

Ecopsychology and Transpersonal Psychology

John V. Davis and Jeanine M. Canty

In Friedman, H. L., & Hartelius, G. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of Transpersonal Psychology*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell. Pp 597 – 611.

Ecopsychology is one of the fields of study and practice focused on human-nature relationships. While it shares much with environmental psychology, conservation psychology, deep ecology, environmental justice, and other fields that also focus on human-nature relationships, it is distinguished by its view of the fundamental interconnection between humans and their environments, the use of concepts based on this relationship such as *ecological self* and *ecological unconscious*, the centrality of phenomenological and sensorial connections with the natural world, and the integration of practices based on the healing potential of direct contact with the natural world (i.e., ecotherapy) with practices oriented to environmental action and ecological, personal, and community sustainability. This chapter explores the historical roots and core themes of ecopsychology, its initial emergence as a radical psychology and further development as a more formal and inclusive field, and the role of spirituality and transpersonal concepts in ecopsychology.

As a radical pedagogy, ecopsychology encourages a critical analysis of globalized societies, particularly those within Western and “developed” nations, examining their common disconnection from, and domination of, the Earth and peoples who live in closer harmony with nature. Its pertinent critical analysis serves as a foundation for a

fundamental worldview change and awakening, or rather reawakening, to inherent bonds with the natural world including those aspects of self-identity, body, emotion, and soul that are silenced within a mechanistic worldview and renewed by direct and immediate contact with nature. Revealing this disconnection with nature and a deeper self and reintegrating into healthy relationship with the natural world (including humans), ecopsychology provides a path of restoration between the small self of the individual and the larger Self of the world.

Ecopsychology's contributions include bringing more sophisticated psychological principles and practices to environmental education and action, developing psychotherapeutic and educational thinking and practices aligned with the values of the natural world, and fostering lifestyles that are both ecologically and psychologically healthy (Doherty, 2009; Esbjörn-Hargens & Zimmerman, 2009; Roszak, 1992; Roszak, Gomes & Kanner, 1995; Winter, 1996). A core theme is the broadening of self-identity to include other beings, the natural world, and the cosmos. It is here that ecopsychology and transpersonal psychology share common ground most visibly. To put it succinctly, humans and nature are both parts of a transpersonal whole. Deepening this identity promotes self-transcendence, self-realization, and optimal human maturity and at the same time, environmentally-sustainable attitudes and behaviors.

Roots and History

There are three entwined roots of ecopsychology. In some respects, ecopsychology grew from observations about environmental action and the need for a more psychologically-sophisticated approach to changing attitudes and behaviors toward the environment. Specifically, Roszak (1992) and others recognized that appealing to fear

and shame, as he felt most environmental activists were doing, would not produce long-term change. Rather, appeals to love, devotion, and a “psycho-emotional bond” with nature (Swan, 1992) were needed. At the same time, the healing properties of direct contact with the natural world were being integrated into the human potential movement by Greenway (1991, 1995), Foster and Little (1980/1989a, 1989b), and others.

Recognizing that this contact, itself, has psychological benefits for healing and human development led to practices for deepening this connection. A third contributing factor to the birth of ecopsychology was its call for deep cultural change among modern, industrialized cultures (Fisher, 2002; Roszak, 1992) and a corresponding recognition that most indigenous cultures already recognized a deep bond with the natural world (Gray, 1995).

While the views underlying ecopsychology are arguably ancient, the idea of ecopsychology first arose explicitly in the 1960s and 1970s as an awakening to the social and ecological crises of the time—including the first Earth Day and both the civil rights and feminist movements, a time marked by a general critical pedagogical analysis of systems and structures that were hierarchical and oppressive. A new narrative had emerged where the personal was political, and many witnessing the destruction of ecological systems realized that this paralleled the rising psychological fears and disorders within themselves and others (Conn, 1995; Glendinning, 1994; Macy, 1983; Macy, 1995). The environmental movement was in full force, and alternative branches rooted in the critical analysis of the human domination of nature including peoples were emerging. These narratives include deep ecology, ecofeminism, and social ecology (Biehl & Bookchin, 2003; Chalquist, 2007). While these areas of the environmental movement

laid out our destructive relationship with the natural world, they did not address the psychological reasons behind destructive human behaviors, nor how to start healing.

The field of ecopsychology was developed explicitly in the 1990s most predominately with the work of Theodore Roszak, Mary Gomes, Allen Kanner, and Robert Greenway as a means to bridge the gap between ecology and psychology. These theorists saw a disconnection between environmentalists' overreliance on ecological science and political action in addressing the ecological crisis without considering its psychological dimensions. In contrast, mainstream psychology relegated anxieties, pathologies, and other forms of mental illness to the personal domain, rarely considering the effects of escalating planetary devastation or the benefits of direct contact with nature. Ecopsychology emerged as a response to these twin disconnections.

