as a field of historical inquiry is its many guises of inherent ambiguity, its essential tension between ideology and practice, between mind and matter, between culture and commerce, between production and consumption, between utility and symbol, between tradition and innovation, between the real and the ideal.²⁹

Design history is thus, not merely the study of objects, but the study of objects in relation to its surroundings, ideology, philosophy and practise.

This thesis is submitted as a contribution to the design history of sustainability. The type of creative practices it examines are located somewhere between craft and design. Craft has always been a part of design history's remit, but its place within the discipline is worth considering. As the mentioned claim by Highmore, that design encompasses almost the entire modern world, it is necessary to, perhaps, locate the discourses that this thesis deals with, within that claim. It is therefore necessary to delineate the field of study that this thesis will deal with.

Following Highmore, the word design does little to illuminate the subject matter one is dealing with. It can be applied to almost any made object. As Fallan points out especially in areas that intersect engineering, architecture and technology, delimitating the subject matter of design history, can be challenging.³⁰ Victor Margolin defines design as:

By 'products' I mean the human-made material and immaterial objects, activities, and services, and complex systems or environments that constitute the domain of the artificial. And I intend 'design' to denote the conception and planning of these products. As I apply the term 'products' in this essay, I refer not only to the outcomes of professional design practice but also to the vast results of design activity that everyone engages in.³¹

²⁸ Fallan, Kjetil. *Design History : Understanding Theory and Method*. Oxford: Berg, 2010. vii.

²⁹ Ibid. viii.

³⁰ Ibid. vii – xix.

³¹ Margolin, Victor. "The Product Milieu and Social Action". In *Discovering Design: Explorations in Design Studies*, eds. Richard Buchanan and Victor Margolin. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.122.

However, as Fallan points out the problem of letting the subject of design history encompass everything artificial, then “every form of history except natural history becomes design history.”³²

As mentioned, design history has become a wide and multi-disciplinary field that, generally speaking, deals with the social and existential meaning of things, and practices. It encompasses subject matters such as pre-industrial, industrial and non- industrial manufacture, including “graphic design, fashion, textiles, interior design and craft.”³³ These latter subjects relate to design history’s intersection with art history, especially when examining the aesthetical qualities of these. However, as Fallan points out, design history’s heritage from art history is problematic, first of all, because design is not art. He states that non-industrial design probably has more in common with craft than with art.³⁴

Design might not be art, but much of modern craft, relates more to art than to design. Many craft practitioners have moved closer towards a conceptual understanding of their work, and more and more, the gallery has become the preferred arena for craft a fact that has contributed to the growing divergence between craft and design. The difference between subject matter, methods and objective grew larger throughout the 1970’s, and within the Norwegian craft and design community, this resulted in the unravelling of the established institution for the applied arts (this will be further discussed in chapter 3).³⁵ Art historian Jorunn Veiteberg argues that crafts in Norway might be considered to be a part of what Arthur Danto calls *The Artworld* since the 1970’s.³⁶ However, this definition has been criticized and drawn in to question by other art historians. Claiming, amongst other, that craft is characterized by function, skill and beauty.³⁷ This has resulted in that, today, craft seems to be in an extraordinary position. Craft scholar Glenn Adamson argues, in *The Invention of Craft*, that craft in fact is a modern invention, starting with the Industrial Revolution.³⁸ His argument is that skills was not in decline because of new technology of the nineteenth century. It was in fact inventing itself to

³² Fallan, ”Design History”, xvi.

³³ Ibid. 4.

³⁴ Ibid. 7.

³⁵ Veiteberg, “Kunsthåndverk”, 22.

³⁶ Ibid. 23.

³⁷ Ibid. 24 – 25.

³⁸ Adamson, Glenn. *The Invention of Craft*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. xiii.

become something new entirely. Before the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution, craft was simply the manufacturing of goods, he writes:

[Craft] emerged as a coherent idea, a defined terrain, only as industry's opposite number, or other. Craft was not a static backdrop against which industry emerged like a figure from the ground. Rather, the two were created alongside one another, each defined against the other through constant juxtaposition.³⁹

The discrepancies that can be found within the realm of craft, that it inhabits qualities of both art and design, in being closely linked to both function and idea, places it in a particular position. André Gali writes that:

In a post-modern time, a term that Adamson uses about the situation in the 21st century, craft becomes the connective tissue in the triangle of art, craft and design. To create an object that works for our time, all of the following aspects must be maintained: concept, execution and construction.⁴⁰

So how then, does one identify this locus in the relation to this thesis?

This thesis aims at examining a design/ craft initiative through a sustainability context. The research has started from a definition of design history that includes the social, cultural and existential meaning of practice. This is not to exclude objects as a matter of principle, but due to the aim and scope of this thesis, the main interest has been in the practices and ideology behind the social design initiative of Austvatn Craft Central. Design is as much a term that relates to the act of making as to objects in themselves. Furthermore the study of design history may deal as much with practices, ideology, philosophy and the social as with objects themselves. This thesis seeks to investigate the ideology behind, as well as the act of making itself within a framework of sustainability. To get to this point, terminology from craft theory will form the basis for the discussion on the act of making.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ (My translation): "I en postmoderne tid, et begrep Adamson bruker om situasjonen i det 21. århundre, blir kunsthåndverket selve bindeleddet i triangelet, kunst, kunsthåndverk og design. For å lage et fungerende objekt for vår tid må alle disse sidene være ivaretatt: konsept, utførelsen og utformingen."

Gali, André. "Kunsthåndverkets gullalder". In *Kampen med materialet*, ed. André Gali. 8 – 16. Oslo: John Grieg forlag, 2015.8-16. 12.

The terminology of craft is multifaceted and difficult to navigate. This has not been made easier by the fact that this thesis relies on both English and Norwegian sources. The Norwegian vocabulary relating to craft includes a wider variety of formulations to the English word craft or even applied arts. The Norwegian word “kunsthåndverk” (art as craft, or craft) is defined to relate to materials and how these are used by artist in their studio. However, André Gali writes that the task of finding an unambiguous definition of the Norwegian word “kunsthåndverk”, proved difficult. He writes that within his terminology craft is understood as a way of production, of working and a way of thinking, “–practical thinking– relating to materials such as textiles, ceramics, metal, wood and leather, but also other materials and in combination with these. At the same time, the methods and materials, first and foremost serves as production of meaning.”⁴¹

However, craft can also mean folkways and home craft. On folkways and craft, the American jeweller Bruce Metcalf writes:

[...] I would say that the meaning of the word “craft” changes as societies change, and people tailor the word to their specific needs and desires. [...] craft also meant trades and folkways. That is to say, there were long traditions of pre-industrial production of handmade objects, from roof thatching and chair bodging to weaving homespun and carving treen. Some of these trades became professionalized, organized into guilds and unions, as with metalsmithing.⁴²

In this thesis two definitions of craft will be utilised. The type of folkway craft that Metcalf refers to, is in Norway closely related to the concept of home craft (husflid). The Norwegian word husflid, is a combination of the words hus (home) and flid (diligence). Thus, husflid incorporates the protestant notion of diligence being a virtue. In this thesis, the difference between home craft and craft, will mostly relate to the fact that Austvatn Craft Central was founded on the ideology of home craft. However, as it was incorporated into small scale manufacturing of craft objects, it is more correct to refer to its practice and production as craft. The Nord-Odal research group also use the term craft (kunsthåndverk) to describe the

⁴¹ (My translation): “– en “praktisk tenkning”– knyttet til materialgruppene tekstil, keramikk, metall, tre og lær, men også med andre materialer og i kombinasjon. Samtidig tjener arbeidsmetoden og materialbruken først og fremst meningsproduksjonen.”

Gali, “Kunsthåndverkets gullalder”, 14.

⁴² Bruce Metcalf, "Contemporary Craft: A Brief Overview," in *Exploring Contemporary Craft : History, Theory & Critical Writing*, ed. Jean Johnson. Toronto: Coach House Books, 2002. 13-24. 14.

practical activity and products produced at Austvatn Craft Central. In this latter use of the word, craft is more related to Gali's definition. So, the definition of craft in this thesis, incorporates both the traditional folkway craft, home craft, and the more modern understanding of how craft also relates to production of meaning.

1.5 Thinking Through Apparatus

French philosopher Michel Foucault has argued that historical contingency can be based on something other than uninterrupted continuity. In his 1971 book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he states that:

If the history of thought could remain the locus of uninterrupted continuities, if it could endlessly forge connexions that no analysis could undo without abstraction, if it could weave, around everything that men say and do, obscure synthesis that anticipate for him, prepare him, and leave him endlessly towards his future, it would provide a privileged shelter for the sovereignty of consciousness.⁴³

Thus, to set out from a point where continuity and the human actor are the locus of historical analysis will only assume that historical development is linear and that "[...] time is conceived in terms of totalization and revolutions are never more than moments of consciousness."⁴⁴

This means that there can be other forces at play in shaping the social makeup of society. In dealing with this fact, Foucault implements the term *dispositif*, or "apparatus" in English, as a signifying terminology to deal with what he calls "governmentality" or the "government of men".⁴⁵ With apparatus, Foucault means "[...] a heterogeneous set consisting of [discourses, institutions, architectural forms, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions] – in short, the said as much as the unsaid."⁴⁶ Foucault argues that the apparatus itself is "the

⁴³ Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge, and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010. 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Agamben, Giorgio. *What Is an Apparatus?: And Other Essays*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009. 2.

⁴⁶ Foucault, Michel. "The Confession of the Flesh ". In *Power/Knowledge : Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980. 194 – 228. 194.

system of relations that can be established between these elements.”⁴⁷ The apparatus has a strategic function in society, as it is constitutive in shaping and manipulating relations thus leading events in a direction. Foucault states that:

[...] what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements, Thus, a particular discourse can figure at one time as the program of an institution, and at another it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent, or as a secondary re-interpretation of this practice, opening out for it a new field of rationality. In short, between these elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, there is a sort of interplay of shifts of position and modifications of function which can also vary widely.⁴⁸

The apparatus thus, becomes a formative size that performs power in and by, for instance, a discourse. This means that the apparatus is defined both by the formation of mixed and asymmetrical elements – the different elements of a discourse –, as well as a specific sort of origin – what establishes a discourse –. The term discourse refers to a series and sequence of utterances and signs. The things that are spoken or not spoken within a specific context. The context, or institution of which the utterance is offered is what connects one utterance to the other, thus making us able to establish meaning and understanding through the sequence of the utterances. Foucault argues that:

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functioning, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation [...].⁴⁹

Thus, discourse can be understood as that which is established around or between systems of utterances.

What I will try and argue in this thesis is that there is a certain apparatus in play within the discourse that stretched beyond disciplines, institutions and time. One that can be found at

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 194-195.

⁴⁹ Foucault, “The Archaeology of Knowledge”, 38.

play on both the field of craft and environmental philosophy. The task of this thesis will be to try and identify, within the different narratives that are presented, the nature of the connection between them. By assessing the venture of Austvatn Craft Central through the lens of deep ecology, the aim is to locate an underlying principle, something that is at play in both deep ecology, Austvatn craft central and in the thoughts of William Morris.

1.6 Sources and Methodology

In the following I will give a summary of the principal sources and methodology that has formed the foundation for my research. Secondary literature and sources will be presented successively throughout the text.

The thesis will be divided into three main parts. The first part deals with the claimed environmentalism of William Morris. In this part, I have relied on the writings of different theorists who in one way or another has mentioned the green aspect of Morris. The main source of this part has been the article 2011 “Morris the Red, Morris the Green’ – a partial review” by Parick O’Sullivan. O’Sullivan has written on the environmentalism of Morris since the early 1990s, but in this 2001 article he gives a summary of how the issue of a ‘green’ Morris, has been dealt with by other writers.⁵⁰ He traces the origins of these writings back to Nicolas Gould’s 1974 article for the *Ecologist*, where Gould presents Morris’ ideas on art and technology as highly evocative for modern environmentalist movements. Moving on from Gould, O’Sullivan traces the development of writings on the green thoughts on Morris to the present. This article, though brief in scope, has served as the general guideline through the different arguments of theorists claiming a green aspect of Morris. It has guided me to find the necessary, articles, books and essays for this thesis.

On the ideological background of the Arts and Crafts movement I have relied on the 1995 book *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, by Wendy Kaplan and Elisabeth Cumming⁵¹, as well as Gillian Naylor’s 1971 book with the same title.⁵² Because the Arts and Crafts movement only

⁵⁰ O’Sullivan, Patrick. "Morris the Red, Morris the Green'--a Partial Review." *The Journal of William Morris Studies* 19, no. 3, 2011. 22-38.

⁵¹ Cumming, Elizabeth, and Wendy Kaplan. *The Arts and Crafts Movement*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995.

⁵² Naylor, Gillian. *The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of Its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory*. London: Studio Vista, 1971.

is mentioned in relation to William Morris, I have found the writings of Kaplan and Cumming, and Naylor sufficient to highlight the sources and ideals of the movement.

In “The Deep Ecology Movement: Origins, Development & Future prospects” from 2010, Bill Devall and Alan Drengson describes the origins and foundations of the deep ecology movement.⁵³ This article has formed the foundation for the second part of chapter 2, where I describe the development and general principles of the deep ecology movement. This part of the chapter does not go deeply into the philosophy or principle of the deep ecology movement, and the article by Drengson and Devall gives the general overview of how the deep ecology movement grew out of and parallel to other movements of social responsibility of the 1960s and 70s.

The sources of the subchapters on Austvatn Craft Central has primarily been based on the 1973 research report from the Nord-Odal project, *Samfunnsendring Og Sosialpolitikk : Rapport Fra Nord-Odalprosjektet*, edited by Georges Midré. It has also been based on oral sources, in form of interviews with Olav Dalland and Rolf Harald Olsen. Both of wich were key figures in the Austvatn project. As the use of oral history might offer some methodological challenges, it is nessecarry to asses some of the main theoretical issues in dealing with this kind of material.

Oral history is the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral form.⁵⁴ Alessandro Portelli argues that the difference between written and oral sources are that:

The content of the written source is independent of the researcher’s need and hypothesis; it is a stable text, which we can only interperet. The content of oral sources, on the other hand, depends largely on what the interwiever puts into it in terms of questions, dialouge and personal relationship.⁵⁵

As the reseach report from the Nord-Odal project gives a thouroug account of the Austvatn initiative, this formed the basis for the interview with both Dalland and Olsen. Further more, both Ida Kamilla Lie and Thomas Tengesdal Nordby have given accounts of their interviews

⁵³ Devall, Bill and Alan Drengson. “The Deep Ecology Movement: Origins, Development & Future prospects”. *The Trumpeter* vol. 26, no. 2 (2010).48 – 69. 48.

⁵⁴ Yow, Valerie Raleigh. *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2005. 3.

⁵⁵ Portelli, Alessandro. ”What Makes Oral History Different”. In *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. New York: Routledge, 2016. 40 – 58. 55.

with Dalland and Olsen in their respective masters theses. The guidelines for the interviews, thus, became to complement the information that was gathered from the mentioned written accounts. However, the research report gave little information as to the performative acts of creating that unfolded at the Austvatn Craft Central and important information about the Odal carpet, could not have been obtained, had it not been for the accounts of Dalland and Olsen.

Portelli argues that what makes oral history different from history dealing solely with written records, is that it tells us “less about the *event*, than about their *meaning*”.⁵⁶ He continues by asserting that this in no way inclines that these sources have no factual validity, and that they are valuable sources for unknown aspects of known events. He writes that: “[oral sources] always cast new light on unexplored areas of the daily life of the nonhegemonic classes. From this point of view, the only problem posed by oral sources is that of verification.”⁵⁷ As Valerie Raleigh Yow points out, there are no method that enables historians to make quick and definite descisions as to the acuracy of oral accounts.⁵⁸ Evidence from interviews are derived from the memory of the interviewee, and the question then becomes if this memory is an reliable account of the actual events.⁵⁹ As the events of Austvatn happened over 40 years ago, the oral accounts given had to be viewed in light of this. Something, that both Dalland and Olsen respectively articulated. However, materials from the Austvatn Craft Central archives at the National Archive in Oslo, and the research report, confirmed and complimented the information obtained from the interviews.

The archive from Austvatn Craft Central in the National Archives of Norway, mostly contains documents in form of correspondans between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Nord-Odal research group, minutes from general meetings at Austvatn Craft Central and funding applications from Austvatn Craft Central to the Miistry of Social Affairs. These documents are all written in Norwegian, on the topic of social politics and social science, and it has been challenging to translate this to English. However, the archives have given important information on the ideology and the practical endeavors of Austvatn Craft Central.

Sources on the design posesses at Austvatn Craft Central, would have been of great value. However, there were no such documentation in the archives. There is a private archive on

⁵⁶ Ibid. 52.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Yow, ”Recording Oral History”, 36.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Sigrun Berg, but I have not been successful in my attempts to access this. I have also been in contact with the regional archives of Hedmark county, but I was not successful in accessing these either. Perhaps there is more information about Austvatn Craft Central in these archives.

The framework of the final chapter, the thesis' discussion part, is based on the writings of Arne Næss. More precisely on his 1976 book *Økologi, samfunn og livsstil*, and the English 1989 version of this book *Ecology, community and lifestyle*, translated by David Rothenberg. The latter is the first English version of the book. It is not a direct translation of the 1976 book, but it is rather a new work in English, based on the Norwegian version, with a revised and updated content.⁶⁰

Because this thesis is written in English I have mostly relied on the English version from 1989. However, though the English version generally have the same content as the Norwegian book, there are certain differences. The English version is much more comprised and dense than the 1976 version. The central themes are the same, but the original eighteen-point deep ecology platform, is in the 1989 book comprised to the eight-point platform articulated by Næss and George Sessions in 1984 (this will be further discussed in chapter 2.6).

In the 1976 Norwegian version, Næss' deep ecology platform, more explicitly articulates principles of local communities, self-reliance and the importance of pleasure in work. But these aspects are brought in under other chapters in the English version. It is also important to note here, that though the notions of local communities, self-reliance and pleasure in work is not explicitly articulated in the eight-point platform, it is still incorporated in the notion of diversity and symbiosis.

The English version was also an updated version of what Næss wrote in 1976. This means that the book was re-written to fit the contemporary climate. Thus, I have been aware of this fact, and have tried to be concise in the application of the material. This means that, when I have dealt with the general content of ecosophy I have solely relied on the English version. But when dealing with notions of ecosophy and deep ecology as a historical matter of fact, I have checked the 1976 version for confirmation of that these ideas was already present in the 1970s. However, as a conclusive remark, I would like to add that Næss dealt with ecosophy and deep ecology from the 1970s and throughout the rest of his life. This means that his

⁶⁰ Næss, Arne. *Ecology, community and lifestyle*. Translated by David Rothenberg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xii.

ecosophy and deep ecology has been revised, and developed several times. I have tried to be aware of this fact, when dealing with ecosophy as a historical subject matter.

1.7 Scope and Thesis Structure

A weft thread moves alternately over and under each warp thread it meets on its horizontal course from one side of the warp to the other; returning, it reverses the order and crosses over those threads under which it moved before and under those over which it crossed. This is the quintessence of weaving.⁶¹

Bauhaus weavers such as Anni Albers, formulated a theory of the formal and material field of weaving that incorporated traditional methods of handwork. Albers writings on weaving, transcended the old understanding of weaving as simply making “pictures out of wool”.⁶² By unifying making and thinking, the writings of Anni Albers might also serve as metaphorical guidelines in theoretical assessment of craft.

This thesis aims to weave together narratives, so that the nature of the connections between the relations offered, might be revealed. I will try and identify a kind of apparatus, or constitutive size within discourses. In order to do this comprehendingly I have divided the thesis into three main parts, relying on the basic construction and method of a plain weave. In the plain weave the intersection of warp and weft takes place in the most elementary demeanour, by alternating the wefts movement from over to under the warp threads it most clearly “[...] embodies the sum total of weaving and therewith reaches back the furthest.”⁶³

By dividing the body text into three main parts, the thesis can be composed in a similar manner. Each section has been given the name of the function in the weaving process that it mirrors. In order to keep the historical narratives separate, they will mimic the separation between the warp and the weft that is at play before the act of weaving makes them part of a whole. In weaving the design of the loom presupposes the fabric’s function and character. In historical inquiry, the theoretical and methodical framework is the basis of the theoretical analysis of the given topic, and thus mirrors this function. The first two sections will form the

⁶¹ Albers, Anni. *On Weaving*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1993. 39.

