



## **The Ecological Mind: Meditation on a Blue Jay**

*by Cheryl Lyon*

During a recent lengthy stay in Newfoundland's southwest coast, I was privileged to be part of a conversation that included a fisherman (they don't say "fisher" there) who, after 35 years fishing "took the buy-out" of his license in the devastating 1990's cod moratorium.

While we talked, a blue jay landed on a post close by. The old fellow paused awhile, observed the bird closely, then quietly, almost to himself, said "that's some well made." One craftsman acknowledging the fine work of another.

His comment was unusual. It stayed with me until I gradually felt the profound awe and respect behind his simple words, its shades of wonder and gratitude.

He and this bird were subjects, not objects, in the world. They each have an active role within the greater unfolding story called Life. Both the blue jay and the man are finely made. This is ecological understanding. *Feeling*, all Life as interconnected, interdependent, an originally well-made whole.

Maybe recovering such a relational perspective begins with simple things, like contemplating a bird. Separated from Nature and rendered objects of marketing by our economy, we humans miss Nature's reminders that both blue jays and humans have their roles on the planet. We humans have overstepped ours.

Finding our rightful place again might begin with finding for ourselves the mind and heart behind the fisherman's remark.

Our times are urgently telling us to relearn how to farm, eat, make things, design homes and cities, respectful of Nature's ways and limits, mindful of her reciprocal demands. We have large-scale choices to make: what to continue and what to cease doing; what to value; what priority to give to things in our daily lives; how to reshape what it means to be a human being among all fellow creatures.

At the time when the old fisherman had to end generations of his family's livelihood because of the collapse of the what we call a "natural resource" (cod,) the magnitude of this new eco/economic reality was not yet felt by the rest of the world. But it is now in every sector of living around the globe.

The globalized way of living we call the Economy is not "well made." It endangers both us and blue jays in its suicidal disconnect from Nature. However, beginning with "eco-eyes" on our own local watershed's soil, water, animals, plants and on how we use and trade them to supply our life essentials, we can craft an enduring, local economy.

Only such ecological thinking is wide and deep enough for the scale of change needed. With this perspective, we will know WHY producing and eating as much food locally as possible is a good idea. Why replacing fossil fuels with renewable is vital. And how taxes are one way to pool our resources to protect food land, water and promote peaceful communities.

The human niche in it all is to be the *conscious specie* whose vital role now is to reverse our destructive ways, then maybe what we re-make in the transition decade now underway will. Like the blue jay, indeed be beautiful and well-made.