The first articulations of ecopsychology theory and practice concentrated on unraveling the reasons and consequences for this disconnection with nature and proposing avenues for restoration of an innate relationship with the natural world. For example, Fisher (2002) proposed ecopsychology as an evolving project for radical change toward serving the whole of life through the avenues of psychology, philosophy, critical evaluation, and healing practice. Ecopsychology sees the environmental crisis as rooted in a psychological crisis where humans of modern, industrialized, and technological civilizations have separated their identities from the rest of the natural world, which leads to seeing the planet as (merely) a material resource for human consumption. A major assumption is that *this crisis is embedded in the history and culture of modern, industrialized civilization that includes most of Western civilization*. The critical theory of ecopsychology looks at how Western civilization spurred the environmental crisis by

creating this perceived disconnection ranging from the institutionalization of domestic agriculture, the role of language and abstract thought, the role of mechanistic science, and colonization (Abram, 1996; Anthony, 1995; Gomes & Kanner, 1995; Glendinning, 1994; Shepard, 1995). Ecopsychologists call for a shift in worldview and practice that will re-embed our individual human psyches into the natural world.

While the integration of the psyche of the individual with that of the earth may seem like a radical restructuring for humanity, this relationship has been a foundation of past and present indigenous peoples. According to Roszak (1995), “Once upon a time all psychology was ‘ecopsychology’” (pp. 5-6). Ecopsychology seeks to restore this relationship, and some of its narrative focuses on what happened within the history of modern humans that obstructed this natural bond. In particular, the work of Paul Shepard (e.g., 1995, 1998) and Chellis Glendinning (1994) suggests that humans became arrested in their maturation with the invention of large-scale agriculture which resulted in a rift of our symbiosis with the natural world. Shepard labeled this *ontogenetic crippling* referring to a kind of developmental arrest in humans, while Glendinning went further with the concept of the *original trauma*, claiming this separation from nature has resulted in collective trauma. Doherty (2009) identified these views as representing ecopsychology’s first generation focused in part on critiques of modern culture.

A second generation of ecopsychology has emerged with a stronger focus on research and therapeutic practice. The *Ecopsychology* journal was established in 2009, providing a forum for scholarly research and inquiry concentrated on the relationship of human and planetary wellbeing, the *European Journal of Ecopsychology* followed in 2010, and a number of innovative research projects on ecotherapy, nature-based models

of human development, and integrations of environmental action and restoration with psychological healing and growth have appeared in recent years (Chalquist, 2007; Buzzell & Chalquist, 2007; Louv, 2005; Plotkin, 2003, 2007). This work is bringing ecopsychological concepts into tangible practice toward healing and reintegrating into a nature-based reality. Doherty (2009) has suggested that as ecopsychology moves into this second generation of research, theory, and application, it is becoming less defined by its countercultural, holistic, and romantic stance and more self-reflective, pluralistic, and pragmatic. Doherty called for an expansion from those early tenets of ecopsychology but not a rejection of them.

For others, this movement towards research and practice creates concerns about the explicit spiritual and mystical flavor of early presentations of ecopsychology by Roszak and others. For example, Reser (1995) found cause for concern with the "quasi-religious—and often explicitly religious—character of the discourse" (p. 241), stating, "The rhetoric is of spiritual connecting and transformation, there is a clear quest for the sacred and use of ritual, frequent reference to earth magic and animism/transcendentalism, etc." (p. 242). While Reser and others are skeptical about the value of an ongoing influence of transpersonalism in ecopsychology, its intersection with transpersonal psychology is an important aspect of ecopsychology's pluralism. As ecopsychology finds useful connections to ecotherapy, environmental psychology, conservation psychology, and other environmentally-focused psychologies, it will also be fruitful to develop its connections with transpersonal psychology. While these recent developments have assisted in developing ecopsychology as a more formal field, there is danger that ecopsychology's radical critique of modern society and the transformative

potential of the ecological self will be lost, replaced with a focus on nature as a useful therapeutic background.

Core Themes

Images of Human-Nature Relationships

Ecopsychology advocates certain images and concepts that reintegrate human identity with the natural world and which parallel those within transpersonal psychology. For the most part, ecopsychology presents two images for the relationship between humans and nature: (a) nature as home and its inhabitants as family (e.g., siblings or Mother Earth) and (b) nature as self, in which self-identifications are broadened and deepened to include the non-human world. These views stand in contrast to views that nature is dangerous and needs to be controlled and dominated or that nature is (merely) a useful resource to be exploited, protected, conserved, or stewarded. Jung made similar observations about the connections between the human psyche and nature (Jung & Sabini, 2002; Perluss, 2006) These images also parallel, to an extent, the concept of biophilia, the deep emotional bond humans have with nature (Wilson, 1984; Kahn, 1999).