⁶² Smith, T’ ai . *Bauhaus Weaving Theory: From Feminine Craft to Mode of Design*. Minneapolis: University of Moinesota Press, 2014. xvi.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 38.

empirical and material foundation of this thesis, while the final section will attempt to mirror the performativity of weaving – giving allowances for improvisation and “breaking the rules” in order to achieve the desired effect⁶⁴ – thus revealing the plausibility of a sustainability ethos in the initiative of Austvatn Craft Central. In addition, this introductory section functions as the loom itself, outlining the theoretical and methodical framework upon which the fabric is formed.

Part I: Warp

The warp are the threads that run lengthwise in the fabric. In a plain weave these are stationary and forms the basic structure of the fabric. When choosing a warp one needs to consider the stability of the fabric, how the warp will function together with the weft and its durability. It is the warp that will determine the stability of the fabric, if the warp threads are placed with too much distance from each other you might end up with an unstable fabric. The warp is the part of the construction of weaving that primarily relies on the tension provided by the loom.

This section, mirroring the function of the warp, will stabilize the analysis. It will function as the foundation for the further discussion that will be conducted in chapter 4. In this chapter I will give a general overview of how theorist such as Florence S. Boos, Patrick O’Sullivan, Raymond Williams and others have articulated the environmentalist ethos of William Morris. I will give emphasis to the way Morris’ thoughts might have anticipated the deep ecology movement.

This chapter will metaphorically consist of two warp threads. The first being the environmentalism of Morris, and the second will deal with the historical foundations and development of the deep ecology movement in relation to other movements of social responsibility of the time. The aim is to show how deep ecology also incorporates and relates to ideas of social responsibility. Making it more than a movement that unconditionally turned towards nature. The deep ecology movement saw how human well-being depended on the condition of the whole biotic communities. Thus, bringing it closer in line with the social design initiative of Austvatn Craft Central.

Part II: Weft

⁶⁴ Golberg, Grete and Vibeke Vestby. *Veving*. Vollen: Tell Forlag, 1995. 8.

The weft are the threads that runs horizontally or crosswise. While the warp threads are stationary, the weft are in constant movement. These are the threads that the weaver for the most part deals with. It is the weft threads that fills the space between the warp threads, and it is for this reason also referred to as the filling.⁶⁵

This section will deal with the historical grounding for, and of Austvatn Craft Central. It will give a brief summary of the political situation of the Norwegian craft and design community, to ground the endeavours of Sigrun Berg and Austvatn Craft Central in the craft/ design discourse of the time. This chapter will also discuss how the craft ideology behind Austvatn Craft Central was founded on a longstanding tradition of seeing home craft as a remedy for poverty and viable option for social betterment. As a metaphorical weft thread, this chapter will be more descriptive than discursive. Meaning that the relation of Austvatn Craft Central to William Morris and deep ecology, will not be discussed until the fourth and final chapter. The story of Austvatn Craft Central will be the metaphorical weft thread that, in chapter 4, will move over and under the warp threads.

Part III: Weaving

Weaving is the performative act of implementing knowledge, skill and material. With this act the conjoining of warp and weft creates a grid, recognized by its firm structure and inelasticity. In a plain weave, no more than two warp threads and two weft threads are necessary to form a grid, and this simplest of all thread constructions is at the same time “the most conducive to aesthetic elaborations.”⁶⁶ Weaving is the process of passing weft thread alternately under and over the warp threads.⁶⁷

This section will form the discussion part of the thesis. In order to identify some sort of constitutive size between ideas of craft and livelihood on the one hand, and ecological equilibrium on the other, it seems useful to rely on the ideas of Michel Foucault. The aim is to identify in the ideas and enterprise of Austvatn, principles of sustainability. How to do this sensibly depends on how one approaches the material. Austvatn Craft Central, was after all, not initially based on ecological design principles, and environmental concerns does not seem to have been explicitly articulated. In order to identify within the Austvatn Craft Central,

⁶⁵ Albers, “On Weaving”, 39.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 19.

aspects or principles that, in retrospect, can be considered as sustainable, it is necessary to put it in the right context. Elements from chapter 2 and 3 will, together with the theoretical and philosophical foundations of deep ecology and ecosophy, form the basis for the discussion.

As mentioned, Foucault uses the term apparatus to describe “the system of relations that can be established between [discourses, institutions, architectural forms, philosophical and moral propositions].”⁶⁸ This means that there can be something at play between historical narratives and events that stretches beyond time and space. It has been claimed, as we will see in chapter 2, that the ideas and ideology of William Morris proved highly informative and inspirational for the environmentalist movement. Nicholas Gould’s 1974 article in *The Ecologist*, speaks volumes of how, at least some ecologically concerned actors of that time, saw Morris as an early day environmentalist. This both informed and formed modern visions of ecology, and was highly influential in grass root movements seeking a simpler life and back to the land.

However, apparatus is understood as a system of relations between different elements. It is not prudent nor desirable to aim at simply finding the evidence to prove that one actor was influenced by another. Thus, the aim of this thesis will be to suggest a nature of the connections that can be established between the discourses in the empirical material.

⁶⁸ Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh ", 194.

2. Warp

This thesis is founded on the notion that there seems to be a connection between craft and the ecology movements of the twentieth century. More concretely, that there are modes of thinking that resonates with the branch of environmentalism that deals with ecology and the craft ideology of the Arts and Crafts movement. As mentioned, this thesis will be structured in three main chapters, that relies on the metaphor of weaving. This way the first two chapters will be more descriptive than discursive, thus keeping the warp and the weft separate before weaving them together in the final chapter. In this second chapter, named after the vertical warp threads on the loom, a general historical background to the connection between craft and environmentalism, will be presented. In a plain weave, only two warp threads and two weft threads are necessary to create a grid. The narratives presented in this chapter will thus, form two separate warp threads that each will have implications for the structure of the fabric. In order to place Austvatn Craft Central in a context where both deep ecology and craft plays a part, it is first necessary to outline the sequence of thought that this will be based on.

In the following chapter I will examine the green aspect of Morris, through the writings of theorists from different disciplines. Several theorists have written about environmentalism of Morris, and it have not been prudent, nor possible to mention them all. The texts that have formed the framework of this chapter have all, in one way or another, emphasised the fact that Morris seemed to be attuned to a relationality between the social and nature.

In “Socialism and Ecology” (1982) Williams attribute Morris to be the first socialist writer in Victorian Britain to question the very notion of production, thus in retrospect unifying socialism and environmentalism.⁶⁹ David Pepper noted in his 1993 book *Eco-Socialism: From deep ecology to social justice*,⁷⁰ that one important factor that separates Morris from other socialist thinker, like Marx, is his inclination to utopianism. As Marx opposed utopianism, Morris not only advocated utopianism as a romantic yearning for the past, but as a viable option for the future. Another theorist who focuses on how Morris’s utopianism links

⁶⁹ Williams, Raymond . "Socialism and Ecology". In *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, ed. Robin Gable. London: Verso, 1989. 210-226. 216.

⁷⁰ Pepper, David. *Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice*. London: Routledge, 1993.

his socialism and environmentalism is Peter Marshall.⁷¹ In *Nature's Web* from 1992, Marshall claims that what makes Morris an advanced ecological thinker was his aspiration to keep life simple and to forgo some of the power over nature.

However, the claim that Morris can be understood as a predecessor of the deep ecology movement is most evidently expressed in Florence S. Boos' 1999 section in the centenary essays publications by Faulkner and Preston. In "An Aesthetic Ecocommunist: Morris the Red and Morris the Green", Boos makes the claim that it was Morris's awareness of his surrounding, as it emerges in his literary works, that most clearly associates him to more holistic environmental movements.⁷² Traces of which are most evident in his 1890 eco-utopian novel, *News from Nowhere*.

This chapter will also give a brief introduction to the general principles and history of the deep ecology movement and the ecophilosophy of Arne Næss. In the 2010 article "Deep Ecology Movement: Origins, Development & Future Prospects", Alan Drengson and Bill Devall, traces the development of the deep ecology movement and gives a detailed account of the movements relation to other movements of social responsibility. twentieth century, these movements became global.⁷³

2.1 The Industrial Revolution and Victorian Design Reformers

The Industrial Revolution started in Britain in the eighteenth century and quickly spread to the rest of the world.⁷⁴ Among the key features of this new era was technological changes, the use of new energy sources and the invention of new machines.⁷⁵ It was especially the invention of new machines that had the biggest impact on traditional handcraft. The Spinning Jenny and the Power Loom replaced the old handcraft of spindling and weaving. Enabling the production of larger quantities of textiles and in turn increased economies of scale. This also resulted in a formidable use of natural resources and the mass production of goods. However,

⁷¹ Marshall, Peter. *Nature's Web: Rethinking our Place on Earth*. New York: Paragon House, 1993.

⁷² Boos, "An Aesthetic Ecocommunist", 22.

⁷³ Næss, Arne. "The Three Great Movements". *The Trumpeter* vol. 9, no. 2(1992). 04.11.2016. <http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/view/431/706>

⁷⁴ *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Industrial Revolution". 20.03.2017.

<http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/Industrial-Revolution/42370#>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

these changes also led to a surge in social and economic development and the general standard of living increased correspondingly. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the first industrial revolution was over and the second making Britain well on its way of becoming a fully industrialized nation. Making the Victorian era, a time of peace and national confidence, a time a prosperity as well.⁷⁶ However, this wealth and prosperity was not, evenly distributed throughout society.

Though this new time promised prosperity, progress, and the reinforced belief in man's mastery of nature, a darker and more troublesome side of the mechanisation of society became evident. Extraction industries, large factories and the urbanization that followed had grim consequences. The urbanization that grew out of the increasing number of factories resulted in overcrowded slums and poverty, and the extraction industries induced an ever-expanding degradation of the English countryside. Naturally, this resulted in the realization that technical progress did "not necessarily coincide with the improvement of man's lot", and a campaign for social, industrial, moral, and aesthetic reform was to materialize.⁷⁷ This was the historical impetus of the Arts and Crafts movement, as the movement's endeavours found its rightful place within this campaign. The movement developed as a reaction to the material consequences of the industrial revolution, such as the deterioration of style and aesthetics, but fundamental to its philosophy was the "conviction that industrialization had brought with it the destruction of 'purpose, sense and life'."⁷⁸ Among the leading figures of the movement was William Morris (1834-1896), C.R. Ashbee (1863-1942) and W.R. Lethaby (1857-1931), all trained architects. They believed that all creative endeavours were of equal value and worked towards a unity of the arts.⁷⁹ With a vision to reform design and once more give value to the work process itself, the aesthetical principles of the movement became: "[...] to re-establish a harmony between architect, designer and craftsman and to bring handcraftsmanship to the production of well-designed, affordable, everyday objects."⁸⁰

In the 1995 book *The Arts and Crafts Movement* Elisabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan highlights some stylistic common denominators such as the use of local materials, "honest" and unpolished furnishing that would reveal the beauty of its material, and lavish decorative

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Naylor, "The Arts and Crafts Movement", 7.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 8.

⁷⁹ Cumming and Kaplan, "The Arts and Crafts Movement", 6.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

objects that would: “[...] equal the technical virtuosity and visual brilliance of earlier civilizations.”⁸¹ Still the movement’s main aesthetic program was more about philosophy than style.⁸² In fact: “[...] the very word `style, as applied to historicist revivalism, was anathema to them.”⁸³ Instead they favoured a sense of individualism that grew out of an ideology of revolt against the established system which thrived on the exploitation of the many for the profit of the few. Gillian Naylor writes that this attitude of the socially aware “[...] within the design profession tended to be rebels against orthodox social and academic attitudes, and their non-conformity led to a rugged individualism.”⁸⁴ This was especially true of William Morris, who committed himself to the idea of revolution. In, perhaps, a less radical manner, he sought to reject and reinterpret the accepted definitions of the design process.⁸⁵ Cumming and Kaplan highlights four principles that characterizes the movement: design unity, joy in labour, individualism and regionalism.⁸⁶

Social reform was one of the key concerns of the movement. For some, reform meant a change in working conditions: “[...] belief in the restorative power of craftsmanship and the search for a simple life [...]”⁸⁷ For others, like William Morris, the key theoretical principle was unity of aesthetics and political reform.⁸⁸

It is conspicuous how a penchant for socialism and attention to nature was juxtaposed in the thoughts of the Arts and Crafts movement’s most prominent figures. In 1891 W.R. Lethaby, published *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, summarising the movement’s idealistic nature and pointing out the juxtaposition between work, nature and art.⁸⁹ In the book’s introduction Lethaby, citing Sir Joshua Reynolds *Discourse II*, assesses how expressions of the past are the foundation for the aesthetics of the future.⁹⁰ Compiling the unification of the arts, joy in

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Veiteberg, Jorunn. *Kunsthåndverk : Frå Tause Ting Til Talande Objekt*. Oslo: Pax, 2005. 18.

⁸³ Cumming and Kaplan. "The Arts and Crafts Movement", 9.

⁸⁴ Naylor, "The Arts and Crafts Movement", 8.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Cumming and Kaplan, "The Arts and Crafts Movement", 7.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Adamson, Glenn. *The Craft Reader*. Oxford: Berg, 2010. 146-155. 146.

⁸⁹ Cumming and Kaplan, "The Arts and Crafts Movement", 9.

⁹⁰ Lethaby, W. R. *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*. New York: Macmillan, 1892. 1.

labour and the fundamental part that nature plays as the source of all inspiration, Lethaby wrote:

What then, I want to ask, are the ultimate facts behind all architecture which have given it form? Mainly three: [...] *thirdly*, on the side of style, nature. It is of this last that I propose to write; the influence of the known and imagined facts of the universe on architecture, the connection between the world as a structure, and the building, not of the mere details of nature and the ornaments of architecture, but of the whole – The Heavenly temple and the Earthly Tabernacle.⁹¹

He continues by stating that one should refrain from merely examine architecture through erected structures and monuments, but by tracing a kind of mysticism surrounding them:

It will be necessary, not only to examine architecture in the monuments, but the contemporary statements which relates to them, the stories about buildings and even the mythology of architecture, for such a mythology there is.⁹²

So, by unifying the arts with labour – the craft and skills that goes in to all making – and nature, both the “Heavenly Temple and the Earthly Tabernacle”, a vision of the future emerges:

What, then, will this art of the future be? The message will still be of nature and man, of order and beauty, but all will be sweetness, simplicity, freedom, confidence, and light; the other is past, and well is it for its aim was to crush life: the new, the future, is to aid life and train it, 'so that beauty may flow into the soul like a breeze'.⁹³

This implies that an idealization of the “sweetness of nature” was not merely a nostalgic predilection for times past, but regarded as a pragmatic solution for the future.

In his essay “Learning from Nowhere? Locating William Morris ‘Eco-Fiction in Design History” Kjetil Fallan argues that the reason why modern environmentalists have been embracing the endeavours of the Arts and Crafts movement is because of their fundamental

⁹¹ Ibid. 4.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid. 8.

scepticism towards industrialization and their fondness of the pastoral.⁹⁴ The figure of the Arts and Crafts movement most widely recognized as a forerunner for modern environmentalism was William Morris. His thoughts on the relationship between nature and work was so discursive that it has been addressed by the twentieth-century environmental theorists as a sort of proto environmentalism.

2.2 Morris the “Green” – Morris the “Red”

According to Patrick O’Sullivan, it is difficult to know where the idea of a proto-green William Morris comes from.⁹⁵ There are a multitude of different interpretations, and it is not my aim here to survey them all. For the purpose of this thesis, though, there is especially one claim that is of interest, namely that arguing that there seems to be a sort of “ecological consciousness” in his writings and his artistic endeavours. According to Florence S. Boos:

Morris had a remarkable ability to focus quickly on essentials, and express some of the ‘holistic’ interrelations between social and physical processes that still elude precise system-theoretic quantifications. His conviction that spoliation of natural beauty leads straight to other forms of deprivation made him an important predecessor of late twentieth-century environmentalism in all its various hues of green– from ‘deep’ ecological and ecofeminist ‘theorists’, to pragmatic activists and resource planners.⁹⁶

What Boos is referring to is how Morris seem to show a surprising sensibility of how things are connected. His writings on the role of pleasure in work, the democracy of art and his plea for the conservation of the British countryside all testify to this. When Morris depicted the perfect factory, his major concern was to the pleasurable surroundings of the labourer. The natural as well as the man made.⁹⁷ But to get to that argument, we first need look at some aspects of Morris’s work lauded for its environmental ethos.

⁹⁴ Fallan, Kjetil. "Learning from Nowhere? Locating William Morris’ Eco-Fiction in Design History". 11.04.2017. <http://www.backtothesustainablefuture.net/learning-from-nowhere-locating-william-morris-eco-fiction-in-design-history/>.

⁹⁵ O’Sullivan, “Morris the Red, Morris the Green'-a Partial Review", 22.

⁹⁶ Boos, “An Aesthetic Ecommunist”, 22.

⁹⁷ In “A Factory as It Might Be” from 1884, Morris gave a description of how a factory that would satisfy the requirements made by him and other socialist. Mostly, this was to accommodate the critique made towards the socialist pennant to avoid coming up with

Raymond Williams, one of the earliest in literary criticism to discuss the environmental aspect of the ideas of William Morris, suggested that what might be the greatest “green” contribution from Morris’s ideas, was the harmonisation of two conflicting ideas in socialism and environmentalism.⁹⁸ A leading traditional socialist idea had until Morris’s time been that the way out of poverty was increased production. As a unifying act, rather than asking questions surrounding the quantity of products, he asked what the quality of products being produced should be.⁹⁹

When socialism became more distinct from other associated and overlapping movements, and in the middle of the nineteenth century started to become more of an independent movement, the tendency was to see poverty as the central problem of modern society.¹⁰⁰ The solution became increased production, and as Williams argue, this increased production would come about at the expense of nature. This set about a form of triumphism, advocating man’s mastery over nature, that can be traced through most of nineteenth century socialist writing.¹⁰¹ As modern scientific production was viewed as the only way of reducing poverty, the dominion over nature was to a large degree, utilized as a polemic tool, echoing the general spirit of nineteenth century society.¹⁰² This kind of triumphism, gave inspired and stimulated increases in production that would be viewed as the salvation of the struggling classes.¹⁰³ The point that Williams is making is, that before Morris, socialist thought did nothing to comment the fact that even what was arguably the most industrialized nation in the world, at the time, poverty prevailed alongside the decay of the English countryside. Williams writes that:

But under the spell of the notion of conquest and mastery, with its mystique of overcoming all obstacles, of there being nothing too big for men to tackle, socialism lost its own most important emphasis. It did not really look at what was visibly

pragmatic solutions. For Morris, the ideal factory would be placed in beautiful surroundings, in a beautiful building. All in all, the factory would be a pleasant place.

Morris, William. “A Factory as It Might Be”. *The William Morris Internet Archive*. 10.05.2017. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/justice/10fact1.htm>

⁹⁸ Ibid. 22.

⁹⁹ Williams, "Socialism and Ecology", 216.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 213.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 214.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Arne Næss was attuned to this aspect of socialism. He argues that the line of development from Neo-Platonism – Bacon – Marx, sought to not only maintain an indifference to nature, but to elevate the triumph over nature as a norm.