Fox (1995) provided a useful outline of various positions on human-nature relationships leading to what he called *transpersonal ecology*, that is, that humans and the natural world are both parts of a more inclusive whole. A transpersonal view of human-nature relationships can include these images, and it can transcend them. Conceiving of nature as an expanded and more-inclusive self may be a necessary step in developing a more transpersonal view of the human-nature relationship. However, this broader self is not a final understanding. A transpersonal view goes beyond the nature-as-self image without invalidating it. Such a transpersonal view recognizes that both human and nature

are expressions of the same ground of being. An understanding of unitive or nondual states and practices for developing this understanding is thus the foundation for an effective integration of transpersonal psychology and ecopsychology.

Ecological Unconscious, Self, and Identity

These terms refer to the understanding that, though they can be differentiated, humans and nature are not fundamentally separate. Roszak (1992) introduced the concept of the *ecological unconscious* which links the individual's psyche to that of the living world. In a holistic and transpersonal sense, ecopsychology is the story of our individual and collective souls within the context of the ecological crisis and our return to our innate relationship with all of life. The *ecological self* is a central concept related to the ecological unconscious. Coined by the late deep ecologist Arne Naess (1989) and further developed by ecopsychologists (Conn, 1995; Sewall, 1995), the ecological self is an identification of the individual with all of life in a manner that dissolves or transcends boundaries between *I* and *other* and between *I* and *nature*, paralleling the notion of Self in transpersonal psychology. A successful development of the ecological self through awareness, immersion in nature, and other forms of mindfulness and healing practices holds the key to reunification with the natural world and restoring human's untapped transpersonal capacities. Thomashow's work (1996) supports the ecological self by developing what he terms *ecological identity*, which uncovers one's personal stories with the natural places one has inhabited. This personalized approach fosters a deeper awareness of our intimate relationships with nature, prompting a resulting ecological ethos.

Trauma, Grief, and Healing

Critical ecopsychology recognizes that disconnection from, and resulting destruction of, nature manifests a collective trauma for all peoples living apart from the natural world. In essence, in separating from this home or larger self, these societies have supported a separation from their true nature. Glendinning (1994) described this process using the concepts of *the original trauma* (the point of disconnection) and *the primal matrix* (a healthy human state, prior to disconnection). The primal matrix is a fluid state of consciousness and being that includes “a sense of belonging and security in the world, trust, faith,” “a sense of personal integrity, centeredness, capability,” and “the capacity to draw vision and meaning from nonordinary states of consciousness” (pp. 20-21).

Emptiness, narcissism, and addiction are important themes within ecopsychology. Loss of relationship with nature parallels a loss of true self, replaced with a false self rooted in “narcissism ... that masks deep-seated but unacknowledged feelings of worthlessness and emptiness” (Kanner & Gomes, 1995, p. 79). In essence, separation from true nature results in woundedness and pathological behaviors including addictions ranging from excessive consumption, alcohol and substance addiction, eating disorders, codependency, technological addiction, and other forms of abuse and self-abuse. These addictions are relevant to ecopsychology inasmuch as they (a) arise, at least in part, from a disconnection from the natural world and (b) have severe negative environmental consequences.

Experiencing emotional pain and grief in order to start the healing process is another important ecopsychology theme. This process is spurred by seeing and accepting the realities of the ecological crisis and the collective and personal disconnections from nature. Joanna Macy (1983; Macy & Brown, 1998) explicated the need to respond

emotionally to the ecological crisis and the dangers of apathy and denial of this pain. Through feeling this pain, it is released as part of a larger system, and by exercising compassion toward it, despair can be transformed into empowerment. O'Connor (1995) pointed out that by accepting the crisis, it is possible to understand our human condition better including the reasons we allow the ecological crisis to occur. This process is paralleled by Conn (1995), who uses four practices with her ecologically-oriented psychotherapy work: awareness, emotional responsiveness, understanding, and action (see pp. 166-170). Windle (1995) has argued that for environmentalists to be successful, they must engage nature across multiple dimensions including the emotional, relating the process of ecological despair to mourning the loss of a beloved. The impacts of environmental devastation on the human psyche and, more generally, the wounds and trauma of the disconnection of humans from the natural world are central to many ecopsychologists.

Practices

Ecopsychology is defined by its orientation to human-nature relationships rather than its practices, most of which can be found in other contexts. Ecopsychology calls for a reconnection between humans and the natural world, or more precisely, a re-awakening and development of this connection, and its practices express this call. They may be identified as ecopsychological inasmuch as they reflect an integration of psychology and the natural world and promote environmental justice, ecological sustainability, and human development. Given such a broad approach, it is not surprising that a wide variety of practices have appeared in ecopsychological frameworks. Three broad themes may be discerned within this variety: awareness practices, environmental work, and ecotherapy.

Among the practices aimed at increasing awareness of the natural world and human-nature relationships are sensory awareness, mindfulness practices, mapping, and techniques for facilitating communications with the natural world, animals, plants, and landforms (e.g., Abram, 1996; Coleman, 2006; Devereaux, 1996; Metzner, 1999; Plotkin, 2007; Sewall, 1999). Related to awareness practices, there are also methods for working with metaphor and symbol and methods for using nature as a means of expanding awareness, such as uses of nature as a projective device and mirroring. One might also include training in traditional (“primitive” or “survival”) skills as a means of increasing awareness of, and in, the natural world. Ecopsychology has also contributed to a deeper understanding of the sources of environmental action. This has been reflected in environmental education; restoration and regeneration work; the promotion of attitudes and lifestyles which are environmentally, economically, socially, and psychologically sustainable; bioregionalism; and advocacy and demonstration of relocalization based on appropriate technology. Clear examples of these practices are found in environmental restoration work that aims simultaneously at psychological healing and development. Narrowly-defined, ecotherapy integrates the natural world into counseling and psychotherapeutic settings by using nature as an element of psychological assessment (for example, including a person’s history with and attitudes toward the natural world as part of a psychological assessment), using natural objects and metaphors for psychological healing, dealing with difficult emotions toward nature (including fears of nature and despair, grief, and anger about environmental devastation), and encouraging direct contact with nature. Broadly defined, ecotherapy includes other means of engaging nature as a therapeutic and developmental resource and promoting deeper bonds with the

natural world. Such practices include gardening and horticultural therapy, animal-assisted therapy and education, place-bonding practices, wilderness therapy and outdoor adventure counseling, wilderness intensives such as wilderness-based rites of passage, and various kinds of nature-based ritual-based shamanic work. As with any organization of such a rich collection, many practices cross the boundaries of these three categories. For example, earth-centered festivals and seasonal celebrations, expressive arts with a focus on human-nature relationships, and eco-theater might be used within an ecopsychological context.

With such a broad and inclusive list of practices, ecopsychology runs the risk of losing its focus and meaning. This is the reason for the crucial importance of an emphasis on promoting ecopsychological values such as ecocentrism and a view of human-nature relationships based on metaphors of family, home, or a more inclusive self. Nature-based mindfulness practices are ecopsychological when they are grounded in the fundamental interconnection of human consciousness and nature, learning traditional survival skills would be considered ecopsychological to the extent they promote a deeper bond between the learner and the natural world, and environmental restoration reflects ecopsychology when one's actions develop both a natural area and inner development as two aspects of one whole. As long as these values are kept in mind, ecopsychology's practices will be able to continue to expand in creative, coherent, and useful ways.

Transpersonal Dimensions of Ecopsychology

Common Theoretical Ground

A number of influential voices in ecopsychology have included a transpersonal view at its core more often through references to spirituality and nature mysticism. A

recent edited volume on ecopsychology (Kahn & Hasbach, 2012) identified its transpersonal aspects as one of five core orientations of ecopsychology, that is, “interactions with nature that lead to optimal mental health and help to develop a sense of inner peace, compassion, and trust that pushes us forward into service and finally to the transpersonal” (Hasbach, Kahn, & Doherty, 2012, p. 2).

While connections between ecopsychology and transpersonal psychology are not always acknowledged or accepted, it seems that a view of nonduality is shared by both fields (Davis, 2011). A self-identity that transcends the individual as a separate entity underlies transpersonal psychology. Although there are disagreements about the nature and extent of this transcendence, it is at the root of various core concepts in transpersonal psychology, including nonduality, holism, unitive consciousness, mystical experiences, peak experiences, self-transcendence, a collective unconscious, spiritual intelligence, and ego-transcendence (see, e.g., Caplan, Hartelius, & Rardin, 2003).

The role of nonduality in ecopsychology is generally articulated less explicitly, but it is central. At the focus of ecopsychology is a relationship between humans and nature characterized by seamless interconnection. While differentiations between humans and the non-human world are important, these relative differentiations are not fundamental any more than are differentiations between oaks and maples. Ecologically-based images of different leaves on the same tree or individual waves on a single ocean are often used to portray ecopsychology’s view of human-nature relationships. Concepts that are core to ecopsychology such as *ecological self*, *ecological identity*, and *ecological unconscious* point to a self-identity beyond the individual.