Næss, Arne. *Økologi, samfunn og livstil*. Oslo: Bokklubben Dagens Bøker, 1999. 318.

happening in the most developed and civilized societies in the world, at what was happening in England [...].¹⁰⁴

According to Williams, Morris's craftsmanship made him attuned to how human interference affected the natural world, stating that:

[Morris], a man who from direct practice, from the use of his own hands, from the observation of natural processes, was deeply aware of what work on physical objects really means. He knew that you can produce ugliness quite as easy as you can create beauty. He knew that you can produce the useless or the damaging as easily as the useful. He could see how many kinds of work seemed specifically designed to create ugliness and damage, in their making and in their use.¹⁰⁵

Morris was, thus, one of the first to question the abstract idea of production, criticizing general standards of quantity, but also bringing into the discussion an element of human standard.¹⁰⁶ This meant bringing in an ethical element to the production of objects. He realised that the way in which objects were produced was intrinsically connected to the greater fabric of society. By bringing together art and labour, the hierarchy brought forward by the division of labour – where the designer or engineer was superior to the worker – would diminish, and the worker would no longer be a tool for the industry. To overcome the awful conditions under which the average industrial worker performed his or her labour, Morris realized that there were some fundamental factors that needed to be in place. These factors were; the unification of the arts, pleasure in work, egalitarian structures in society, and the importance of clean, satisfactory surroundings to live and work in. The latter did, especially in *News from Nowhere*, apply to nature as much as to factories or workshops. And it is in this aspect that Morris brings about ideas that highly resonates with modern environmentalist tropes. How these factors cohere with modern environmentalism will be discussed in the final section of this thesis. But, before taking a closer look at how Morris's thoughts are echoed in modern times, it is we need to outline his thoughts of art and society.

2.3 The Democracy of Art

Morris' ideas on how art and socialism was connected was first brought to the public in his lectures on decorative arts. The first lecture, *The Decorative Arts*, was given to the Trades

¹⁰⁴ Williams, "Socialism and Ecology", 215.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Guild of Learning in 1877.¹⁰⁷ It was around this time that he had become increasingly concerned with social and political problems, realizing that the profit of the privileged few, came at the expense of the working man.¹⁰⁸ This, then, formed the foundation for his lectures, embarking on a campaign “for the democracy of art as part of a wider campaign for social justice.”¹⁰⁹ He declared that: “I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few”, and proclaimed the terms of his crusade to be:

[...] surely since we are servants of a Cause, hope must ever be with us, and sometimes perhaps it will so quicken our vision that it will outrun the slow lapse of time, and show us the victorious days when millions of those who now sit in darkness will be enlightened by an *Art made by the people and for the people, a joy to the maker and the user.*¹¹⁰

This meant a reformation of the prevailing understanding of the term art. A term that – in its prevalent definition – Morris found to be elitist and limiting.¹¹¹ He saw both the narrow understanding of art and the misery of the working man as issues relating to class struggle and in his 1877 lecture *The Hopes and Fears for Art* he stated:

Now as to the scope and nature of these Arts I have to say, that though when I come more into the details of my subject I shall not meddle much with the great art of Architecture, and less still with the great arts commonly called Sculpture and Painting, yet I cannot in my own mind quite sever them from those lesser so-called Decorative Arts, which I have to speak about: it is only in latter times, and under the most intricate conditions of life, that they have fallen apart from one another; and I hold that, when they are so parted, it is ill for the Arts altogether: the lesser ones become trivial, mechanical, unintelligent, incapable of resisting the changes pressed upon them by fashion or dishonesty; while the greater, however they may be practised for a while by men of great minds and wonder-working hands, unhelped by the lesser, unhelped by each other, are sure to lose their dignity of popular arts,

¹⁰⁷ Naylor, "The Arts and Crafts Movement", 107.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 108.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

and become nothing but dull adjuncts to unmeaning pomp, or ingenious toys for a few rich and idle men.¹¹²

Thus, Morris understood the unification of the arts as essential to both the decorative arts as well as the fine arts. The established hierarchy would in his view only render the decorative arts, -mechanical and without autonomy, and the fine arts useless and elitist. Reforming this understanding of art to include “the great body of art, by means of which men have at all times striven to beautify the familiar matters of everyday life, [...], both a great part of the history of the world, and a most helpful instrument to the study of that history”.¹¹³ In this way, all artistic endeavours was regarded as equal, thus, the craftsman became equal to the architect.

The unification of the arts would ensure that the production of goods would rise to become more than perseverance and pointless exhaustion of the body. Claiming that: “[...] without these arts, our rest would be vacant and uninteresting, our labour mere endurance, mere wearing away of body and mind.”¹¹⁴ For Morris, the revival of handicraft was the ultimate unification of work, pleasure and beauty. With this unification, society had the possibility of progressing in a way that would produce no ugliness for bot man and nature, and he stated:

[...] but now only let the arts which we are talking of beautify our labour, and be widely spread, intelligent, well understood both by the maker and the user, let them grow in one word POPULAR, and there will be pretty much an end of dull work and its wearing slavery; and no man will any longer have an excuse for talking about the curse of labour, no man will any longer have an excuse for evading the blessing of labour. **I believe there is nothing that will aid the world's progress so much as the attainment of this;** I protest there is nothing in the world that I desire so much as this, wrapped up, as I am sure it is, with changes political and social, that in one way or another we all desire.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Morris, William ."Hopes and Fears for Art ". 11.04.2017.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1882/hopes/chapters/chapter1.htm>.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Morris, schooled in the aesthetics, literature and history of the middle ages, naturally found his ideal for pleasure in labour in the crafts guilds and workshops of the middle ages.¹¹⁶ But a mere revival of craft as the main production technique of designed objects, would not be sufficient. Mental pictures of enslaved bodies crafting affordable consumer goods by hand in dungeon-like surroundings, are enough to put that hypothesis to shame a circumstance Morris was aware of. His writings offer important clues as to the fact- that he was highly sensitive to the importance of the surroundings in which labour was performed. And it is with this insight his thoughts and actions connects with modern day environmentalism.

2.4 Learning from Nowhere: William Morris, The proto-Environmentalist?

However, there are many conflicting ideas about the green, red and artistic aspects of William Morris. O'Sullivan alludes to the fact that by the many critics, historians and theorists who have mentioned the green aspect of Morris practice, not all have drawn a proportionate alignment between his socialism, design enterprise and environmentalism. O'Sullivan argues that the author of the 1974 essay on William Morris, published in *The Ecologist*¹¹⁷, Nicholas Gould puts Morris's thoughts in a green context by mentioning his outlook on technology and art, but does not mention socialism at all.¹¹⁸ More recently, Sara Wills has questioned this very notion of a green Morris, emerging in the fields of Victorian and literary studies over the last three decades.¹¹⁹ Wills argues that the apparent green hue of Morris's thoughts is rather a result of his socialist inclinations making him primarily concerned with livelihood rather than ecology. Wills argues that:

¹¹⁶ For more on Morris's interest in the middle ages, the gothic revival and his involvements with the Pre-Raphaelites see: Cummings and Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), Gillian Naylor, *The Arts and Crafts Movement: a study of its sources, ideals and influence on design theory* (London: Studio Vista, 1971), and Faulkner and Preston, *William Morris: Centenary Essays*, (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999).

¹¹⁷ *The Ecologist* is a British environmental magazine first published in 1970 for promoting environmental issues to a global readership. Founded by environmentalist and philosopher, Edward Goldsmith, the magazine quickly became the leading platform for ecological thought in the 70's. (The Ecologist. "About the Ecologist". 11.04.2017. http://www.theecologist.org/theecologist/266662/about_us.html)

¹¹⁸ O'Sullivan, "Morris the red, Morris the green", 22.

¹¹⁹ Wills, Sara. "Nature, Socialism, Livelihood: The Greening of William Morris?". *Melbourne Historical Journal* 31, no. 1 (2003).74 – 92.

For Morris, industry remained the insufficiently problematized key term in Marx's conception of the relationship of the human and natural world. He believed that the task, the joy, of completing nature – of transforming it not from nature into something other-than-nature– was essential to life. `Man` was not just Homo Faber, but Homo artist, and the natural beauty of the earth was reproduced “by the labour of man both mental and bodily”: by `the expression of the interest man takes in the life of man upon the earth with all its surroundings`.¹²⁰

Kjetil Fallan argues that, Wills sees Morris's concerns about nature as a manifestation of anthropocentrism rather than as a precursor of today's notion of the anthropocene.¹²¹ And perhaps rightfully so. However, as Peter Marshall points out, what makes Morris an advanced ecological thinker, and separates him from his compatriots, was that Morris in fact was willing to forgo of the power over nature, won by past ages.¹²²

In *News from Nowhere*, Morris depicts a utopian future where a post-industrial England, once again has risen as a pastoral Eden. At the core of this green socialist utopia was the return to handicraft and the annihilation of the contrast between city and countryside. It is in this work of fiction that Morris most clearly anticipates some of the mood of modern green movements, such as alternative technology, renewable energy, simplicity of lifestyle, community self-reliance, production for need, lifespan of goods, waste reduction “[...] and above all the key role of what is defined as work (for both men and women) in allowing us all to express our essential humanity in a free and sustainable society”.¹²³ However, it is also with *News from Nowhere*, that we can find traces of the fact that Morris had an understanding of the relationship between man and nature that is echoed in modern environmentalist movements. In Morris's depiction of a utopian future, man has forgone some of the power over nature, to achieve an idealistic society. That Morris was sensitive to the problematic relationship between man and nature is most vividly expressed in a passage from the book when, Clara – the protagonist's muse- explains why her Victorian ancestors had caused such havoc to the environment, she exclaims:

¹²⁰ Ibid. 80.

¹²¹ Fallan, Kjetil. "Learning from Nowhere? Locating William Morris' Eco-Fiction in Design History". 11.04.2017. <http://www.backtothesustainablefuture.net/learning-from-nowhere-locating-william-morris-eco-fiction-in-design-history/>.

¹²² Marshall, “Nature's Web”, 314.

¹²³ O'Sullivan. "Morris the Red, Morris the Green", 23.

Was not their mistake once more bred of the life of slavery that they had been living? — a life which was always looking upon everything, except mankind, animate and inanimate —“nature”, as people used to call it—as one thing, and mankind as another. It was natural to people thinking in this way, that they should try to make ‘nature’ their slave, since they thought “nature” was something *outside them*.¹²⁴

Her conclusion was that her Victorian ancestors attitude towards nature, the fact that they saw nature as something outside of themselves, facilitated exploitation of nature. This implies that Morris, was attuned to the fact that the man-in-nature image – later discourage by deep ecologists– had a significant impact on man’s predilection of exploiting nature.

Even if accepting Wills argumentation, the fact that the thoughts of Morris touches upon something that later on was established as central tropes within the twentieth century environmental philosophy begs a closer look at this when inquiring into the history of sustainable design.

One of the most evocative evidence for making the claim that Morris informed and inspired ecologists of the twentieth century, however, is found in an issue of *The Ecologist*. This journal was the leading platform for ecological thought in the 1970’s and the 1974 article on William Morris, written by Nicholas Gould, at least to some degree suggests that the thoughts of Morris was known and influential in ecological circles.¹²⁵

2.5 Looking Forward: The Birth of Environmentalism and the Three Great Movements of the Twentieth Century

Florence S. Boos argues that Morris in his time observed the fact that the negative effects of ideals that actualized, in fact, had consequences not anticipated. Like the negative social and environmental effects of the industrial revolution that ignited Morris’s anger. She argues that:

¹²⁴ Morris, William. *News from Nowhere: Or an Epoch of Rest, Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance*. London: Routledge, 1970. 154.

¹²⁵ Gould, Nicholas. "William Morris." In *The Ecologist* vol. 4, no. 6 (1974): 210 - 212. 20.11.2016. http://www.theecologist.org/back_archive/19701999/.

In the last decade, we have seen [...], the apparently unlimited power of `global capital` to transform governments and shuffle casts of `major players` without the smallest concern for distributive justice; and the flickering capacity of political democracy to mitigate the consequences of immiseration, greed and hate. Most of us have been insulated from these agonies, but we are aware that we have been witnessing –in effect– a global variant of the industrial revolution that aroused Morris’s anger.¹²⁶

Thus, she sees a similarity between the circumstances of the nineteenth century and those of the twentieth century. Circumstances that led to the emergence of a myriad of different movements working for positive social change. Most of these movements started out as grassroots movements, but through the course of the century, they spread to become national and in some cases, – like in the case of the three great movements– global.¹²⁷ The three great movements of the twentieth century were the peace movement, the social justice movement and the environmental movement. Arne Næss writes that:

At the end of this century we have seen a convergence of three great areas of self-destructiveness: the self-destructiveness of war, the self destructiveness of exploitation and suppressions among humans, the self-destructiveness of suppression of non-human beings, and of degradation of life conditions in general. The two first gave rise to the global peace movement and the global social justice movement, the third gave rise to the much younger global movement, that of deep ecology.¹²⁸

Thus, the relationship between peace, social justice and the environment are seamlessly interwoven. The awareness of the interconnectedness between the social and the environmental were, as we have seen, issues that Morris seems to have been aware of already in the nineteenth century.

The 1960’s and 70’s was the time when environmentalism seriously began establishing itself as an independent field of interest. In large part due to Rachel Carson’s famous warning against pesticides in *Silent Spring* from 1962, but also the writings of Lynn White, Jaques

¹²⁶ Boos, “An Aesthetic Ecocommunist”, 22.

¹²⁷ Devall, Bill and Alan Drengson. “The Deep Ecology Movement: Origins, Development & Prospects”. *The Trumpeter* vol. 26, no. 2 (2010).48 – 69. 48.

¹²⁸ Næss, Arne. “The Three Great Movements”. In *the Trumpeter: Journal of Ecosophy*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1992. 04.11.2016.

<http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/view/431/706>.

Yves Cousteu and Georg Henrik von Wright.¹²⁹ Environmentalism gained traction in a multitude of different camps, both inside and outside academia. Even if issues such as social inequality, living standards and global justice was present, nature itself now became a part of the equation. This coincided with the growing scientific knowledge about the actual impacts of human actions on the natural environment. The momentum that ecology as a science gained during these years were especially formative for the philosophical wing of the environmentalist movement.¹³⁰

Ecology as a science now proved and classified the interconnectedness between all organisms and their surroundings and it highlighted the deteriorative consequences that human actions had on ecosystems. Making it evident that humans were part of ecosystems, and by hurting nature we ended up hurting ourselves. One of the truly formative environmental philosophies of the 1970's was the ecophilosophy of Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss.

An accomplished mountaineer and influential philosopher, Næss is credited with coining the term deep ecology, developed as an alternative to what he saw as shallow reformist solutions to the environmental crisis.¹³¹ Næss was inspired by ecology when he formed his philosophy, but he realized that ecology as science became too objective in its articulation of the consequences of anthropogenic deterioration of nature.¹³² This led to the development of a philosophy of ecology, that incorporated moral, social, scientific, political and legal propositions. Still, the underlying trope in Næss's thoughts was the interconnectedness between everything and anything.

¹²⁹ Anker, Peder. "Science as a Vacation: A History of Ecology in Norway". In *History of Science* 45, no. 4 (2007). 455-479. 459.

¹³⁰ Peder Anker makes a thorough examination of the history of ecology in Norway, and the Norwegian academic environment's connection to the different disciplines connected to the scientific study of ecology. His claim is that the University of Oslo became highly influential in the ecological discourse of the 1960's and 70's, due to the very unique relationship these scholars had to nature. Anker, Peder. "Science as a Vacation: A History of Ecology in Norway". *History of Science* 45, no. 4 (2007). 454 - 479.

¹³¹ Næss introduced the term deep ecology in 1972, as to describe what he saw as a movement alongside other movements for social responsibility. For more on this see: Næss, Arne. "The Three Great Movements". *The Trumpeter* vol. 9, no. 2(1992). 04.11.2016.

<http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/view/431/706>

¹³² Haukeland, Per Ingvar. *Dyp Glede: Med Arne Næss Inn I Dypøkologien*. Oslo: Flux forlag, 2008. 19.

In 1971 Næss published the first edition of what was to become his most influential work on environmental philosophy, under the name *Ecology and philosophy*.¹³³ In 1976 a revised version with the title *Ecology, community and lifestyle* was published. Here he gave a thorough presentation of ecosophy – and his personal version, Ecosophy T – and the philosophical reasoning behind it. The book was based on a series of lectures and papers he had written on the subject in the previous years and it also comprised a common ideological platform for the deep ecology movement.

2.6 The Shallow and the Deep, Long- Range Ecology Movement

The publication of Rachel Carson's book, has by some been regarded as the beginning of the deep, long-range ecology movement.¹³⁴ Though there was a long-standing movement for conservation of land and resources, anteriorly to the publication of *Silent Spring*, Carson's writings were especially influential because it showed how human well-being depended on the condition of the whole biotic communities.¹³⁵ She explained how living beings were interconnected within ecosystems. Devall and Drengson points out that:

Carson helped us to grasp that caring for some animal populations, such as birds, requires that we care for the health of the whole system they live in. Because we are interrelated, we must respect all forms of life as part of our whole biotic community. In human communities every person counts; so too in natural communities, all beings contribute and participate. As humans with forethought and self reflection, we are responsible for what we do and how we participate in local and global systems.¹³⁶

Thus, Carson showed the need for deep changes in practices and ways of living.¹³⁷ This change required a significant reorientation in attitudes, values and policies. As the prevailing attitude to environmental problems was that it could be solved with reforms and technology, the deep ecology movement, was founded on the idea that these reforms and technologies

¹³³ (My translation): *Økologi og filosofi*. Næss, "Økologi, samfunn og livsstil", xv.

¹³⁴ Devall and Drengson, "The Deep Ecology Movement", 50.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 50

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

were not enough. Carson's book, and writings of other ecologists all indicated that a deep change in basic values and priorities was needed.¹³⁸

Næss first used the term deep ecology at the World Future Research Conference in Bucharest in 1972.¹³⁹ In 1973, Næss further described the deep ecology movement in the article "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary".¹⁴⁰ He used the term deep ecology, as a counterpart for what he called "shallow ecology". Shallow ecology was described as short-term pragmatic solutions to environmental challenges, while deep ecology would go deeper into our attitudes towards our surroundings and thus challenge established episteme. The shallow movement, did not go to the ultimate level in values and conceptions of the world. Shallow ecology, Næss claimed, was mostly concerned with the wealth and affluence of developed countries.¹⁴¹ Shallow ecology, thus, mostly dealt with "pollution and resource depletion in industrialized nations, and only with minor reform of the system without fundamental changes in values and practises."¹⁴²

According to George Sessions, shallow environmentalism suggests that instead of radical change in society one needs to reform society ecologically. Sustainable development, was according to Sessions a type of shallow environmentalism: "The concept of sustainable development is a good example of what we call shallow environmentalism, because the idea is that development will not stop, we will continue to develop we just want to develop sustainably or ecologically."¹⁴³ Deep ecology, Næss claimed, would only partly be concerned about pollution and resource depletion, arguing that "there are deeper concerns which touch upon principles of diversity, complexity, autonomy, decentralisation, symbiosis, egalitarianism and classlessness."¹⁴⁴

Deep ecology, was not an independent philosophy. Næss used the term to articulate a social movement of individuals who had a similar approach to the environmental crisis. When Næss used terms of diversity, symbiosis and decentralisation –to mention a few– he tried to

¹³⁸ Ibid. 51.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 52.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Boeckel."The Call of the Mountain". Video. 04.11.2016.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf3cXTAqS2M>

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

articulate the underlying intuitions that supporters of deep changes felt was needed in relation to how the natural and built environment was treated. The deep, long-range ecology movement must be understood as a global social movement of people with similar attitudes towards the environment. Deep ecologist Bill Devall describes the deep ecology movement as:

Deep long-range ecology movement is- deconstructing those phrases- first of all a social movement. It is not an ideology. It is not a church, not a specific religion. It is a social movement. Social movement meaning people working together, in a community. It is based upon ecology, the relationships between organisms and their habitat. It is long-range, because it does not attempt in this movement to discount the future, but to take in account potentialities and possibilities of evolution of the system. And it is deep in that it encourages participants to ask questions of why. Most importantly; why am I here? What is meaning? So [the deep ecology movement] is basically a search for meaning in a world of fact.¹⁴⁵

In 1976, when Næss published *Økologi, samfunn og livsstil*, the deep ecology platform was articulated through eighteen points. In 1984 a revised version articulated by Næss and Sessions was presented.¹⁴⁶ This platform consisting of eight points, was as more concise and comprised version of what Næss had suggested in 1976. The platform was a *proposal* for a deep ecological platform, because “the platform formulations are not supposed to list common views in concrete situations, but to express the most general and basic views they have in common.”¹⁴⁷ Devall and Drengson argues that supporters of the deep ecology movement mostly agrees on the general platform principles of the movement.¹⁴⁸ Global social movements often unite people with different religions and personal philosophies, therefore they are often difficult to precisely define.¹⁴⁹ This is true of the deep ecology movement as well, but these global social movements are often characterized by general goals and aims, such as the deep ecology platform of Næss and Sessions. Other philosophers and activists have defined and articulated such platforms, but the eight point platform of Næss, is according to Devall and Drengson, the one that “distils what to [them] seem to be shared

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ see appendix

¹⁴⁷ Næss, ”Ecology, community and lifestyle”, 28.

¹⁴⁸ Devall and Drengson, “The Deep Ecology Movement”, 53.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

principles in the movement from a wide, cross-cultural literature, and also gleaned from activist' statements.»¹⁵⁰

Essences of the eight point platform has now been incorporated into many documents and agreements, and the original 1984 formulation has been re-written and re-structured since then. A revised and compromised version was published in 2002, still incorporating the most central themes from the 1984 version. The 2002 deep ecology platform was as follows:

- 1) All living things have intrinsic value.
- 2) The diversity and richness of life has intrinsic value.
- 3) Except to satisfy vital human needs, humankind does not have a right to reduce this diversity and richness.
- 4) It would be better for human beings if there were fewer of them, and much better for other living creatures.
- 5) Today the extent and nature of human interference in the various ecosystems is not sustainable, and lack of sustainability is rising.
- 6) Decisive improvements requires considerable change: social, economic, technological, and ideological.
- 7) An ideological change would essentially entail seeking better quality of life rather than a raised standard of living.
- 8) Those who accept the aforementioned points are responsible for trying to contribute directly or indirectly to the realization of the necessary changes.

Due to the scope of this thesis the 2002 version has been best suited to present in the body text. It is important to note that with this revised version, the notions of self-reliance and local communities, that Næss' 1976 version articulated, are not as explicitly stated. However, these notions must be understood as implicit in his notion of diversity and symbiosis. This will be further discussed in chapter 4.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has presented some of the central themes in the discussion on the greening of William Morris, as well as a general outline of the development of the deep ecology movement. The common denominator between the mentioned claims of Morris

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

environmentalism, is that they place him more in line with eco socialism, than perhaps deep ecology. However, without contesting this claim, the aspect of Morris's thoughts that might seem to make him relevant in relation to deep ecology, is that he seemed to be highly sensitive to the interconnectedness and co-dependence of social structures and the environment.

This suggests that Morris was aware of the problematic relationship between man and nature, that troubled also troubled Næss. When Næss introduced the concept of Self-realisation (this will be further discussed in chapter 4) his aim was to conceptualize the notion of all life fundamentally being one. Through active Self-realisation, as a process, man should aim at understanding himself as a part of a larger self. A larger self that included nature as well as other humans, things, and social structures.

As will be discussed in chapter 4, deep long-range solutions to the environmental crisis had, according to Næss, to be informed by an understanding of interconnectedness and co-dependence. When highlighting the aspects of Morris's thoughts that relates to community self-reliance and alternative technologies, it is important to not project modern day understanding of these concepts to the past. As Fallan points out:

This recent 'greening of William Morris' has also been criticized as a retrospective ideological extrapolation of contemporary concerns onto the past. There are good reasons to be cautious, of course, because Morris did not have access to the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of our current understanding of ecology and sustainability—but this does not render his ideas incompatible with or irrelevant to more recent historical developments.¹⁵¹

The objective of this thesis is not to project notions of sustainability on to the thoughts and ventures of William Morris, or the Arts and Craft movement. And it is important to reiterate that since our time's understanding of the word sustainability, is troublesome at best, it does little to illuminate how this thesis deals with its material. The objective of mentioning Morris in relation to deep ecology is not to try and prove a connection between the two. However, there are aspects of Morris's thoughts on craft and nature that can help illuminate how Austvatn Craft Central, in retrospect, can be understood within the history of sustainable

¹⁵¹ Fallan, Kjetil and Finn Arne Jørgensen. "Environmental Histories of Design: Towards a New Research Agenda". In *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2017. 103 – 121. 109.

design. As a warp thread, the ideas of Morris that have been mentioned in this chapter will help guide the analysis of how Austvatn Craft Central might be fulfilling some of the deep aspects of ecologically sane production and politics that deep ecology called for. Because, as we will examine further in chapter 4, without blatantly projecting contemporary ideas on to the past, there seems to be some modalities of thinking that tangent both Austvatn Craft Central, William Morris and the deep ecology of Arne Næss.

3. Weft

The 1960's and 70's was the time for counterculture and revolt. It was the time of consumer criticism, and distrust of established power structures. It was a time of social justice movements and it was the time when environmentalism became an independent, influential movement. In her master's thesis on the Austrian-American designer and activist Victor Papanek and his relationship to the Scandinavian design community, Ida Kamilla Lie observes how

[b]oth in the United States and Europe an increased distrust towards materialism as system and established political power structures was emerging. Debates concerning the role and appropriation of technology in society converged with the growing recognition of the devastating effect technology had on the natural environment. People started questioning if the benefits of technology outweighed the disadvantages.¹⁵²

But it was also the time of great internal turmoil within the Norwegian Arts and Crafts community. And it was a time when most of rural Norway still suffered under economic and social hardship. In these years, the designs of Sigrun Berg came to be closely associated with an alternative lifestyle, representing slow-living, local communities, natural economy and gender equality.¹⁵³ This symbolism is still today associated with her designs.¹⁵⁴ However, it was not just the aesthetics of her design that initiated this. Berg was a vocal and passionate advocate for the potential craft and design had in a larger discussion on social responsibility.

¹⁵² (My translation): "Både i USA og Europa gjorde en økende mistro til både materialismen som system, og de politiske makthaverne seg gjeldene utover 1960-tallet. Debatter om teknologiens rolle i samfunnet, og hvem som skulle kontrollere den, falt sammen med en voksende erkjennelse av de miljømessige utfordringene teknologien førte med seg. Spørsmålet mange stilte, var om fordelene med teknologien veide opp for de negative effektene på samfunnet."

Lie, "Vardagsvaror for den virkelige verden", 11.

¹⁵³ Lium, Randi Nygaard. *Textilkunst i Norge*. Trondheim: Museumsforlaget, 2016. 131.

¹⁵⁴ The term "purple scarfs and ergonomic footwear" was used in the 1960s and '70s to address a certain type of left-wing, environmentally concerned person wearing Sigrun Berg designs. In 2012, the leader of environmental organization Bellona, used the term to describe members of the Green party.

Larsen, Hege. "Løfter fram Sigrun Berg". *Khrono*. 20.05.2017. <https://khrono.no/campus-samfunn/2013/12/det-lilla-skjerfets-mor>.

In 1971, a research project, mapping the socio-political conditions of Nord-Odal municipality, put into effect their vision of a craft central that would offer employment, solidarity and community self-reliance. Sigrun Berg was the chief consultant designer for the project, that was to be named Austvatn Craft Central. With Austvatn Craft Central, traditions of home craft as supplementary income and potential for social betterment, was revitalized.

Following the analogy of weaving, where the weft threads This chapter will examine the ideological and practical background for the establishment of Austvatn Craft Central. First, a brief introduction of the design discourses of the 1960's and 70s will be given, to show that the ideas of Sigrun Berg fell between the larger discourses of the time. This will allow us to consider her in relation to design activism. Her visions for the future for craft, incorporated a social responsibility imperative and thus, aimed at answering the contemporary call for more socially aware design.

The aim of this thesis is to locate, in the ideology and practice of Austvatn Craft Central, principles that harmonises with deep ecology. However, in order to get to this point, it is first necessary to examine the ideology and modes of thinking that formed and informed Austvatn Craft Central. Therefore, this chapter will highlight aspects of Austvatn Craft Central that will be used in the final analysis in chapter 4.

3.1 Design or Craft? A Political Issue

Towards the end of the 1960's and throughout the 70's, the Norwegian design community was gradually separating into two camps. On the one hand, designers aiming for industrial manufacturing of goods found the applied arts terminology to be narrow and limiting. On the other, craft practitioners began identifying more closely with the ideology, politics and financial structures of fine arts.¹⁵⁵ This cumulated in a heated debate that ended with the disintegration of the National Federation of Norwegian Applied Arts (LNB) in 1978.

¹⁵⁵ For more on this process see:

Kjetil Fallan's 2007 article "How an Excavator Got Aesthetic Pretensions – Negotiating Design in 1960's Norway". In *Journal of Design History*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2007. 43-59.

Thomas Tengesdal Nordby's master thesis "The Swan Song of the Applied Arts - Ideology and Utopia in the National Federation of Norwegian Applied Arts 1965–1978" from 2015.

And Mette Grieg Toyomasu's master thesis "Fra brukskunst til kunsthåndverk, en fagpolitisk

The Norwegian Association for Arts and Crafts (NK)¹⁵⁶ – which was established in 1975 but retained its membership in the LNB until 1978 – sought to define its understanding of craft more in tune with the political, aesthetical and economic structures of the fine arts. This implied moving away from industrial design and the focus on beautiful objects of use that the terminology of applied arts maintained.¹⁵⁷ In 1965 LNB was reorganised from an individual membership organisation to become an umbrella organisation for all major professional associations in the fields of design, craft and even architecture, as well as for other relevant institutions. In many aspects LNB saw it as its social responsibility to advocate for the creation of beautiful and affordable objects for the masses.¹⁵⁸ Craft practitioners, who increasingly understood their calling as something other than the production of objects for use, whether industrially or manually, felt that the ideology and politics of LNB did little or nothing to promote the specificity of their craft.

3.2 Sigrun Berg: Craft and Social responsibility

Entrenched between, or beyond, these two camps were the midwife, turned painter,¹⁵⁹ turned designer, Sigrun Berg. She represented a vision differing from most of her contemporaries. Berg believed that designers and the manufacturing industry had a social responsibility that would not compromise beauty and quality. While many of her fellow craft practitioners worked towards an independent craft association that would facilitate an economic and political alternative to the industrial production of applied arts, Berg worked closely with LNB to examine an alternative model for craft within the established system.¹⁶⁰

Thomas Tengesdal Nordby writes that LNB and Berg, throughout the 1970s (and parallel to the internal turmoil) had worked on a study on how the applied arts, home craft, and small

opprydding: Keramikeren Yngvild Fagerheim som eksponent for en kunstnergruppe”, from the University of Oslo 1997.

¹⁵⁶ Norske Kunsthåndverkere.

¹⁵⁷ Gali, André. “Fra Brukskunst til Kunsthåndverk”. In *Kampen med materialet*, ed. André Gali, 20 – 28. Oslo: John Grieg Forlag, 2015. 22.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Berg studied painting at the National Academy of fine art, under Axel Revold in the period of 1934 – 35. She then participated in the endeavours of Sosialistisk kulturfront, the Norwegian association for culture and socialism, indicating that her interest in the social responsibility of the arts reaches back to the beginning of her artistic career. Katrine Lund, *Kunst og kamp: Sosialistisk kulturfront* (Oslo: Orfeus, 2012).

¹⁶⁰ Nordby, “The Swan Song of the Applied Arts”, 68-69.

scale industry could collaborate in order to ensure the economic foundation of craft practitioners.¹⁶¹ Berg believed that the need for an organisation that could establish contact between manufacturers and craft practitioners, would be beneficial for both sides.¹⁶² She envisioned a collaboration between traditional craftsmanship and industrial manufacturing.¹⁶³

Throughout her career, Berg herself worked closely with several of Norway's most prestigious textile manufactures. From 1956, she designed for the United Norwegian Wool Factories¹⁶⁴ (DFU),¹⁶⁵ a collaboration that proved quite successful, resulting in favourable reviews both nationally and abroad.¹⁶⁶ She was awarded a diplome d'honneur and a gold medal at the Triennale di Milano, in 1954 and 1960, respectively, for the textiles she designed for DFU. She also designed a series of wool blankets for Røros Tweed. These became highly sought after and was eventually copied by another textile manufacturer.¹⁶⁷ Turid S. Myhr has made the interesting observation that before Berg joined forces with the Norwegian textile manufacturers, most of their designs were imported from abroad. The fact that her collaboration with DFU and other companies became so successful showed that Norwegian design could produce distinct textiles of high aesthetic and material quality.¹⁶⁸ The fact that this happened quite late in relation to other countries was, according to Norwegian interior architect and editor of the design journal *Bonytt*, Arne Remlov, perhaps a "combination of the

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 68–69.

¹⁶² Ibid. 69.

¹⁶³ For more on the enterprises of Sigrun Berg see: Turid S. Myhr's master's thesis, "Sigrun Berg: Tekstilkunstner og designer: En redegjørelse for hennes virksomhet med hovedvekt på den monumentale tekstilutsmykkingen av Håkonshallen I Bergen 1959-61", University of Oslo, 2010, as well as the ongoing research project of Liv Klakegg Dahlin. Findings and results are continually published on the blog, "Oppdrag Sigrun Berg", <https://oppdagsigrunberg.wordpress.com/>.

¹⁶⁴ (My translation): De Forenede Ullvarefabrikker (DFU).

DFU was a Corporation established by the unification of several Norwegian textile manufacturers. It consisted of Aalgaards Uldvarefabrikker, Nydalens Fabrikker, Hjula Væverier, Grorud Textilfabrikker, Skauger Fabrikker, and Fredfos Uldvarefabrik.

Myhr, Turid S. "Sigrun Berg, Tekstilkunstner og designer", 9.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. 9-11.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 11.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

craft practitioners' critique of industrial production and the textile industry's lacking faith in how craft practitioners and designers could help increase revenue."¹⁶⁹

By the 1960s she had become an acknowledged textile designer, receiving prestigious commissions such as the royal yacht, the Norwegian embassy in Stockholm and the Oslo City Hall. But it was the locally organized craft centrals that she was most passionate about. Berg felt that it was the people and the homes behind the products that was most essential.¹⁷⁰ By utilizing traditional techniques, knowledge and a workforce available right there in the local communities, design could be instrumental in maintaining these people's way of life.¹⁷¹

3.3 Difficult times and the Social Responsibility of Craft and Design

Some of the largest social problems in Norway after the war were unemployment and centralization, causing the unravelling of a traditional way of life. Making a living from small scale farming and foresting in rural areas, located far away from industrial and educational centres became increasingly difficult. Sigrun Berg noticed this already in the interwar period, while working as a midwife in the Telemark region, and in 1947 she started her own weaving workshop outsourcing many of the weaving assignments to women in Telemark villages.¹⁷² Her enterprise thus provided rural families with a much-needed extra income and the ability to work from their own homes, whilst at the same time supplying a starving post-war market with high-quality textile products in substantial volumes.¹⁷³ From her designs, local women weaved furniture- and clothing fabrics, rugs, carpets and other textiles.

¹⁶⁹ (My translation): "[...] både brukskunstnerens kritikk av industrivarer og fabrikkens manglende tro på at kunstnerne kunne medvirke til å øke omsetningen [...]". Myhr, "Sigrun Berg, tekstilkunstner og designer", 11.

¹⁷⁰ NRK, "Brukskunstneren Sigrun Berg I Nærbilde," ed. NRK (1967). 25.10.2016. <https://tv.nrk.no/program/FOLA00001267/brukskunstneren-sigrun-berg-i-naerbilde>

¹⁷¹ NN. "Veversker i Austbygde Finpusser Formen," *Rjukan Dagblad*, 08.05.1965.

¹⁷² NRK, "Brukskunstneren Sigrun Berg I Nærbilde," ed. NRK (1967). 25.10.2016. <https://tv.nrk.no/program/FOLA00001267/brukskunstneren-sigrun-berg-i-naerbilde>

¹⁷³ The deficiency of household objects was tremendous. It seemed a difficult task to supply homes with the utilities that they needed, and often pragmatic solutions were sought to overcome this. The lack of foreign currency for the import of such goods, was one factor and the interior manufacturing industry was producing at reduced capacity at best. This resulted in a surge of pragmatic solutions. In 1949, the small country of Norway had as many as 400 pottery workshops, where the clay was sourced on site and burned in home-made kilns. Wildhagen, Fredrik. *Formgitt i Norge*. Oslo: Unipub, 2012. 217.

She envisioned a crew of local craftspeople ready to produce handmade items on assignment from designers, artists and the manufacturing industry.¹⁷⁴ While the local authorities saw this kind of home based crafts production as archaic and not a suitable strategy for improving employment rates, Berg took matters into her own hands.¹⁷⁵ In 1961 over one hundred people in the small community of Trysil were weaving for her workshop, effectively saving the livelihood in these villages.¹⁷⁶ She was confident that hers was a viable option and that this type of work would not only provide income, but also the satisfaction of feeling useful and of a job well done.¹⁷⁷ However, she stressed the fact that without some sort of institutionally-based coordination between producers, buyers, and designers, most of these local craft initiatives would fail.¹⁷⁸ In the early 1960s she developed a plan for the organisation of craft initiatives, both centrally, locally, and in municipalities. It was important, she explained, to consider this type of work as homework,¹⁷⁹ not simply home craft. With the understanding that it indeed was labour – and payed work – the producers would be committed to deliver the commissioned products according to agreement with the buyer.¹⁸⁰

3.4 The Nord-Odal Project: Design Activism and Social Science

Towards the end of the 1960s a research group lead by sociologist Yngvar Løchen undertook a comprehensive study of the Nord-Odal municipality of Hedmark county, on the commission of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Sosialdepartementet). The mandate was to include individuals with physical, psychological and social disabilities, and to test and evaluate new measurements of social aid.¹⁸¹ In addition they were to develop a model for socio-political

¹⁷⁴ Nordby, Thomas Tengesdal, "The Swansong of the Applied Arts", 68 – 69.

¹⁷⁵ NN. Ursula Monsen, "Hele Jølster Lager Brukskunst."

¹⁷⁶ Aune, Ernst. "Veving berget næringsgrunnlaget i Trysil grender". *Sarpsborg Arbeiderblad*, 18.9.1961.

¹⁷⁷ NRK. "Brukskunstneren Sigrun Berg I Nærbilde." edited by NRK, 1967. 31.08.2016. URL: <https://tv.nrk.no/program/FOLA00001267/brukskunstneren-sigrun-berg-i-naerbilde>.

¹⁷⁸ NN. "Sigrun Berg legger fram forslag til samlet plan". *Norges Bondeblad*, Oslo. 03.12.1963.

¹⁷⁹ "Heimeyrke" – Homework is here understood as the term is used by sociologists Eileen Boris and Cynthia R. Daniels, that it relates to industrial homework, in: Boris, Eileen and Cynthia R. Daniels (eds.). *Homework: historical perspectives and contemporary perspectives on paid labour at home*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

¹⁸⁰ NN. "Sigrun Berg legger fram forslag til samlet plan". *Norges Bondeblad*, Oslo. 03.12.1963

¹⁸¹ Georges Midré, *Samfunnsendring Og Sosialpolitikk: Rapport Fra Nord-Odalprosjektet*. Oslo: Gyldendal, 1973. 15.

reform, as a future-oriented, alternative solution to established models.¹⁸² The research group included members from a wide variety of different professions and disciplines. The study was supposed to say something universal about social conditions in municipalities in rural Norway, but as this was an action research project the model had to be executed in collaboration with a suitable municipality. Nord-Odal fulfilled the requirements of having a certain amount of problems relating to employment, health and social issues, and depopulation. It also lacked any form of organized industry, so the issue of unemployment seemed to amplify depopulation and health issues, as the younger generation of able bodies left the area.