Theodore Roszak's *The Voice of the Earth* (1992), the seminal book in ecopsychology, connects it to nature mysticism, feminist spirituality, and in his conclusion, "the interplay between planetary and personal well-being, [phrasing which] is deliberately chosen for its traditional theological connotation" (p. 321). Snell, Simmonds, and Webster (2011) reviewed Roszak's work on ecopsychology and concluded that spiritual experience is an important theme in his presentation of ecopsychology. They also point out that Roszak avoided the term *spirituality* because he felt it would hinder acceptance of his argument. They concluded that "it would be prudent to account for Roszak's contribution and the significance of spiritual experience in his representation of ecopsychology" (p. 112). Warwick Fox's *Transpersonal Ecology* (1995) also articulated the intersection of ecopsychology and transpersonal psychology. Although the original 1990 publication of this book predates Roszak's (1992) major presentation of ecopsychology, Fox (1990) cited Roszak's earlier work at several points and includes Roszak in a list of writers who "see the cultivation of ecological consciousness in 'spiritual' or 'quasi-religious' terms" (p. 52). Robert Greenway (1995) pointed to dualism as "perhaps the source of our pervasive sense of being disconnected" from the natural world (p. 131) and suggested that such dualism (in contrast to nondual or unitive perspectives) is also at the root of Western culture's domination, exploitation, and destruction of human habitat, "the very basis of our survival as a species" (p. 131). Andy Fisher's *Radical Ecopsychology* (2002), another formative work for the field of ecopsychology, considered spirituality in some instances to be virtually synonymous with the reunion of humans and the rest of nature (p. 97), and a necessary foundation for encountering the depths of environmental suffering in order to engage in effective

environmental action (pp. 190-191). Deborah Winter's *Ecological Psychology* (1996) is subtitled *Healing the Split Between Person and Planet*, suggesting this split is not fundamental, that it is a wound in need of healing, and that closing this split benefits both humans and the non-human planet. She cited Roszak's ecopsychology and Fox's transpersonal ecology as examples of a growing synthesis between ecopsychology and transpersonal psychology. Winter summarized her discussion of these fields this way:

The basic principle to be drawn from both gestalt and transpersonal psychology (and their recent forms of ecopsychology and transpersonal ecology) is that our ordinary experience of ourselves as separate autonomous beings is incomplete and inaccurate. [Recognizing this] will require ... a shift in consciousness (the transpersonal emphasis) from the smaller, autonomous, ego-oriented self to the wider and deeper ecological self. Transpersonal psychologists, ecopsychologists, and transpersonal ecologists argue that such a shift is more than a cognitive event—it is also a directly perceptual and/or spiritual event. (p. 264)

Of particular interest to transpersonalists, Wilber (1996) referred to nature mysticism as a paradigm case for the first transpersonal level of development, he identified wilder places as “inviting places” to “relax egoic grasping” and seek optimal psychological health and transformation (p. 291), and he cited deep experiences of nature as examples of the mystical experience and extraordinarily healthy human development. Writing about the deep ecologists' (and presumably ecopsychologists') views of a transpersonal and ecological self, he called himself

a big fan of their work. They have an important message for the modern world: to find that deep Self that embraces all of nature, and thus to treat nature with the same reverence you would extend to your own being. (Wilber, 1996, p. 204)

It should also be noted that he considered deep ecologists (and again, presumably ecopsychologists) “basically half right and half wrong (or seriously incomplete)” (1996, p. 6). Responding to his criticisms is beyond the scope of this chapter, but they are worth noting in the relationship between transpersonal and ecopsychological thought (cf. Davis, 1998, see pp. 77-79).

Research on Transpersonal Experiences in Nature

Common ground between ecopsychology and transpersonal psychology can be seen in empirical research as well. Much research confirms the connection between nature experiences and various measures of psychological health including cognitive restoration, stress reduction, vitality, and altruism. While these variables are not precisely or necessarily transpersonal, they are definitely of interest to ecopsychologists. More relevant to this discussion is the body of research demonstrating the spiritual or transpersonal aspects of nature experiences, corroborating and refining similar observations in a wide variety of nature, spiritual, and religious literatures.

Kaplan and Talbot (1983; see also Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989) evaluated a series of wilderness programs for inner-city youth and adults. Content analysis of participant’s journals revealed the following impacts:

[During the backpacking trips] for many participants there is eventually a surprising sense of revelation, as both the environment and the self are newly perceived and seem newly wondrous. The wilderness inspires feelings of awe and

wonder, and one's intimate contact with this environment leads to thoughts about spiritual meanings and eternal processes. Individuals feel better acquainted with their own thoughts and feelings, and they feel "different" in some way—calmer, at peace with themselves, "more beautiful on the inside and unstifled." (Kaplan & Talbot, 1983, p. 178)

[Immediately after the trip] there is a growing sense of wonder and a complex awareness of spiritual meanings as individuals feel at one with nature, yet they are aware of the transience of individual concerns when seen against the background of enduring natural rhythms. (pp. 179-180)

[At a follow-up] the wilderness is remembered as awesome, and is felt to have offered a compelling glimpse of a real world, and of a way of relating to one's surroundings and responding to one's daily opportunities and challenges, that was immensely satisfying. (p. 182)

Other empirical research also points to connections between nature experiences and concepts central to transpersonal psychology. Several empirical studies examined the relationship between nature experiences and peak experiences (for Maslow and others, a paradigm case of transpersonal experience). Wuthnow (1978) used three definitions of peak experiences in a large representative survey and asked respondents if they "ever had the feeling that you were in close contact with something *holy or sacred*," had "experienced the beauties of nature in a deeply moving way," and had the feeling of "being in harmony with the universe" (p. 61). Eighty-two percent of his sample reported being deeply moved by the beauty of nature, the most common of the three experiences, and 49% percent felt this experience had a lasting influence on their lives. Keutzer (1978)

asked college students whether they had had a transcendent experience, sixty-five percent responded affirmatively, and of special interest here, the most common trigger was “beauties of nature such as sunset” (p. 78) In a cross-cultural confirmation of these findings, Hoffman and Muramoto (2007) found that samples of Japanese college students reported nature experiences as the first or second most common trigger for their peak experiences. Shiota, Keltner, and Mossman (2007) found nature to be the most common trigger for the experience of awe, a characteristic of peak and spiritual experiences. Rudd, Vohs, and Aaker (in press) found that experiences of awe, in comparison to other positive emotions such as happiness, brought people into the present moment and led to an expanded sense of time, greater willingness to engage in prosocial behavior, stronger preferences for experiences over material objects, and increased life satisfaction. Notably, this research used images of nature such as waterfalls and whales (among other techniques) to elicit awe.

In a survey of mental health services, Lukoff and Mancuso (2012) found that, among those surveyed throughout California, the spiritual practices most beneficial to mental health were, in order of frequency, prayer, meditation, attending religious services, and spending time in nature (out of 23 possible choices). Supporting the close relationship between nature experiences, spirituality, and mental health, 40.3% of respondents reported time in nature as a spiritual practice beneficial for mental health. Other empirical studies (e.g., Frederickson & Anderson, 1999; Stringer & McAvoy, 1992) have found spiritual experiences in the context of wilderness adventure activities. Overall, it seems that both the adventure element and the wilderness setting play a role in

John Davis 8/16/12 4:04 PM

Comment: TO GLENN: This is still in press. I expect it will be out in the next issue, so maybe we'll have a reference in time for the Handbook. I read it at http://faculty-gsb.stanford.edu/aaker/pages/documents/TimeandAwe2012_working_paper.pdf

John Davis 8/16/12 3:50 PM

Comment: TO GLENN: This section is new and includes your suggestion to include Lukoff and Mancuso (2010). Thanks for that.

evoking transpersonal experiences and that one of the primary reasons people engage in wilderness experiences is to seek transpersonal experiences (Brown, 1989).

From its beginnings, ecopsychologists (and others) have proposed a relationship between feeling connected to nature and environmental behaviors, and while this connection is not yet well understood, research is now showing evidence of this. Empirical measures of “connectedness to nature” (Mayer & Frantz, 2004) and “relatedness to nature” (Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2009) predict stronger valuing of non-human species, greater concern for the environment, and more proactive environmental action (Schultz, 2001). Although the concepts of *ecological self* and *ecological identity* suggest a deeper and more profound relationship to nature, a sense of emotional connectedness and being related to nature is still relevant to ecopsychology. Friedman (1983) showed that an expanded sense of self can come to include an identity with the entire world or universe, and using the Nature Inclusive Measure to operationalize *ecopsychological self*, St. John and MacDonald (2007) showed this expansion can come to include the natural world. This promising research directly addresses an important dimension of transpersonal development: a self-identity that has expanded to include the natural world and a sense of unity or oneness, representing empirical validation of core themes of ecopsychology.

Again, these experiences are foundational for transpersonal psychology and confirm the connections between ecopsychology and transpersonal psychology. In a poetic voice, Susan Griffin expressed the same transpersonally-laden insight:

We know ourselves to be made from this earth. We know this earth is made from our bodies. For we see ourselves. And we are nature. We are nature seeing nature.

We are nature with a concept of nature. Nature weeping. Nature speaking of nature to nature. (1978, p. 226)

As humans we are also nature caring for nature. This suggests the possibility of models of environmentally-responsible behavior which is rooted in a nondual view of human-nature relationships and more successful techniques for developing pro-environment behaviors, which would be a useful direction for ecopsychology.