One of the objectives of the Nord-Odal project was to execute an alternative model for social aid, developed by the research team. In 1970, the team contacted Sigrun Berg.¹⁸³ The idea was to establish a craft production central, organized as a cooperative. The aim was to present a model for socio-political reform, as an alternative solution to industry, based on the needs of the “grassroots”. It was therefore imperative that the initiative would not be perceived as an extraneous force imposed on its users.¹⁸⁴ In this, the project deliberately shunned prevalent social politics of the time. Upon being contacted by the research group, Sigrun Berg reached out to Olav Dalland and Rolf Harald Olsen, both students at the National College of Applied Art and Craft (SHKS).¹⁸⁵ Olav Dalland had studied textile design and Rolf Harald Olsen interior design. Berg became aware of Dalland and Olsen, due to their involvement in the student revolt in 1968, where students at SHKS demonstrated against the prevalent organisation of the school.

As Ida Kamilla Lie has showed, the situation got particularly inflamed when, in 1968, the school planned its hundred and fiftieth anniversary and the student council threatened to boycott the event in protest over what they saw as insufficient student involvement.¹⁸⁶ According to Lie, the anniversary received considerable press coverage, due as much to the tense situation between the students and the school, as the event itself.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² Ibid. 15.

¹⁸³ Ibid. 205.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 205.

¹⁸⁵ Statens kunst og håndverkshøyskole (SHKS).

¹⁸⁶ Lie, ”Vardagsvaror for den virkelige verden”, 51

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

The situation at SHKS must be viewed in light of the prevalent situation within the Norwegian applied arts community in general. The students' critique of the situation at the school was not restricted to the events surrounding the anniversary. The lack of student democracy within the institution, as well as what they saw as a predilection for aesthetics over social responsibility and "real problems", were matters of high concern.¹⁸⁸ Lie shows that it was the younger generation of designers who led the campaign for using design to address real problems and actual needs of society. She highlights a quote from industrial designer Thorbjørn Rygh, who taught at the school, where he states that a separation between younger and older designers was emerging. He saw the younger generation being more in tune with society, whilst the post-war generation of designers was largely more preoccupied with the aesthetical side of design.¹⁸⁹

Both Dalland and Olsen had participated in the Scandinavian Design Students Association (SDO) seminar "Man and environment" in Stockholm in 1968. Here, Papanek, lectured on the "Social and Moral Responsibility of Design", "Revolution, Social Change and Design", and "Design education".¹⁹⁰ The seminar also included practical workshops. Olav Dalland participated in a workshop on designing for people with disabilities.¹⁹¹ It was during this workshop that one of the participants, Susanne Koefod, designed the preliminary draft of what is now universally known as the international symbol of access.¹⁹² In relation with their involvement with the student revolt, Dalland and Olsen were interviewed on national television. After seeing the interview, Sigrun Berg reached out to Dalland and Olsen regarding the Nord-Odal project.¹⁹³ They were young designers, influenced by Papanek and the need for socially responsible design. Berg probably found kindred spirits in the two young designers. They were young radicals, searching for a way to make design and craft socially

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. 53.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. 54.

¹⁹⁰ Lie, "Vardagsvaror for den virkelige verden", 35 – 40.

¹⁹¹ Dalland had an especially relevant background for the project, as he in addition to studying textiles at SHKS also worked part-time at the national institution for rehabilitation. Working with people with different physical and psychological handicaps, Dalland primarily functioned as a supervisor and with guidance in the institution's art program. Personal communication with Olav Dalland, 06.10.2016.

¹⁹² Lie, "Vardagsvaror for den virkelige verden", 39.

¹⁹³ Personal communication with Olav Dalland, 06.10.2016, and Rolf Harald Olsen, 25.01.2017.

responsible.¹⁹⁴ Thus, both Olsen and Dalland joined the Nord-Odal project, and participated in developing the research group's model for social aid; the Austvatn Craft Central.

An important foundation for the collaboration between the researchers and the artists was that both groups, from their respective professional vantage points, readily saw that the Nord-Odal community was experiencing significant challenges, and agreed that both types of expertise could jointly contribute towards improving the conditions.¹⁹⁵ The social scientists wanted to move away from a theoretical and academic approach to social problems and towards a more reality-oriented and practical social science.¹⁹⁶ The designers, on their part, were concerned about the growing industrial manufacturing of objects of desire produced for an increasing consumer market. As a remedy, they looked to reviving more traditional practices and circumstances of craft production.¹⁹⁷ This way design and craft could be offered as a viable option for employment also in rural communities as well as help stimulate meaningful social collaborations. The social aspect of the project was important for Berg, but there was no substituting for the quality of the objects it could produce.¹⁹⁸ The collaboration between the social scientists and the designers, resulted in the proposal for a craft central. The project rapport describes it as:

[the Austvatn Craft Central] would be grounded on crafts, and it was meant as an option for employment within its local community. We were going to focus on an organized form for small-scale serial production. We regarded the craft central as the heart of a system of production, and this system should utilize local resources.¹⁹⁹

Thus, Austvatn Craft Central was to be established on the visions of reviving more traditional craft practices, revitalizing the local community and the serial production of high quality objects.

¹⁹⁴ Personal communication with Rolf Harald Olsen, 25.01.2017.

¹⁹⁵ Midré, "Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk", 205.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 206.

¹⁹⁸ E-Mail Correspondance with Olav Dalland, 05.11.2016.

¹⁹⁹ (My translation): "Denne sentralen skulle bygge på kunsthåndverk, og den var ment som et sysselsettingstilbud i bygda. Vi skulle satse på organisert små-serieproduksjon. Vi oppfattet sentralen som et midtpunkt i et produksjonssystem, og dette systemet skulle utnytte lokale resursjer." Midré, "Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk", 206.

3.5 Austvatn Craft Central: Revitalising Home Craft

The ideology behind the Austvatn Craft Central was the origins of home craft.²⁰⁰ Based on the notion that home craft originated within the natural economy of the agrarian community, where resources were allocated by sharing, direct bartering or according to traditional customs.²⁰¹ Objects were produced by and for the people who needed them. This was closely linked to the whole economy of the agrarian household, as textiles, utensils and tools were in large part produced on the farm. This type of folkway craft, have a long tradition in Norway, and the Nord-Odal project was not the first social scientific study to recognize that craft could inform and aid social politics. Throughout the nineteenth century the Royal Norwegian Society for Rural Development, brought home craft into the national market economy.²⁰² The Society was established in 1809, and its objective was to coordinate different forms of trades, industry and science.²⁰³ The society considered home craft to be an integral part of rural industry, and when the society changed its organisational structures during the nineteenth century, craft remained an important focal point.

Kjetil Fallan point out that the aesthetic aspect of traditional home craft, did not rise to the prominence until the last decades of the nineteenth century. Before this, the interest in traditional home craft focused on its potential for economic and moral betterment. This formed, according to Fallan: “something of a campaign that reached its peak in the 1850’s and 1860s.”²⁰⁴ In 1859, when the Royal Norwegian Society for Rural Development held its fifth national meeting, the botanist, F. Schübeler, spoke of the potential for home craft in export trades, making it an important supplementary income to rural areas.²⁰⁵ Schübeler and his compatriots saw home craft as a *way* of production rather than as aesthetic objects. The objective was that home craft could contribute to the economies of rural Norway, thus having an important role in the national economy.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ Midré, "Samfundsending og sosialpolitikk", 207.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Glambek, Ingeborg. *Kunstnen, nytten og moralen: Kunstindustri og husflid i Norge 1800 – 1900*. Oslo: Solum forlag, 1988. 28.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Fallan, Kjetil. *Designing Modern Norway: A history of design discourse*. London: Routledge, 2017. 20.

²⁰⁵ Glambek, "Kunsten, nytten og moralen", 35.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. 35-36.

One of the most prolific champions of traditional home craft in Norway, was theologian-cum-ethnologist, Eilert Sundt. In addition to recognizing home craft as a means to overcome poverty, Sundt believed that home craft, had the ability of fostering industriousness, skill and dignity in people.²⁰⁷ This aspect clearly resonates with the ideology of Austvatn Craft Central.

The Nord-Odal project report states that craft has always been a way for immobilized people to contribute in society. Individuals that for some reason could not participate in the day-to-day chores of husbandry, could contribute for instance by wood carving or other form of crafts.²⁰⁸ In this way, craft performed an important socio-political function,²⁰⁹ and imbued the production of goods with an ethical imperative. The project report states that craft in the early days was also a way of keeping farmhands and workers occupied in-between the core shores on the farm. In Norwegian, the word for home craft is “husflid” (directly translated to house or home (hus) diligence (flid)), and the report states that this term most likely derives from the protestant position that diligence in itself was a virtue. This in turn strengthened craft’s position within the fabric of this traditional society.²¹⁰ Thus, the ideology of Austvatn Craft Central echoed the ideas of Eilert Sundt.

Further, the Nord-Odal project recognized that pre-industrial manufacturing, organized in guilds and unions, evolved into small-scale serial production and became an important source of income within the communities involved.²¹¹ In some cases, the revenue from craft production was the sole source of income. The guild and union system could also preside over designated sales channels, thus making craft production in large part: “[...] independent from mercantile organizations, and the revenue went unabridged to the producers themselves.”²¹² However, this system of pre-industrial manufacturing did not survive the rise of capitalism and the industrial revolution. As the rapport states: “Rural life’s relative independence from a capitalist class structure was curtailed at the expense of standardized forms of production aimed at an affluent consumer market, with a declining sensitivity to quality.”²¹³

²⁰⁷ Fallan, “Designing Modern Norway”, 20.

²⁰⁸ Midré, “Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk”, 207.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid. 207.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² (My translation): “[...] uavhengig av merkantile organisasjoner, og fortjenesten gikk uavkortet til produsentene selv.” Midré. “Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk”. 207.

²¹³ (My translation): “Den relative uavhengighet av en kapitalistisk klassestruktur som preget bygdelivet, ble beskåret, og man satset på standardiserte former beregnet på et kjøpekraftig

The Nord-Odal research group recognized that this resulted in an unravelling of the way of life in communities dependent on this form of production. The producers, who had a close connection to the material from which they produced their goods, lost control of the organization of labour and the management of workforce and distribution.²¹⁴ The previously established cooperatives and collaborations, within and across communities, thus became lost. It became increasingly difficult to recognize and take care of the individuals who had relied on craft production as a source of employment.

Accordingly, it was crucial for the members of the Nord-Odal project that some of these elements of folkway craft traditions were revitalized in Austvatn Craft Central. For the social scientist, the social aspect was without question quintessential to the project. However, for Berg, Dalland and Olsen, craft itself was the fundamental force within Austvatn Craft Central.²¹⁵ The group wanted to place Austvatn Craft Central between two perimeters.²¹⁶ On the one hand, it should be based on craft production, where attentiveness to materials and quality was key. On the other hand, it should function as a factory with a stable production and financial security for the workers.²¹⁷ The main purpose of the craft central was small-scale serial production by local producers, organized as a cooperative where the control and management was placed in the hands of the producers themselves.²¹⁸ These ideas were not only rooted in the distant past. Ideas on the social and economic potential of craft had, just a few years earlier, been re-introduced by the prominent social scientist and politician, Ottar Brox. His ideas on craft as socio-political remedy in rural Norway, resonates with those of Austvatn Craft Central.

In 1966, Brox published his book *What is happening in Northern Norway?*,²¹⁹ a critical analysis of the connection between national socio-political strategies and the living conditions in Northern-Norway. He criticised, technocratic solutions based on top-down, centralized policy-making, extrinsic to the communities under scrutiny. The poor economic conditions in

publikum uten dyptgående sans for kvalitet.” Midré, “Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk”, 207-208.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ E-Mail Correspondance with Olav Dalland. 05.11.2016.

²¹⁶ Midré, "Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk", 208.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ (My translation): *Hva skjer i Nord-Norge?*

rural Norway, he argued, were thus a direct consequence of decisions being made by outside forces.²²⁰ He stated that:

[...] the burden of the consequences is being carried by society, therefore it is society that should be responsible for the planning. But society does not necessary mean the government. To give control to society does, in this respect, mean nothing more than to give the local communities, for whom the plans of action are developed, the responsibility of examining and approving them.²²¹

The authority of deciding how and what to implement into rural policymaking, thus, had to be directed back to the local communities themselves. Direct financial aid and tax cuts merely seemed to increase the gulf between town and country, as it enhanced the financial centres and weakened the smaller municipalities. Every plan for production in these areas was based on the available natural resources and labour. In this respect, Brox's thinking resonates with those of Arne Næss. The concept of community self-determination and self-reliance were important to policymaking that would be in line with deep ecology principles. This will be discussed further in chapter 4. However, it is important to mention this here because it is in this aspect that Brox's ideas also correspond with those of the Nord-Odal project. The objective of Austvatn Craft Central was to utilize locally produced raw material and it had to be organized in a way that gave a maximum amount of self-determination to the central's members.²²²

Although Brox's case was Northern-Norway, he upheld that his analysis was relevant for rural Norway in general.²²³ In addition to an analysis and critique of the governmental plan for Northern Norway, Brox proposed his own plan of action for radical and stable improvement of the living conditions in these areas. His conclusion was that in order for the peripheral communities to improve their economic situation, the economic activities had to be local and under local control. Instead of simply supplying natural resources and labour to the

²²⁰ Ottar Brox, *Hva Skjer I Nord-Norge? : En Studie i Norsk Utkantpolitikk*. Oslo: Pax, 1969. 7.

²²¹ (My translation): “[...] samfunnet blir i alle fall belastet med følgene, derfor bør samfunnet ha ansvaret for planlegginga. Men samfunnet betyr ikke nødvendigvis staten. Å gi samfunnet kontrollen betyr i dette tilfellet ikke annet enn at detaljplanene må vurderes og godkjennes av den lokale befolkningen som de er utarbeidet til fordel for.” Brox, “Hva skjer i Nord-Norge”, 129.

²²² Midré, “Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk”, 208.

²²³ Ottar Brox, *Hva Skjer I Nord-Norge? : En Studie i Norsk Utkantpolitikk*. Oslo: Pax, 1969. 7.

larger economic centres, rural areas should start making products higher up the value chain in order to benefit from greater profits and added value.²²⁴ Brox claimed that agriculture and production for self-sufficiency had a much higher revenue than production of resources for export to economic centres, and he therefore proposed development of different cooperation's within the communities themselves so that production of produce and other necessities would not limit people's ability to maintain occupation within other fields of employment.²²⁵ But, he claimed, the question of making craft and small scale industry an attractive alternative was also a question of social change and a shift in established power structures.²²⁶

Brox suggested a craft central, financed by governmental funding. It would function as a juncture between local craft practitioners, market and export institutions, and experienced designers and craft practitioners. The latter would serve as consultants, educators and designers, so that the products would acquire the highest possible quality. Brox claimed that if this could be a viable option of employment, the individuals disposed to this kind of work would, with proper training, instigate a "new spring" of creative and aesthetic expressions that had not yet been unleashed.²²⁷ Brox's ideas were known and utilised in the planning and development of Austvatn Craft Central.²²⁸ His ideas, though revitalizing traditional tropes from Sundt and his compatriots, must be understood as modern and reactionary in the 1960s. They represented a vision for the future, based on the needs of the grassroots, thus, the models available as inspiration for this grassroots need, was the traditional folkways of local communities. Just a few years into the future, ideas that would tangent those of Brox, was articulated both by Arne Næss and the Nord-Odal research group.

As mentioned, the Nord-Odal projects research group made a deliberate effort to distinguish the ideology of Austvatn Craft Central from the traditional terminology in socio-political methods. In that the craft central aimed at providing an alternative business model, benefitting both economical as well as social needs, it was important that it in all respects functioned as an independent factory, where social needs were maintained but not its main purpose. The craft central was to produce quality goods based on techniques and knowledge inherent within the community of producers. The research group decided that the craft central's

²²⁴ Ibid. 128.

²²⁵ Ibid. 130.

²²⁶ Ibid. 138.

²²⁷ Ibid. 139.

²²⁸ Midré, "Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk", 208.

manufacturing activity should be centred around textile production, mainly weaving. Weaving was the activity that in the simplest manner could be adjusted to the individual skills and needs of its members.²²⁹ Training and education would be provided by skilled craft practitioners, and patterns and designs should be made available through attracting consultants from the field of design.²³⁰

Austvatn Craft Central moved into the old buildings of Austvatn School in October 1970. In June 7th 1972, it was officially registered as a cooperative.²³¹ The members themselves owned the organisation, and shares was determined by how many hours each member worked at the central. The emphasis on participatory decision-making intended to give the members of Austvatn the means to control their own working conditions, the cooperative would thus, be able to engage individuals that otherwise would feel alienated and fall outside conventional business structures.²³² Through the implementation of direct democracy the members would decide which projects to initiate, which type of textiles they would produce, and in which manner.

The main objectives of Austvatn were articulated in the statutes of march 9th 1972.²³³ Although these highlighted the social aspects of its ideology, the principles of craft and design was considered an important part of its objectives. It is therefore important to remember that Austvatn did not just aim at providing an alternative social and economic structure—it was also a professional experiment driven by challenges internal to craft and design discourse. The statutes articulate that Austvatn Craft Central should aim at contributing and examine possible solutions for the problems that craft production of goods and small scale industry was facing.

²²⁹ Riksarkivet. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972.

²³⁰ Ibid. 210 - 211

²³¹ Report from Council Meeting in Nord-Odal municipality, 16.12.1972. National Archives of Austvatn Craft Central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001.

²³² From the founding statutes of 09.03.1972. National archives of Austvatn Craft Central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001.

²³³ From the founding statutes of 09.03.1972. National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001.

In this way, the craft central would continue some of the investigations into how craft, home craft and small scale industry could work together which Sigrun Berg had initiated together with LNB. In this sense, the project functioned as a practical experiment with the aim of demonstrating that this type of serial production of craft products was a viable alternative both to industrial design and to the “artified” craft scene.

Austvatn primarily produced textiles for Sigrun Berg’s own label. After Berg’s designs the workshop also weaved the stage curtain for the Rauland folk school and academy—an institution that opened in 1974, focusing on education within art, ecology, outdoor recreation, drama, philosophy and history of ideas.²³⁴ The craft central also contacted other designers and artists to contribute to the development of patterns as well as providing necessary education and courses. In addition to Olav Dalland, with his expertise in textile printing, and Rolf Harald Olsen teaching classes in drawing, tapestry, works on swaft and basketry, fibre artist, teacher and activist Sunniva Lønning taught classes in plant dying and spindling.²³⁵ In addition, a report found in the Austvatn archives reveals that there was plans of commissioning artist Inger Johanne Brautasett regarding the possibility of using her designs in the production of textiles, but if this was ever executed, is unknown.²³⁶

The craft central would thus, function as both factory, educational centre and social initiative. To achieve the production of textiles that would satisfy modern sensibilities and tastes, relying on old patterns and traditional techniques would not be sufficient. The founding ideas of Berg was, after all, that the expertise of designers and artists should take their social responsibility serious. In a newspaper article published 1963, years before Austvatn was even initiated, Berg argued that in the relationship between handcrafted and machine produced items, old patterns and designs should be meticulously copied, and modern designs should be new. And she stated: “Copies of old coverlets should i.e., in my opinion, be crafted from hand spindled and dyed yarn. In this way, one would achieve an exclusive and expensive side of home craft. But make no mistake, there will always be a marked for these objects. Both

²³⁴ Raulandsakademiet. “History”. *Raulandsakademiet*. 27.05.2017.

<http://www.rauland.org/Aktoer/Raulandsakademiet/About-Raulandsakademiet/History>.

²³⁵ Personal communication with Rolf Harald Olsen, 25.01.2017.

²³⁶ National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001.

nationally and abroad.”²³⁷ Although this quote predates Austvatn Craft Central by almost a decade, it suggests a way of thinking that signifies Berg’s ideas about design. So how, then, would Austvatn achieve the production of textiles that would fit modern tastes and situate it as a factory of small scale serial production, rather than home craft?

The product that was envisioned to be the signature of Austvatn was the Odal carpet. A double weave consisting of a base made of canvas yarn and a top layer of unspun and undyed sheep’s wool. The design of the Odal carpet was made by Berg. Austvatn had established contact with the national meat marked distributor “Kjøtt og flesk sentralen” with a view to deliver its surplus of wool from the meat industry.²³⁸ This wool was originally wasted due to the lack of infrastructure for its utilization in the manufacture of wool products. Austvatn therefore got the main material to produce the Odal carpet free of charge, drastically reducing production costs. The wool was cleaned at the craft central, and the washed wool was dried outdoors on large drying racks out of wood and chicken wire.²³⁹

As necessity is, or so the story goes, the mother of invention, the results from the research on Austvatn Craft Central suggests that the design of the Odal carpet was one of pragmatism rather than artistic vision. The unspun wool would not in itself produce a stable and durable construction for a large floor carpet. Berg thus came up with the idea of the canvas base as a solution to how to maintain the materiality of the natural wool and produce a high-quality floor carpet. The base was weaved as a double weave, and the unspun wool was placed in shelves on top of the base and then batten into place.²⁴⁰ The aesthetical expression of the design was unique to every carpet, as the choice of wool – colours and texture – was entirely in the hands of the weaver. No specific pattern or texture was particularly designed in advance of the weaving process, thus allowing for a wide variety of surface textures and visual expressions.

²³⁷ (My translation): Kopier av gamle åklær bør f.eks. etter min oppfatning være laget av håndspunnet og spesialfarget garn. Derved vil man få en liten eksklusiv og kostbar del av heimeyrket, men vær trygg, den vil det alltid finnes kjøpere til i inn-og utland.” NN. “Sigrun Berg legger fram forslag til samlet plan”. *Norges Bondeblad*, Oslo. 03.12.1963.

²³⁸ Personal communication with Rolf Harald Olsen, 25.01.2017; National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001

²³⁹ Personal communication with Rolf Harald Olsen, 25.01.2017.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

The idea was to produce the Odal carpet on commission. And the sales division of Austvatn Craft Central established contacts with some of the most important distributors of Norwegian textile designs, such as Norway Designs, Rastad og Relling, and Rolf Dragsgård AS.²⁴¹ However, even though the interest in the carpet proved to be significant, and the material for the production did not add to its production costs, the wholesale prize proved to make the Odal carpet too expensive to compete on the market. Because the members of Austvatn Craft Central received proper wages, the total price of the carpet became unable to compete with similar items, that was produced at lower costs. At approx. 3000 NOK pr. square meter in 1972,²⁴² the price seemed to put the carpet in a small and exclusive segment of the market. Eventually, a similar but less expensive carpet from a Swiss manufacturer made the sale of the Odal carpet even more difficult.²⁴³

3.6 Understanding the Significance of the Austvatn Project

Austvatn Craft Central was finally discontinued in 1973. After the research project folded, the deliberate action that the project had taken in establishing itself outside of the traditional norms of social politics, made applying for funding from other governmental institutions a challenge. The established conditions for governmental funding, applied more to sheltered workshops, or educational programs.²⁴⁴ In its resemblance to small scale industry, the craft central evaded the established norms for governmental funding. Its wish to be an alternative to established norms and models was what eventually led to its demise.

But it is important to note that there are lessons to be learned from the project, which to this day might shed light on initiatives that fall in between the established. The fact that the craft central was to constitute an alternative to established norms of production, both in relation to industrial design and to the direction that craft was taking in the 1960s and 70s, allows us to

²⁴¹ Report from meeting of Austvatn Craft Central, 26.05.1972. National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001

²⁴² Report from meeting of Austvatn Craft Central, 16.05.1972. National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001

²⁴³ Personal communication with Rolf Harald Olsen, 25.01.2017.

²⁴⁴ Midré, "Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk", 218-223.

understand Austvatn Craft Central as a form of design activism. It is not, perhaps, activism in the sense of a Papanekian understanding of the word, but suggesting that designers and craft practitioners should take their social responsibility seriously, not by demonstrating or campaigning, nor utilizing the conceptual possibilities that lay within craft, but by using their profession to offer a way of producing craft objects, that did not incorporate established norms of mass production. The radicalism of Austvatn Craft Central, thus resided in its reactionary inclinations. That it looked to the past for inspiration of how to revitalize craft in line with social responsibility imperatives.

There are several aspects of the ideology and practice of Austvatn Craft Central that suggests that it is interesting to consider its ventures in relation to sustainability. The perhaps, most obvious aspect, was that the craft central was considered to be a viable option for communities devoid of industry, and one that would minimize the production of waste, pollution and noise which conventional forms of industry brought with them.²⁴⁵ Also, a production central like this could be placed in close proximity to residential areas, thus limiting the workers' commute as well as not adding strain on natural landscape that otherwise would be used to house new industrial complexes. However, if summarising the ideological foundations of the craft central, several aspects of its venture is relevant for the subsequent analysis in chapter 4. First, the idea of craft and design taking social responsibility. Second, that the central was founded on a traditional understanding of socio-political potential in craft. One that saw home craft and craft production as a viable source of income and providing people with meaningful work. Third, that the notion of self-determination, was incorporated into the organisational structure of the central. Thus, providing its members with the possibility and right to determine how and what to produce. Lastly, the craft central was considered to become an important factor in making the local community self-reliant. As the utilization of locally produced raw materials, would benefit the community and not only the members directly connected to the central.

How these aspects directly apply for an understanding of the craft central's relevance for the design history of sustainability, will be examined and discussed in the following chapter. However, it is important to note that there is a tradition of seeing craft in relation to economic

²⁴⁵ Unidentify document from National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001.

and social betterment. As we shall see, these notions are also incorporated into ideas of ecology and sustainability.

4. Weaving

And just as it is possible to go from any place to any other, so also starting from a defined and specialized field, can one arrive at a realization of ever-extending relationships.

Thus, tangential subjects come into view. The thoughts, however, can, I believe, be traced back to the event of a thread.²⁴⁶

In this quote, Anni Albers articulates the interconnectedness and co-dependence that materializes in the act of weaving. This final chapter, the thesis' discussion, will *weave* together the two constituent components of the study: deep ecology and the case of Austvatn Craft Central. As with the plain weave, where no more than two warp threads and two weft threads are necessary to form a grid, this chapter will utilize the narratives presented in chapter 3, to move under and over each of the metaphorical warp threads from chapter 2. As the weft thread moves over and under the warp threads, tangential subjects come into view. The objective of this chapter, then, is to reveal ecological principles in the ideology and practice of Austvatn Craft Central. In order to uncover these ecological principles, I will juxtapose the ideology behind Austvatn Craft Central, with the deep ecology of Arne Næss.

In chapter 2 I examined the relationship between deep ecology and craft, as articulated through writings on the environmentalism of William Morris and the historical origins of the deep ecology movement. A key observation was that there are two aspects of Morris's green thought that relate to deep ecology. First, that Morris seemed to be aware of the interconnectedness and co-dependence of different components making up a good society, such as pleasurable working conditions, joy, and quality of life as the pre-requisite for the creation of beauty. Secondly, that he understood how the problematic relationship between man and nature allowed man to see himself as nature's master, thus enabling the destruction of the natural environment to satisfy human needs. In the following chapter I will rely on the former aspects of Morris's thoughts to substantiate the assessment of how the ideology behind Austvatn Craft Central relates to deep ecology. The Arts and Crafts ideology is arguably the single-most influential common point of reference in the development of the applied arts all over Europe, so even if there are no explicit connection between Austvatn Craft Central and

²⁴⁶ Albers, "On Weaving", 15.

the Arts and Crafts movement, the present case study is part of this historical trajectory and thus making the Victorian design reform resound rather vibrantly even in 1960s Norway.

To keep things structured, the first three sections will first examine the foundations of ecophilosophy and deep ecology. Then deep ecology principles of diversity, self-reliance and soft technology will be examined as in how they relate to design history. More specifically, how these deep ecological principles relate to the ideology and practice of Austvatn Craft Central and William Morris. To understand how the ideology behind Austvatn Craft Central can express ecological principles, it is necessary to first assess how ecology relates to the social. Explicitly, how deep ecology maintains that an understanding of interconnectedness and co-dependence between the social and nature, is the precondition of any choice or action to be ecologically sane.

Finally, the last five chapters seeks to weave together the philosophy of Arne Næss, the ideology and practise of Austvatn Craft Central and the thoughts and visions of William Morris. And as the weft threads move over and under the warp threads, coinciding ideas comes in to view.

4.1. The Fundamentals of Ecophilosophy, Ecosophy, and Deep Ecology

Ecophilosophy is the utilization of: “basic concepts from the science of ecology – such as complexity, diversity, and symbiosis – to clarify the place of our species within nature through the process of working out a total view.”²⁴⁷ Thus, ecophilosophy is the philosophical designation of the study of ecology. Ecology is derived from the Greek word *oikos* – house or dwelling – and can be considered the study of living conditions, or “Earth household” in Næss’s words.²⁴⁸ When the term was first coined by Ernst Haeckel in 1866, he defined ecology as “the total science of the connections of the organism to the surrounding external world.”²⁴⁹ Ecology can be considered as the interdisciplinary scientific study of the living conditions of organisms and their surroundings. The systems of living as well as non-living

²⁴⁷ Næss, “Ecology, community and lifestyle”, 3.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 38

²⁴⁹ Danielson, Stentor and Philippe Boudes. "Ecology." In *Green Ethics and Philosophy: An A-to-Z Guide*, ed. Julie Newman. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011. 297-305. <http://sk.sagepub.com/reference/greenethics/n46.xml> .

organisms and their relationships to each other are called ecosystems. Arne Næss describes the connection between ecology and ecophilosophy as follows:

The study of ecology indicates an approach, a methodology which can be suggested by the simple maxim 'all things hang together'. This has application to and overlaps with the problems in philosophy: the placement of humanity in nature, and the search for new kinds of explanation of this through the use of systems and relational perspectives. The study of these problems common to ecology and philosophy shall be called ecophilosophy.²⁵⁰

The aspect of ecology that is most essential to ecophilosophy is the fact that it concern itself with the study of "relationships between entities as an essential component of what these entities are in themselves."²⁵¹ In other words, that the question of what constitutes the being of an entity is based on an understanding of this entity *qua* its relationships. These relationships can be internal and external. This means that the relationships that constitute an entity can be outside the entity itself, like the general environment, or inside, such as eating food that is a part of that environment, but then becomes internal.²⁵²

Næss argues that ecophilosophy is a descriptive study. It does not choose between fundamental value priorities, it only explores an inquiry into a particular kind of problem in the juncture between ecology and philosophy.²⁵³ However, value priorities are, according to Næss, imperative in making pragmatic decisions. This is where he introduces the term ecosophy, a personal philosophy, governed by value priorities when dealing with questions of ourselves and nature.²⁵⁴

By an ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia (or) wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction. The details of an ecosophy will show many

²⁵⁰ Næss, "Ecology, Community and Lifestyle", 36.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

variations due to significant differences concerning not only the 'facts' of pollution, resources, population, etc. but also value priorities.²⁵⁵

In other words, ecophilosophy is the study of questions where ecology and philosophy intersect. Ecosophy is our personal philosophical inquiries into questions surrounding ourselves and nature. Ecophilosophy is descriptive, while ecosophy allows for normative judgements and can be governed by value priorities. Ecophilosophy leads in two directions. It can either be applied to develop a deep ecological philosophy, or it can lend support to a growing international deep ecological movement.²⁵⁶ David Rothenberg describes the relationship between deep ecology, ecophilosophy and ecosophy as follows:

The philosophical side of ecophilosophy investigates the particular methods of viewing the world that lead different individuals to something like the platform of deep ecology. Næss calls this reasoning process ecosophy, if it becomes articulated in a philosophical manner.²⁵⁷

Thus, ecophilosophy is the foundation for both deep ecology and ecosophy. The philosophical sides of ecophilosophy – philosophy being understood as an approach to knowledge and insight²⁵⁸ – as a subject of study, leads to the development of our ecosophies. Ecosophy is the guiding principle for individuals who in one way or the other join the deep ecology movement. Ecosophy should then serve as a philosophical grounding for the acceptance of deep ecological principles.²⁵⁹

Through *Ecology, community and lifestyle*, Næss wanted to inspire his readers to develop their own ecosophies. His own version of ecosophy, which he calls Ecosophy T, is his own personal system of reasoning. The T (which is said to represent his mountain cabin, Tvergastein) suggests that there might be many other ecosophies.²⁶⁰ Though Næss wanted

²⁵⁵ Drengson, Alan. "Ecophilosophy, Ecosophy and the Deep Ecology Movement: An Overview" 28.02.2017. <http://www.ecospherics.net/pages/DrengEcophil.html>.

²⁵⁶ Næss, "Ecology, community and lifestyle", 4.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ According to Næss ecophilosophy is:

A compound of the prefix 'eco' found in economy and ecology, and the suffix '-sophy' found in philosophy. In the word 'philosophy', '-sophy' denotes insight or wisdom, and 'philo-' denotes a kind of friendly love. 'Sophia' need not have specific scientific pretensions as opposed to 'logos' compound words (biology, anthropology, geology, ect.), but all 'sophical' insight should be directly relevant for action.

Næss, "Ecology, community and lifestyle", 37.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. 38.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. 5.

his readers to more or less agree to his Ecosophy T, it was not necessary to categorically accept its particular chains of reasoning.²⁶¹ The most important thing was that people were able to reach the system's conclusion, using ways of feeling and reasoning familiar to them.²⁶²

4.2 From Ecophilosophy to Deep Ecology

Deep ecology emphasised the need for more substantial changes in values and practices. This implied a questioning of established ways of thinking about how to live. A questioning of what would give deep and authentic happiness, and what was shallow and short-range perceptions of happiness, especially in relation to how and what to produce and consume. This becomes relevant in the context of the design history of sustainability. Because it suggests that one can adapt deep ecological principles to assess how production of commodities can be considered to be ecologically good or bad. As mentioned in the introduction, design history is the study of ideas and process as much as objects in themselves. In order to locate principles of deep ecology in a design initiative, it is thus relevant to read the ideology and practice of Austvatn Craft Central in light of how deep ecology called for changes in values and practices.

Næss recognized the emergence of ecologists within the scientific community, but he also recognized what seemed to be a misapplication of the ecologists' messages. In the 1973 article "The shallow and deep, long-range ecology movement, A Summary" he wrote:

The emergence of ecologists from their former relative obscurity marks a turning-point in our scientific communities. But their message is twisted and misused. A shallow, but presently rather powerful movement, and a deep, but less influential movement, compete for our attention.²⁶³

To characterize the difference between the shallow and the deep ecology movement, Næss first described the shallow ecology movement as mainly concerned with the health and affluence of people in developed countries. The solutions suggested to overcome the negative environmental effects of human actions seemed to mostly concern themselves with

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Næss, Arne. "The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary". *Inquiry*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1973). 95 – 100. 95.

industrialized nations. The shallow ecology movement, he claimed, mostly dealt with resource depletion and the fight against pollution.²⁶⁴

Næss recognized the need for a more comprehensive approach. He stressed the importance of a rejection of the man-in-environment image, in favour of what he called a relational, total-field image.²⁶⁵ This was a way of understanding humans in relation to the ecosystems that they were part of, seeing all organisms as knots in the biospherical net of intrinsic relations. The being of entities, as such, had to be understood in the relation to the relationships that these entities were a part of. Without these relationships, entities would no longer have the characteristics that we first ascribed to them. In other words, relationships constituted the entity.

Næss uses the word Self-realisation to connect the postulate “all life is fundamentally one”, with individual needs and desires.²⁶⁶ It is a way of connecting a word to the concept of understanding oneself in relation to everything in the world. The capital S in Self refers to an understanding of Self as a larger self, where all life is incorporated. Self-realisation was for Næss an active condition, not a destination one could reach. No one ever reaches Self-realisation, but it is a process, a way of life.²⁶⁷ If the concept of Self-realisation was applied to pragmatic decisions and activities, then one would be aware of being a part of intrinsic relationships, and thus, make choices informed by this.

For Næss, the deep ecological approach to the world did not only relate to the problematic relationship between humans and nature. It was concerned as much with relations within society. As ecological equilibrium only could take place within a society understood as being constituted by intrinsic relations, the models of ecology suggested as a part of the relational, total-field image, also related to the man-made environment. Society had to be understood as ecosystems in themselves. In the human sphere, the elements of our surroundings – buildings, objects, food networks, social relations and dynamics, etc. – also constituted the field of intrinsic relations. Thus, it is important to note that an ecosophical assessment of the world, did not only mean an unconditional turn towards nature. Næss saw the need for humans to maintain their livelihoods and did not unconditionally criticise production and consumption.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Næss, “Ecology, community and lifestyle”, 9.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

This suggests that, an ecosophical assessment of the world, might comprise an assessment of objects, design processes, design ideology and practice.

Næss argued that the deep ecological approach would – utilizing concepts from ecology – advocate for diversity and symbiosis, and complexity over complication. Diversity and symbiosis would advance the potentiality for survival and the possibility of the development of new ways of living. With diversity and symbiosis within the human sphere, the potential for a wide variety of ways of life would be possible. Næss argued that:

[an either you or me attitude] tends to reduce the multiplicity of kinds of forms of life, and also to create destruction within the communities of the same species. Ecologically inspired attitudes therefore favour diversity of human ways of life, of cultures, of occupations, of economies.²⁶⁸

Antithetically, reducing ways of life within society would minimize the possibility of developing ecologically sane ways of life. Society needed to be organized in a way that alternative ways of life could be maintained and supported. The opposite would minimize diversity. In ecology, diversity is crucial for the maintenance of healthy ecosystems. For instance, the genetic diversity in a population can determine its ability to respond to changes in the environment.²⁶⁹

The notion of diversity and symbiosis suggested the necessity of alternative means of production, closely related to ways of living. Diversity within society had to be prioritized to achieve the unfolding of individuals, both individually and collectively.²⁷⁰ Næss stressed that diversity, as realized through a multitude of different livelihoods, were the use of distinctive geographical and climatically distinctiveness, and the exploration of different artistic expressions, was essential to overcome the environmental crisis.²⁷¹ This allows us to understand, that deep ecology was in favour of alternative ways of production. In relation to design this means that design practise or ideology, that incorporated or enabled a diversity of occupations and ways of life, would be in line with deep ecology.

²⁶⁸ Næss, "The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement", 96.

²⁶⁹ Kerr, Jeremy T. "biodiversity." In *Encyclopedia of Environmental Change*, ed. John A. Matthews. 92-93. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Ltd., 2014. 20.05.2017. 10.4135/9781446247501.n401.

²⁷⁰ Næss, "Ecology, community and lifestyle", 14.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

The ecophilosophy of Næss did not only maintain philosophical assessments as the basis of overcoming the environmental crisis. He argued that it, in principle, was desirable for everyone in the ecological movement to partake in political activity. Thus, urging that the ecological movement could not avoid politics. Ecopolitics, he claimed, was not concerned only with specifically ecological activity, but with every aspect of life.²⁷²

To take a deep ecological position in politics would thus incorporate the relational total-field view in political issues. In *Ecology, community and lifestyle*, several different aspects of ecopolitics in compliance with Næss's notion of Self-realisation are assessed. Themes such as: stabilisation of population, distribution of resources, and an assessment of decreasing pollution in line with deep ecology principles. These are important and central themes. However, it is the notion of self-reliance and decentralisation that relates closest to the assessment of principles of sustainability at Austvatn Craft Central.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the economic situation in the rural areas of Norway in the 1970s were problematic. Though Næss's suggestions for deep ecology were global, he seems to have recognized this aspect of how local communities within his own country were struggling. The problems that Ottar Brox had identified in the 1960s were still a major issue, and an increased centralisation allocated power over local recourses away from local communities. To overcome these obstacles in a way that was pragmatic, but ecologically sound, Næss advocated decentralisation, community self-reliance and collaboration over the division of labour.²⁷³ But what did this imply, and what implications does this have for our understanding of Austvatn?

4.3 Self Reliance, Decentralisation and Local Communities

In the previous section I articulated how Næss moved from ecophilosophy to a deep ecology that allowed for pragmatic descriptions to be implemented into ecologically sane policy making and actions. Building on this point, the following section will assess how the ecological concepts of diversity and symbiosis was incorporated into Næss's thoughts on ecopolitics, particularly in relation to his notions of self-reliance and decentralisation.

²⁷² Ibid. 130.