Conclusion

In many ways, ecopsychology began with a rejection of mainstream psychology and conventional culture—including technology and the promotion of a romantic view of the natural world. The field's subsequent development has come to include more emphasis on ecotherapy and a broader view of environmental action. This welcome maturation seems useful as long as it continues to value thoughtful critiques of the cultural roots of environmental devastation and the centrality of the transpersonal dimensions of human-nature relationships. Distancing itself from these dimensions would deny the importance of mystical connections between humans and nature while replicating a mechanistic worldview and a human-nature duality. An inclusive ecopsychology will include cultural-political critique, conclusions grounded in a blend of quantitative and qualitative research, rich applications of ecotherapy, and psychologically mature approaches to environmental attitudes and action. In conclusion, these two fields share much common ground and a number of potential contributions to each other. Among transpersonal psychology's contributions to ecopsychology are conceptual frameworks and practices for exploring the spiritual dimensions of human-nature relationships in ways that are methodologically rigorous, conceptually sophisticated, and

John Davis 8/9/12 6:46 AM

Comment: TO GLENN: I'm inclined to use this stronger language – “would be” rather than “might be.” OK?

more effective. In turn, transpersonal psychology can benefit from ecopsychology's critique of those factors that lead to apathy, violence, and trauma (whether toward oneself, other people, or the environment) and its views and methods for realizing the natural world as a portal to the transpersonal.

References

- Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Anthony, C. (1995). Ecopsychology and the deconstruction of whiteness. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 263-278). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Biehl, J., & Bookchin, M. (2003). Theses on social ecology and deep ecology. Retrieved from the Institute for Social Ecology <http://www.social-ecology.org/1995/08/theses-on-social-ecology-and-deep-ecology/>
- Brown, M. (1989). Transpersonal psychology: Facilitating transformation in outdoor experiential education. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 12, 14-21.
- Buzzell, L., & Chalquist, C. (2007). *Ecotherapy: Healing with nature in mind*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.
- Caplan, M., Hartelius, G., & Rardin, M. A. (2003). Contemporary viewpoints on transpersonal psychology. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 35, 143-162.
- Chalquist, C. (2007). *Terrapsychology: Reengaging the soul of place*. New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal.
- Coleman, M. (2006). *Awake in the wild: Mindfulness in nature as a path of self-discovery*. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Conn, S. A. (1995). When the earth hurts, who responds? In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 156-171). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.

- Davis, J. (1998). The transpersonal dimensions of ecopsychology: Nature, nonduality, and spiritual practice. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 26* (1-3), 69-100.
- Davis, J. (2011). Ecopsychology, transpersonal psychology, and nonduality. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies, 30* (1-2), 89-100.
- Devereux, P. (1996). *Revisioning the earth: A guide to opening the healing channels between mind and nature*. New York, NY: Fireside.
- Doherty, T. J. (2009). Editorial: Leading ecopsychology. *Ecopsychology, 1*(2), 53-56.
- Esbjörn-Hargens, S., & Zimmerman, M. E. (2009). *Integral ecology: Uniting multiple perspectives on the natural world*. Boston, MA: Integral Books.
- Fisher, A. (2002). *Radical ecopsychology: Psychology in the service of life*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Foster, S., & Little, M. (1989a). *The book of the vision quest: Personal transformation in the wilderness*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. (Original work published 1980)
- Foster, S., & Little, M. (1989b). *The roaring of the sacred river: The wilderness quest for vision and self-healing*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Fox, W. (1995). *Toward a transpersonal ecology: Developing new foundations for environmentalism*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Frederickson, L., & Anderson, D. (1999). A qualitative exploration of the wilderness experience as a source of spiritual inspiration. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 19*, 21-39.

- Friedman, H. (1983). The Self-Expansiveness Level Form: A conceptualization and measurement of a transpersonal construct. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 15*, 37-50.
- Glendinning, C. (1994). *My name is Chellis and I'm in recovery from Western civilization*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications.
- Gomes, M. E., & Kanner, A. (1995). The rape of the well-maidens: Feminist psychology and the environmental crisis. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 111-121). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Gray, L. (1995). Shamanic counseling and ecopsychology. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 172-182). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Greenway, R. (1991). Mapping the wilderness experience. *Circles on the Mountain, 5*, 19-23.
- Greenway, R. (1995). The wilderness effect. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 122-135). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Griffin, S. (1978). *Woman and nature: The roaring inside her*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Hasbach, P., Kahn, P., & Doherty, T. (2012). *Ecopsychology* roundtable: Patricia Hasbach and Peter Kahn. *Ecopsychology, 4*(1), 1-9.
- Hoffman, E., & Muramoto, S. (2007). Peak experiences among Japanese youth. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 47*, 497-513.