²⁷³ Ibid.

If diversity and complexity as deep ecological principles are to be implemented to achieve a resilient society – understood as one able to deal with environmental problems in a way that counteracts the depletion of the human and natural environment – then this has political implications. For Næss this meant that decision-making had to be informed by ecosophy. When decision-making was informed by ecosophy, some themes would become evident as being better choices than others. Since ecosophy implemented standards of value judgements informed by wisdom, these ecopolicies would take the intrinsic connections between everything into account.

For Næss, self-determination was a precondition for ecologically informed politics. He argued that: “Implicit in a system with a basic norm of Self-realisation is the assumption of a capacity for self-determination, a capacity for realising potentialities.”²⁷⁴ This implied that coercion should be avoided in as many essential aspects of life as possible.²⁷⁵ Because social conditions decided the development of self-determination, centralization had to be understood within these parameters. With centralisation, coercion would be inevitable, as power would be located away from local communities. This had implications, not only for policymaking but also in relation to culture. With centralisation, Næss claimed, centres would impose cultural power over the periphery,²⁷⁶ meaning that centres would determine how the periphery would live.²⁷⁷

In this way, the deep ecology principles of cultural self-determination can be seen in relation to William Morris’ concern that the ability to freely choose what and how to consume diminished with capitalism. In *The Revival of Handicraft*, Morris argues that:

Almost all goods are made apart from the life of those who use them; we are not responsible for them, our will has had no part in their production, except so far as we form part of the market on which they can be forced for the profit of the capitalist whose money is employed in producing them. The market assumes that certain wares are wanted; it produces such wares, indeed, but their kind and quality are only adapted to the needs of the public in a very rough fashion, because the public needs are subordinated to the interest of the capitalist masters of the market, and they can

²⁷⁴ Ibid. 141.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. 142.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

force the public to put up with less desirable article if they choose, as they generally do. **The result is that our boasted individuality is a sham** [...].²⁷⁸

Here, Morris exemplifies the interconnectedness between consumption and self-determination. In a system where power is located away from individuals, their self-determination in how and what to consume diminishes. In this way, Morris seems to be in accordance with Næss. Deep ecology principles of cultural self-determination must be understood in relation to consumption and market economy. Deep ecology did not unconditionally criticise consumption. But consumption had to be informed by Self-realisation. Because Self-realisation favoured intrinsic value, how to consume had to be guided by a total view. Næss argues that: “A central slogan of ecosophical lifestyle: ‘Simple in means, rich in ends.’ It is not to be confounded with appeals to be Spartan, austere, and self-denying.”²⁷⁹ Ecosophical lifestyle valued quality of life over standard of living. This meant that choices of how and what to consume had to be guided by two principles to be ecologically sane. First, choices should be informed by an understanding of value in accordance with ecosophical principles. That it would add to a deep long-range feeling of happiness. And second, they should be guided by self-determination—i.e. what and how to consume would not be dictated from above.

If we summarize what until now has been said a few things become obvious. First, centralisation decreases the possibility of self-determination. Second, without self-determination the possibility of realizing potentiality, decreases. Thus, centralisation decreases the possibility of realising potentialities. Third, centralisation decreases the likelihood of cultural diversity. And fourth, that all of this makes it difficult to be self-reliant. Being self-reliant is to have the possibility to achieve inner and outer activeness; reaching goals.²⁸⁰ This means that self-reliance increases the possibility for individuals and communities to create instead of consuming, doing not being done to.²⁸¹ Self-reliance, Næss argued, required individuals to be very conscious of their values. It is only possible, he claimed, within a coherent, local, logical and natural community.²⁸²

²⁷⁸ Morris, “The Revival of Handicraft”, 148.

²⁷⁹ Næss, “Ecology, community and lifestyle”, 88.

²⁸⁰ Næss, “Ecology, community and lifestyle”, 143.

²⁸¹ Ibid. 143.

²⁸² Ibid. 144.

Self-determination and self-reliance also have relevance for understanding different strategies of sustainable design. Ecological design, or eco-design is the incorporation of ecological principles into the design process; especially in relation to life-cycle or materials. However, deep ecology does not simply rely on ecology as science, nor tries to mimic ecology. Rather, it asks deeper questions of co-dependence. It urges us to see society in relation to its relationships, both internal and external. This can be understood as relations within society, and the relationship between the human sphere and nature. So, if incorporating deep ecology principles into design –a kind of deep ecological design– it becomes obvious that assessments of co-dependence and interconnectedness must be considered. In that regard, deep ecological principles of self-reliance and self- determination can help to assess if something is a case of deep ecology design, or not.

In the following section, principles of self-determination and self-reliance will be utilised to examine the design practice and ideology of Austvatn Craft Central.

4.4 The Self-reliance of Austvatn Craft Central

The association between craft, and especially home craft, with self-reliance became especially acute the nineteenth century. As seen I chapter 3, the conception of home craft changed significantly in Norway during this period, from being considered a rural phenomenon, it was eventually enrolled in the national market economy.²⁸³ Kjetil Fallan points out that advocates of home craft as industry, such as Peter Christian Asbjørnsen and Eilert Sundt, saw home craft as a means to secure a greater degree of self-sufficiency, and as a source of supplementary income in rural areas. In this way home craft became a way to counteract poverty and to evoke industriousness, diligence, and dignity in people.²⁸⁴ However, if understood in relation to deep ecology and Austvatn Craft Central, this self-sufficiency aspect of home craft leads in two directions. First, that self-reliance can be understood in relation to ecologically sound politics. And second, through the activities of Austvatn Craft Central self-determination and self-reliance was incorporated into small scale industry. These principles seen together suggest that there is an ecological imperative at play in the venture of the craft central. Having established that self-reliance can be understood in relation to deep ecology,

²⁸³ Fallan, Kjetil. *Designing Modern Norway: A history of design discourse*. London: Routledge, 2017.19.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. 20.

and as Næss, puts it; ecologically sane politics.²⁸⁵ I will now examine how principles of self-determination and self-reliance relates to Austvatn Craft Central.

Throughout her career Sigrun Berg called for a revitalization of the social aspect of craft. She utilized the potential of home craft, both as a means of production, and to strengthen the self-sufficiency of local communities. However, Berg argued that in order for craft practitioners and designers to fully realize the potential of home craft, better organizational structures had to be implemented. As discussed in chapter 2, she therefor called for the establishment of centrals to organize the production and workforce of home craft.²⁸⁶

Austvatn Craft Central was as mentioned, founded on the idea that it should be both an alternative form of social aid, and contribute to the development of craft in relation to small scale production of useful objects. This suggests, that the research group did not see these aspects as opposing each other. It must be understood as a pragmatic attempt professionalize home craft to make it a viable alternative to industrialised manufacturing. This way it would unify the old understanding of home craft with a modern production system, taking economic, cultural and working conditions into account. Instead of working from their own home, the members of Austvatn Craft Central had a place of employment. Though the craft central was organized as a cooperative, it would function more along the lines of a factory than a studio.²⁸⁷ For instance, the Odal carpet would be custom-made, and priced according to size. This meant that production would be relying on collectiveness and collaboration, in order to produce individually sized carpets in large quantities. The concept of self-determination becomes relevant in this aspect. Austvatn Craft central was structured as a cooperative. This gave every member the authority to partake in decision-making, thus avoiding coercion in form of powerful forces determining what and how things were to be produced. The members themselves decided what projects they would participate in and how they would distribute the work. The craft central thus incorporated the aspect of self-determination that Næss articulated as having “the possibility of maximum self-activity: creating rather than consuming. Doing, not being done to.”²⁸⁸ When making this statement, Næss was talking

²⁸⁵ Næss, ”Ecology, community and lifestyle”, 132.

²⁸⁶ NN. Bruttingsrud, Alette. ”Vi Trenger Brukskunstsentra.” *Kvinnen, hjemmet og samfunnet*, 18.02.1972.

²⁸⁷ Unidentified document from National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001

²⁸⁸ Næss, “Ecology, community and lifestyle”,

about local communities and strengthening the local and the global. However, Næss argued that within the principle of self-reliance was the emphasis on soft and local technologies.²⁸⁹ This will be further discussed below. Implicit in this notion of soft and local technology, was that work had to be pleasurable and meaningful. Pleasurable working conditions was a precondition for meaningful work.²⁹⁰ In this respect, Næss's ideas coincide with those of William Morris.

Morris, as we have seen, saw the necessity of work being pleasurable as a precondition for creating art. To him, art was any product of labour that could be considered beautiful.²⁹¹ He came to the conclusion, however, that the beauty he ached for could never be achieved within the complex structure of contemporary life.²⁹² His socialism was informed by his wish to “act for the destruction of a system which seems to me mere oppression and obstruction.”²⁹³ Again and again he campaigned for the importance of joy in work and pleasurable working conditions. And the role of art in relation to pleasure in work could not be strongly emphasised, according to Morris. It was this art, the production of beautiful objects by hand, that would lift Man's spirit and bring him happiness in his labour, stating; “As for the last use of these arts, the giving pleasure in our work, I scarcely know how to speak strongly enough of it”.²⁹⁴ He continued by saying:

[...] we all know what people have said about the curse of labour, and what heavy and grievous nonsense are the more part of their words thereupon; whereas indeed the real curses of craftsmen have been the curse of stupidity, and the curse of injustice from within and from without: no, I cannot suppose there is anybody here who would think it either a good life, or an amusing one, to sit with one's hands before one doing nothing—to live like a gentleman, as fools call it.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ Næss, “Økologi, samfunn og livsstil”, 13.

²⁹⁰ Næss, “Økologi, samfunn og livsstil”, 13.

²⁹¹ Morris, “The Revival of Handicraft”, 147.

²⁹² Naylor, “The Arts and Crafts Movement”, 108.

²⁹³ Ibid. 109.

²⁹⁴ Morris, William . "Hopes and Fears for Art ". 11.04.2017.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1882/hopes/chapters/chapter1.htm>.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

Morris thus emphasised that it was not labour per se that was problematic. Idle hands needed to be stimulated, the opposite would be the real curse. It was the nature of the work and the surrounding in which it was being done, that would determine if it was good or bad.

The potential for mental and social wellbeing in craft practice was at the very heart of the Austvatn Craft Central project. Pleasurable and meaningful work was therefore important in order to offer employment to members of the local community who would otherwise fall outside of established structures. As explained in the Nord-Odal project report, the reorientation of the origins of craft took two things into account. Firstly, craft was a way of sustaining life in rural areas and to be self-sufficient. Secondly, craft had traditionally been a means of employment of individuals with disabilities or other difficulties of finding work. When the traditional framework of the natural economy declined in favour of industrial manufacturing of goods, these potentials for social aid in craft, declined correspondingly. Thus, the traditional system of home craft in rural areas lost its ability to appropriate local resources and to create solidarity.²⁹⁶ If compared with Morris's ideas of how craft offers this kind of pleasurable work, the craft central's ideology reveals a common denominator. That the traditional framework for craft production, in being able to restore dignity to the worker and offer a self-determination and self-reliance, was a desirable ideal. However, only if applied under right conditions. For Morris and his compatriots, these surroundings were local communities on the countryside. For Arne Næss, it was the conditions where local, climatic and geographical particularities were visible. For Austvatn Craft Central, it was in an egalitarian, home craft factory in tune with the local community.

Locality and togetherness, in the sense of community, are key terms in the deep ecology movement.²⁹⁷ This implies a resentment of being absorbed in something "that is big but not great – something like our modern society."²⁹⁸ To Næss, the antidote to this big, modern society was local communities. He characterised desirable local communities as including the following traits: small population, direct democracy, the ways and means of production relate strongly to primary production, soft technology, egalitarianism.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Midré, "Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk", 208.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. 144.

²⁹⁸ Næss, "Ecology, community and lifestyle", 144.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

When Austvatn Craft Central was initiated, it was first of all intended as an alternative form of social aid. It was to offer employment, community and solidarity for individuals who had problems finding this elsewhere. Secondly, it was to produce high quality textiles. This was enabled by the fact that patterns and designs were created by skilled designers and craft practitioners, such as Sigrun Berg. But all of this would also have a positive effect on the local community in general. This sort of small scale industry was envisioned not only to offer supplementary income, but to function as an independent line of production. In addition, this small-scale industry would, almost without exception, utilize local resources. In form of raw materials, such as wool, and most of all technique and technology. All that was needed was looms, knowledge and hands, making the craft central almost self-sufficient. With the use of locally sourced raw materials, the craft central would also be of importance the local production community.

If we are to draw a connection between the deep ecology of Næss, the ideology behind Austvatn Craft Central and the thought and visions of William Morris, three things seem to stand out. First, the idea of self-sufficiency. That local communities should be able to decide their own means of production and consumption. Secondly, that egalitarianism was the only way this could be attained. And thirdly, the role of pleasure in work. Næss stressed the interdependence of local communities and the importance of meaningful work, that people should not be just means to an end, and that production should be informed by this to avoid coercion. Both Austvatn Craft Central and William Morris emphasised the idea of the role of pleasure in work. The craft central saw this as a way of offering solidarity and occupation in relation to social aid. William Morris saw this as the only viable way of creating a community that would be fair and just. It was also a precondition for producing any product that could be considered beautiful.

4.5 Technology and lifestyle: A Re-Orientation Towards Soft Technology

Næss argued that an exponentially growing deterioration of the environment, caused by a deeply rooted ideology of materialism and consumerism, was at the core of the seriousness of the environmental situation.³⁰⁰ However, he claimed that the environmental crisis, in fact, had the potential to change the negative direction that society was heading in. In this regard, he

³⁰⁰ Næss, “Økologi, samfunn og livsstil”, 5.

saw the situation as a catalyst for change, if only handled correctly. So how, then, were the ecologically destructive, but firmly established ways of production and consumption to be changed?³⁰¹

As we have seen, he called for a change in policy that would make local communities self-sufficient, based on techniques and labour in correspondence with nature and tradition. Still, to Næss, the biggest ecological threat was modern technological advances. He saw that modern techniques and technology could do more damage in a shorter amount of time than ever before.³⁰² The question became, what kind of, and how much, technology would be compatible with ecophilosophically responsible politics?³⁰³

A deep ecological approach to responsible technology would, according to Næss, look to development of soft technology. Soft technology is recognized by aspects such as craftsmanship instead of mass production, labour intensive instead of capital intensive manufacturing, and compatibility with, instead of destruction of, local cultures.³⁰⁴ It is important to note here, this thinking was not unconditionally negative towards technology. It must be understood as a critique of the prevailing thinking that uncritically saw technological progress as having its own logic and momentum. In other words, he argued that technological innovation which had no rationale beyond its own perpetual progress was to be avoided. He claimed that: “When so-called ‘purely technical’ improvement is discovered, it is falsely assumed that the individual and society must regulate themselves accordingly: technique, in part, determines its own development.”³⁰⁵

So, the assumption that technical development essentially determines all other development was not correct, according to Næss, and he pointed out that:

Improvement of technique implies improvement within the framework of a cultural pattern. That which threatens this framework should not be interpreted as improvement, and should thus be rejected. In industrial societies, these social consequences are not given enough consideration.³⁰⁶

³⁰¹ Næss, “Ecology, community and lifestyle”, 87.

³⁰² Ibid. 288.

³⁰³ Ibid. 114.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. 123.

³⁰⁵ Næss, “Ecology, Community and Lifestyle”, 93.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. 94.

Technological development should therefore only be accepted if it was in line with deep ecology principles of diversity and complexity.

The notion of threading lightly on the surface of the earth, was important to the deep ecological movement.³⁰⁷ A central problem was how to achieve technological development that would harmonise and satisfy both vital human needs, and minimize the spoliation of nature.³⁰⁸ Næss argued that: “Clearly the requirements cannot both be maximally satisfied without getting into conflicts. It is a major concern to find a kind of equilibrium, and the proposals are dependent on geographical and social diversity of life conditions.”³⁰⁹ Thus, self-reliance and diversity served as guidelines in determining what constituted viable deep ecological solutions. Both industry and technology had to be adapted and developed for the exact conditions of where they would be deployed. Both socially and environmentally. A technique or technology that would fulfil deep ecological criteria in the South Pacific would not necessarily be a viable or desirable option in Siberia.

Austvatn, as based on a thorough study of the social needs in Nord-Odal, thus implemented notions of geographical and social diversity. Both the climatic and geographical conditions were taken into consideration. For instance, would the supply of raw materials, such as wool, mainly rely on the sheep husbandry in municipalities near Austvatn.³¹⁰ In an unidentified document from the archives it reads: “[Austvatn Craft Central] can be a considerable contribution to the refinement of locally produced raw material. Perhaps particularly relating to wool.”³¹¹

The techniques and knowledge that Austvatn would rely on, were familiar and known to the users of the Craft Central. Home craft has been a vital and central part of the cultural heritage

³⁰⁷ Ibid. 97.

³⁰⁸ Ibid. 98.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Unidentified document from National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001.

³¹¹ (My translation): “Et tiltak som dette kan komme til å bli en faktor av betydning når det gjelder foredling av lokalt produsert råstoff, kanskje særlig ull”.

Unidentified document from National archives of Austvatn Craft central. Aksjonsforskning og forsøksvirksomhet. Nord-Odal prosjektet. Austvatn håndverksentral. Sosialdepartementet, planavdelingen. Sakarkiv for plansaker. 1972. RA/S-4124/D/L0042/0001.

in Norway. That particularities in geographical and social conditions were implemented in the research that Austvatn Craft Central was founded on, is evident in the research report:

Several researchers have dealt with the notion of distribution of goods within society. They have shown that this distribution in no way coheres with the democratic ideal that politicians declare to be the fundament for their work. There are vast differences in several areas of society, also outside the social. There are differences that are determined both socially and geographically. The rise and development of affluence that has taken place in this country, and that have contributed to the feeling of safety for many people, has not been bestowed upon everyone.³¹²

Thus, the Nord-Odal project was aware of these conditions, and that traditional social scientific studies had described these aspects without taking them further.³¹³

Næss argued that our conventional notion of progress had to be revised in a way that looked to more labour intensive and crafts oriented techniques. With a re-orientation towards techniques and technologies that would incorporate local, climatic, cultural and geographical conditions to production and products, standardisation would decrease. Næss argued that:

Decentralisation, and emphasis upon local resources, climate and other characteristics would result in variations of a technique within the same ecologically sane technology. The same applies to the products of the techniques. Diminishing standardisation and increasing diversity as follow.³¹⁴

Thus, elements of diversity and local self-sufficiency had to be incorporated into development of soft technologies. The transition from hard to soft technologies would not be attainable or sufficient unless the emphasis on local resources was ecologically satisfying. As diversity also

³¹² (My translation): “Flere forskere har tatt for seg godenes fordeling i samfunnet. De har vist at denne fordelingen langt fra svarer til de demokratiske likhetsidealer som politikerne erklærer at de legger til grunn for sitt arbeid. På flere områder i samfunnet, utenfor det sosiale finnes det også store forskjeller. Det er både geografisk og sosialt bestemte ulikheter. Ikke alle har fått den samme del av den alminnelige velstandsutviklingen som har funnet sted her i landet og som trolig har økt tryggheten for svært mange.”

Midré, “Samfunnsendring og sosialpolitikk”, 25.

³¹³ Ibid. 25 – 26.

³¹⁴ Næss, “Ecology, community and lifestyle”, 98.

had to be understood as the flourishing of multiplicity of ways of life within society, soft technologies had to incorporate this element.