- Jung, C., & Sabini, M. (2002). *The Earth has a soul: C. G. Jung on nature, technology, and modern life*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Kahn, P. (1999). *The human relationship with nature: Development and culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kahn, P., & Hasbach, P. (Eds.). (2012). *Ecopsychology: Science, totems, and the technological species*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kanner, A. D., & Gomes, M. E. (1995). The all consuming self. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 77-91). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Kaplan, S., & Kaplan, R. (1989). *The experience of nature*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaplan, S., & Talbot, J. (1983). Psychological benefits of a wilderness experience. In I. Altman & J. Wohlwill (Eds.), *Behavior and the natural environment*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Keutzer, C. (1978). Whatever turns you on: Triggers to transcendent experiences. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 18*, 77-80.
- Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.
- Lukoff, D., & Mancuso, L. (2010). Survey of individuals receiving mental health services and their families. Sacramento, CA: California Institute for Mental Health.
Retrieved at <http://www.mhspirit.org>
- Macy, J. (1983). *Despair and personal empowerment in a nuclear age*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

John Davis 8/15/12 7:13 PM

Comment: TO GLENN: pls check for APA style on this.

- Macy, J. (1995). Working through environmental despair. In Roszak, T., Gomes, M.E., & Kanner, A.D. (Eds.). *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 240-259). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Macy, J., & Brown, M. (1998) *Coming back to life: Practices to reconnect our lives, our world*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Mayer, F., & Frantz, C. (2004). The connectedness to nature scale: A measure of individuals' feeling in community with nature. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 24*(4), 503-515.
- Metzner, R. (1999). *Green psychology: Transforming our relationship to the earth*. Rochester, VT: Park Street Press.
- Naess, A. (1989). *Ecology, community, and lifestyle*. (D. Rothenberg, Trans.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Nisbet, E., Zelenski, J., & Murphy, S. (2009). The nature relatedness scale: Linking individuals' connection with nature in environmental behavior. *Environment and Behavior, 41*(5), 715-740.
- O'Connor, T. (1995). Therapy for a dying planet. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 149-155). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Perluss, E. (2006). Touching Earth, finding spirit: A passage into the symbolic landscape. *Spring Journal, 76*(2), 201-222.
- Plotkin, B. (2003). *Soulcraft: Crossing into the mysteries of nature and psyche*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

- Plotkin, B. (2007). *Nature and human soul: Cultivating wholeness and community in a fragmented world*. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Reser, J. (1995). Whither environmental psychology? The transpersonal ecopsychology crossroads. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 15(3), 235-257.
- Roszak, T. (1992). *Voice of the earth: An exploration of ecopsychology*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Roszak, T. (1995). Where psyche meets Gaia. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 1-17). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Roszak, T., Gomes, M. E., & Kanner, A. D. (Eds.). (1995). *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Rudd, M., Vohs, K., & Aaker, J. (2012). Awe expands people's perception of time, alters decision-making, and enhances well-being. *Psychological Science*, vol 23, No 10, 1130-1136.
- St. John, D., & MacDonald, D. (2007). Development and initial validation of a measure of ecopsychological self. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 39(1), 48-67.
- Schultz, P. (2001). The structure of environmental concern: Concern for self, other people, and the biosphere. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21, 327-339.
- Sewall, L. (1995). The skill of ecological perception. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 201-215). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Sewall, L. (1999). *Sight and sensibility: The ecopsychology of perception*. New York, NY: Penguin-Putnam.

- Shepard, P. (1995). Nature and madness. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 21-40). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Shepard, P. (1998). *Coming home to the Pleistocene*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Shiota, M., Keltner, D., & Mossman, A. (2007). The nature of awe: Elicitors, appraisals, and effects on self-concept. *Cognition and Emotion, 21*, 944-963.
- Snell, T., Simmonds, J., & Webster, R. S. (2011). Spirituality in the work of Theodore Roszak: Implications for contemporary ecopsychology. *Ecopsychology, 3*, 105-113.
- Stringer, L., & McAvoy, L. (1992). The need for something different: Spirituality and wilderness adventure. *Journal of Experiential Education, 15*, 13-20.
- Swan, J. (1992) *Nature as teacher and healer. How to reawaken your connection to nature*. New York, NY: Villard Books.
- Thomashow, M. (1996). *Ecological identity: Becoming a reflective environmentalist*. Boston, MA: MIT Press.
- Wilber, K. (1996). *A brief history of everything*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Wilson, E. (1984). *Biophilia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Windle, P. (1995). The ecology of grief. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth healing the mind* (pp. 136-145). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Books.
- Winter, D. (1996). *Ecological psychology: Healing the split between planet and self*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Wuthnow, R. (1978). Peak experiences: Some empirical tests. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 18*, 59-75.