Though she often collaborated with industrial manufacturers Sigrun Berg had strong opinions as to how new technology posed an threat to human nature. To Berg, handicraft was not only a way of sustaining a financial foundation in rural areas, but it was a way to elevate something she thought of as fundamentally human. To work with one's hands, she thought, was a way to improve both physical and psychological functions of the human body.³¹⁵ At a symposium at the National Museum of Decorative Arts and Design in 1972 she stated: "Our technocratic society has placed man on the outside. Any technician runs the risk of becoming a human being for whom no value other than the quantifiable exists. But we, humans, have an inherent compulsion to play, to beauty and to form."³¹⁶ The social aspect of her ideas, thus, incorporated both the maintenance of livelihood and the human aspect of joy and happiness. The craft of the hand was for Berg at the epicentre of her ideas. The possibility of working with a practical oriented profession would contribute a great deal to society, thus, the applied arts, craft and design had much to offer.³¹⁷

As shown in chapter 3, an important motivation behind Austvatn was to somehow recuperate the primordial notion of craft. That craft also meant folkways and livelihood, suggests that Berg had a deep connection to the historical development of her profession. She maintained the importance of craft taking social responsibility. Austvatn thus, must be understood in terms of suggesting an alternative to both how craft was developing, and how industry was developing. As an alternative to industry, the aspects of soft technology that Næss maintained, seems to be satisfied in Austvatn. As an alternative to how craft and design was developing, Austvatn must be understood as an experimental form of social aid in addition to envisioning how craft and design could develop parallel to industrial design and craft as art. Thus,

³¹⁵ NRK. "Brukskunstneren Sigrun Berg I Nærbilde." edited by NRK, 1967. 31.08.2016.

URL: <https://tv.nrk.no/program/FOLA00001267/brukskunstneren-sigrun-berg-i-naerbilde>

³¹⁶ (My translation): "Vårt teknokratiske samfunn har satt mennesket utenfor. Enhver tekniker risikerer å bli et menneske for hvem det ikke eksisterer andre verdier enn de målbare. Men vi mennesker har en medfødt trang til å leke, til skjønnhet og form."

NN. Buttingsrud, Alette. "Vi trenger brukskunstsentra". *Kvinnen, hjemmet og samfunnet*, 18.02.1972

³¹⁷ NN. Alette Bruttingsrud, "Vi Trenger Brukskunstsentra," *Kvinnen, hjemmet og samfunnet*, 18.02.1972 1972.

maintaining craft ideology, but re-orienting itself toward social responsibility rather than mere aesthetics.

To claim that Austvatn was established on Arts and Craft ideology would be an overstatement and neglecting some fundamental historical facts. Nevertheless, there are important ideological similarities between the two efforts at craft reform which justifies their comparison, especially as they pertain to ambitions of social and environmental sustainability. Austvatn seems to have incorporated ideas about pleasurable work –fundamental to achieve its function as social aid – and an ethical imperative, suggesting that craft and design had a social responsibility. These notions are intertwined and co-dependent. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter 2, the Arts and Crafts movement’s scepticism toward industrialisation also seems to resonate with the Austvatn ideology.

The design reformers of the Arts and Crafts movement sought inspiration beyond the realm of industry. C.R. Ashbee (1863-1942), for instance, believed that work and commerce only could prosper as a continuation of traditional cultures, that would not deny the past.³¹⁸ This related to aesthetics as much as livelihood. The only way to achieve the desired aesthetics, that of incorporating elements of the past and nature, was for production to take place in a traditional manner. Ashbee believed that good design only could be a product of new workshop communities modelled on historic prototypes and located in rural surroundings.³¹⁹

The simple life, associated with life in the countryside, was the ideal for these Victorian design reformers. This was a kind of life and dignity for the worker that would only function, they thought, outside of industry. The ideological godfather, as it were, of the Arts and Crafts movement, John Ruskin, was—perhaps surprisingly, as he is today chiefly known for his writings—attempted to practice what he preached in this respect. His practical endeavour, the mill of St. George, was a part of The Guild of St. George, established in 1878.³²⁰ Considering the guild’s endeavours in relation to soft technology, two things stands out. First, that it

³¹⁸ Cummings and Kaplan, “The Arts and Crafts Movement”, 67.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ The guild was originally established in 1871, under the name of St. Georg’s Fund. In 1875, it became St. Georg’s Company, and in 1878 it was finally registered with The Companies Act under the name St. Georg’s Guild.

Coleing, Linda. “Utility prefigured: Ruskin and St. George’s Mill”. In *Utility Reassessed: The Role Of Ethics in The Practice of Design*, ed. Judy Attfield. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999. 13.

responded to the broader community needs rather than commercial profit gains, thus incorporating ethical design parameters. Second, that Ruskin's original idea that the Guild's ventures should only be based on wind, water, human, and animal power, not only reflects his concern for the natural environment, but also places his enterprise in close relation to characteristics of soft technology as expressed by Næss.³²¹ The Guild was based on the idea of a self-sufficient community, where people would live and work within its structures, and be self-sufficient. Ruskin excluded the use of steam power for two reasons. First, because "machinery enables no more of us to live; it only enables more of us to idle on others misery", secondly because of pollution.³²² As early as 1874, Ruskin pointed to the fact that there was a connection between pollution and environmental depletion, arguing that the soot and stench from the steam engines caused the crops to go bad. Linda Coleing argues that because of Ruskin's attention to the natural environment, he is recognized as a forerunner to the ecology movement.³²³ Although Morris was highly influenced by Ruskin's thinking—and normally considered more of a "practical man" than his mentor, one might add—Coeling argues that Ruskin's St. Georges Mill "represented a much nearer approximation to William Morris's 'A Factory as it Might Be' than Morris himself was able to achieve."³²⁴ The sculptor and designer, Eric Gill (1882 – 1940), who lived and worked much later than Morris, carried on the Arts and Craft ideology into the twentieth century. He wanted to establish a class-less community of people working and living together. His ambition was to unify idealism with practical endeavour and re-integrating living, working, farming and education.³²⁵ In his 1940, *Autobiography*, Gill expressed his desires to unify idealism with practical endeavours, stating that: "[he at least had] done something towards re-integrating bed and board, the small farm and the workshop, the home and the school, earth and heaven."³²⁶

Morris's critique of industry and technology lead in two directions. On the one hand, he maintained that industrial production did not satisfy the aesthetic standards that beautiful objects should have. On the other hand, that industrial production was detrimental to the natural environment. In the 1974 article in *The Ecologist*, Nicolas Gould described how Morris saw himself as an outsider of what he considered the abnormality of industrial society.

³²¹ Ibid. 13.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid. 14.

³²⁴ Ibid. 12.

³²⁵ Cumming and Kaplan, "The Arts and Crafts Movement", 9.

³²⁶ Ibid.

When industrial society no longer made room for art, the most natural of human activity as Gould argues, then there had to be something wrong with this society.³²⁷ Morris was deeply infatuated with the medieval ideas of craft and the guild, and rejected his own time in favour of either an idealistic past or a utopian future.³²⁸ In *News from Nowhere*, he portrayed a harmonic relationship between man and nature. Thus, his utopian future was not one of nature without man, but a future where man lived in harmony with nature. Production in Nowhere had completely changed its feathers, and in many respects, comes close to ideas about soft technology. In Morris' utopia, as in Næss' ideal society, technology was labour intensive instead of capital intensive, craftsmanship over mass production and manufacturing in compatibility with local cultures. In Nowhere, big centralised factories were replaced with local workshops, and nothing was produced that was not needed. Machines were not discarded, but they served as aid for tiresome work that was too strenuous to do by hand.³²⁹

4.6 Concluding Remarks: Beating In

It is important to emphasise that there is no evidence that suggests that the idea of Austvatn was founded on a similar postulate as that of Morris and his compatriots. The idea of placing a craft central in the rural area of Nord- Odal must be understood as founded on an ideology of social responsibility, rather than one of a romantic yearning towards historical craft workshops. After all, Berg was a pragmatist, and did not necessarily disregard industrial manufacturing of textiles as ugly or bad. Her craft ideology was one of unifying the old with the new, drawing on available resources to meet immediate needs. As such, her approach very much resembles the soft technology approach that Næss called for.

Berg's scepticism towards advanced technology was founded on what she saw as fundamentally human. She feared that fundamental human values, like joy, the feeling of a job well done, and an inherent urge to create, were threatened in a society where technological development became a goal in itself. Similarly, Næss did not categorically deny the necessity of technology. But it had to be reoriented to incorporate human standards. Standards that, through Self-realisation, would contribute to human welfare and safeguard the environment at

³²⁷ Gould, "William Morris", 210.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Marshall, Peter. *Nature's Web: Rethinking Our Place on Earth*. New York: Paragon House, 1993. 313.

the same time. It is, perhaps, in regarding human standards as the mediator between means of production and nature, that one can locate reciprocal affinities between the actors in this story. For Næss, soft technology incorporated human as well as climatic and geographical standards as parameters for assessing if technology would be ecologically sane or not. Berg saw craft production as maintaining something fundamentally human. To place craft centrals in rural areas would maintain livelihoods and life quality, while at the same time uphold craft as a viable option as production of goods. Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement believed that traditional craft workshops, located in rural areas, was the only way one could achieve life quality, and produce beautiful objects.

What seems to unite the philosophical assessment of Næss, the poetics of William Morris and the practical design endeavours of Austvatn Craft Central, is that there is a deep founded respect for nature. These principles might not have been explicitly articulated by Austvatn, in the same way, as they were by Morris and Næss. But the focus on locally produced, and natural raw materials. The respect for the local community, and the pursuit to re-orienting craft towards social responsibility, testifies to an understanding of interconnectedness and co-dependence. Human systems –social, political, and economic – have impact on the environment. This means, that the way social systems are structured determine how they will impact their environment. And vice-versa. Social systems are dependent on the environment where they reside.

For Morris and his compatriots, human well-being could only take place within a system that was established in close connection to nature. Nature was understood as their home and source of inspiration, in all practical as well as ideological endeavours. Næss realised that ecological principles, such as that of symbiosis and diversity, had to be incorporated into every aspect of social systems as well. In relation to production of commodities, local, climatic, cultural, and geographical particularities had to be incorporated into the whole production process. This suggests that nature can be understood as a source of inspiration for the design and production of commodities, that would be in line with deep ecological principles. Not in the same way as it was for Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, for whom nature was a direct source of aesthetic ideals, but in a deeper more interconnected way. Perhaps one can understand, if taken everything that has been said into account, the Odal carpet as materialisation of the deep ecological principles of interconnectedness and co-dependence. It was woven from locally produced wool, it's production was dependent on

collaboration and community. The process was labour intensive rather than capital intensive. And its design dependent on knowledge of both material, craft, cultural and geographical particularities.

When the weft has moved over and under the warp threads, a sufficient number of times it is time to beat it in. When beating in, one pushes the row of weft against the previously woven row. Thus, the grid becomes firm and tangential objects come into view. If we use this analogy in our search for the nature of the connections between the ideology of William Morris, the philosophy of Arne Næss and the ideology and practise of Austvatn Craft Central a few things become obvious. In the introduction of this thesis we saw that Oldenziel and Trischler pointed out that the 1970s witnessed the celebration and resurrection of older practices and technologies, suggesting continuities to rather than a radical break from the past.³³⁰ Building on this notion and everything that has been mentioned about Næss, Austvatn Craft Central, and William Morris, it becomes clear that historical traditions and practises informed all of them in their pursuit for a better future. This did not mean that they unconditionally rejected progress, technology or industry. But the technologies and industry of the future had to be informed, at least to some extent, by the past. It seems that this notion of the past, for all the protagonists of this story, was informed by something that they saw as fundamentally human; happiness, the realisation of being connected to the whole biotic community (human as well as non-human), and the ability to choose alternative lifestyles – the ability to choose not to be centralised. Considering the efforts made by the driving forces behind Austvatn Craft Central, it seems as their vision were for a future progressing in tune with human needs through a steady growth economy. Design was at the very centre of this vision, providing people with the means to secure their way of life, and producing quality products as a result. A deep ecology approach to soft technology would consider every aspect of that technology. This holistic, ecological outlook characterizes both the entrepreneurial design activism of Austvatn Craft Central and Næss’ socially engaged philosophy. The two approaches are brought closer still by sharing what might be called a utopian nostalgia: A vision of the future based on a model from the past.

Design theorist David Orr have argued that the key to designing for a sustainable future lies in the past. If he is correct saying this, then the history lessons we need might reside in unlikely

³³⁰ Oldenziel and Trischler. “How Old Technologies Became Sustainable”. 3.

junctures like the one between the works of Austvatn Craft Central, Næss and William Morris discussed here.

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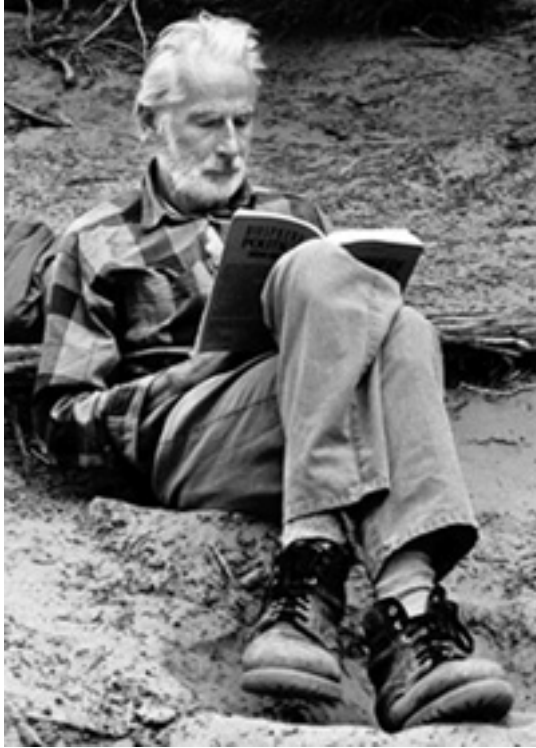
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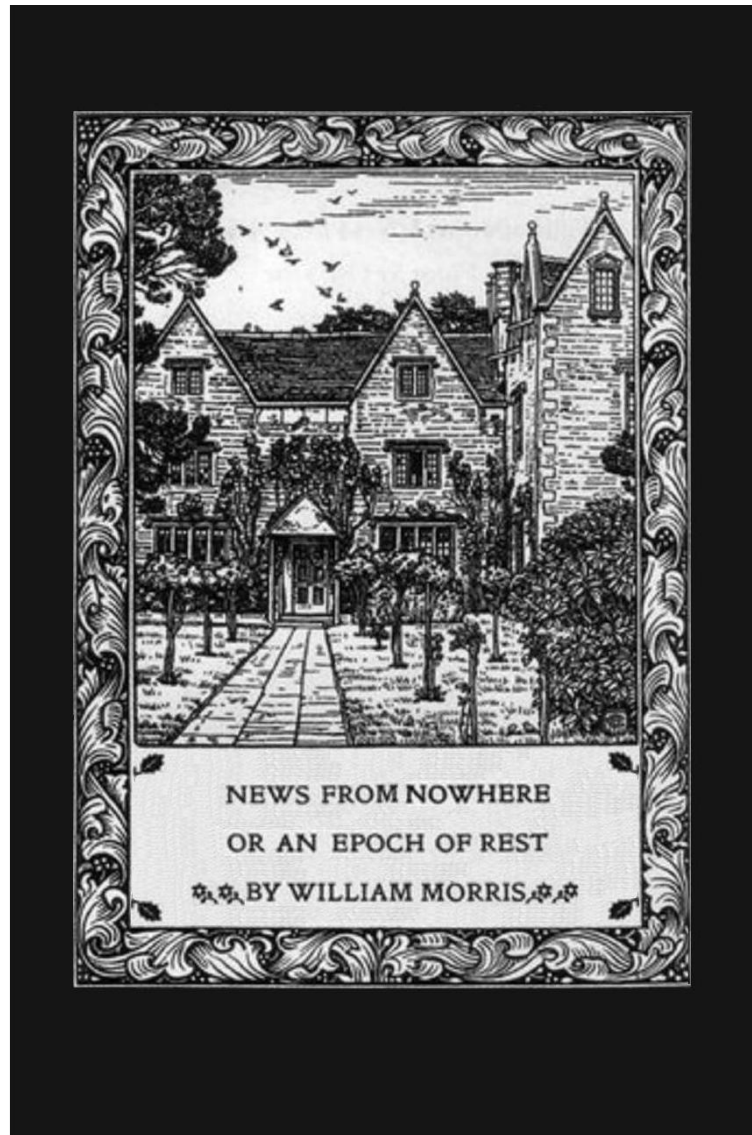
Appendix



Arne Næss

Source: Foundation for Deep Ecology

<http://www.deepecology.org/deepecology.htm>



Cover of William Morris' News from
Nowhere: Or an Epoch of Rest.

Source: Black Horse Books

<http://blackhorsebooks.storenvy.com/>

The Deep Ecology Platform

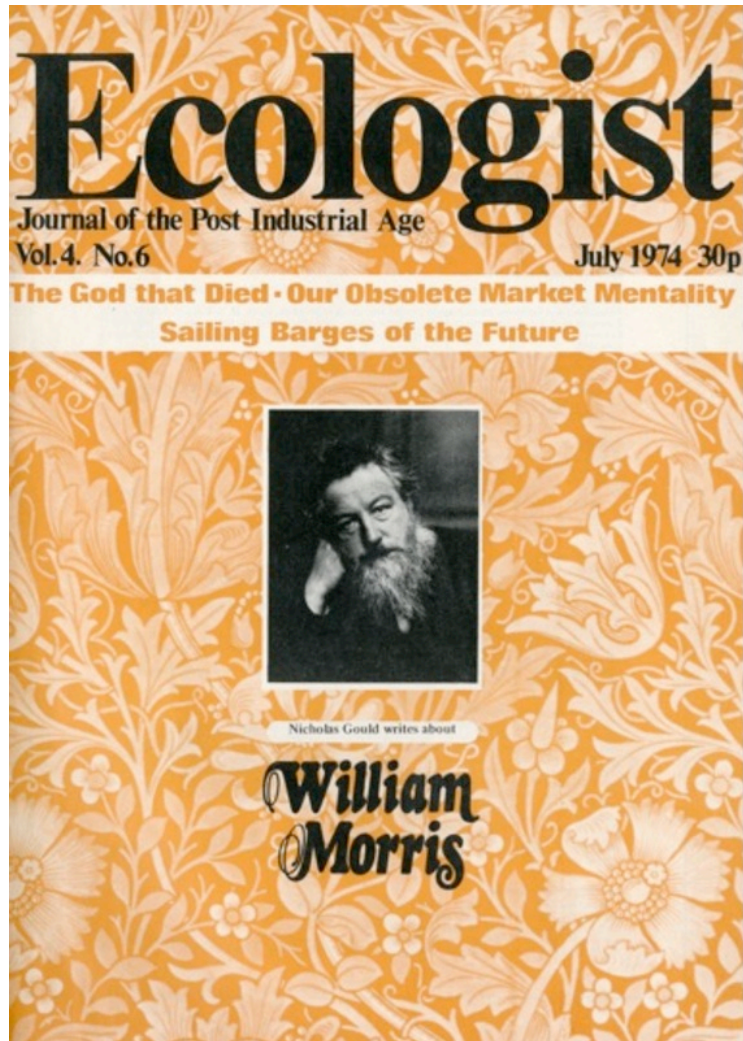
1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: inherent worth, intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realisation of these values and are also values in themselves.
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. Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher 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.

—Arne Naess and George Sessions (1984)

The 1984, Deep Ecology Platform by Arne Naess and George Sessions.

Source: Through The Trees,

<http://wellearthopedia.blogspot.no/2012/11/transfo-rmative-ethics-deep-ecology.html>



William Morris on the cover of the *Ecologist*, vol. 4, no. 6, 1974.

Source: The Ecologist

http://www.theecologist.org/back_archi



Sigrun Berg in her workshop wearing her own design.

Photo: Leif Ørnulf/ Digitalt Museum



Shepherd's jacket for Sigrun Bergs label. Property of Olav Dalland.

Photo: Author

The Odal carpet



Odals-carpet. Property of Olav Dalland

Photo: Author



Close-up of the Odals-carpet.

Photo: Author



Back of Odals-carpet. The back permits the construction of the rug to stay firm and stable, even though the weft is consisting of unspun wool.

Photo: Author



Cover of Ottar Brox' What is happening in Northern-Norway? From 1966.

Source: National Library of Norway
<http://www.nb.no/nbsok/nb/cc3f48ec41>



Cover of project report from the Nord-Odal project.

Source: National Library of Norway

<http://www.nb.no/nbsok/nb/d278666d75455764fe6c788423ca2c97.nbdigital?lang=no#0>