EDITORIAL

Expanding Ecopsychology

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Volume 9 reflects the variety and richness of this evolving field. Papers consider such diverse topics as psychedelics, human attachment, nature-based therapies and Gendlin's Focusing approach.

Can psychedelic experience impact pro-environmental behaviour? The so-called 'psychedelic renaissance' has brought exaggerated claims, but this paper looks beyond the hype, revealing research that suggests these extraordinary substances can influence the inner dimensions of sustainability. Nilsson & Stålhammara review the literature and consider several overlapping themes: values & personality, nature connectedness, and worldviews & spirituality.

Jardine & Lange develop Bowlby's theory to identify other-than-human attachments across a wide range of cultures. Previous research has identified attachments to animals or trees, but the authors found deep attachments to non-living aspects of the other-than-human—sand, wind, ocean waves, fire, quality of light, quietness. This research bridges developmental psychology, environmental education, Indigenous knowledge systems, and sustainability science in genuinely original ways.

Research often doesn't confirm the hypothesis it was testing, but how often do those results get published? Harris, Garip and Lumber's paper presents unexpected results: the key intervention—the 'three good things in nature' exercise—had no significant impact. The apparent 'failure' of a commonly used intervention is interesting in itself, but the Editorial Team were also curious about their methodological approach. We believed there was more to say—and different ways of saying it. The authors engaged with us, revising,

discussing and occasionally constructively disagreeing.

The result is a nuanced and reflexive paper that considers possible reasons for the unexpected results, shedding new light on ecopsychology. More importantly, they engage with the research process itself and acknowledge it may have been hampered by the Western ontological framework they adopt. Can we research ecopsychology from a perspective "that implies a separation of humans from nature" (p. 85)? Or must we consider "a more embodied ontology" (ibid.)? This is a vital question, and we are grateful for the persistence and intellectual humility shown by the authors.

In his new paper, Puk revisits the NBRH approach he described in Volume 7 (Puk, 2021). He presents three case studies of people suffering from significant brain impairment who came to him "when nothing else worked" (p. 123). In each case they came to see themselves as "different people" after working with him (ibid). Puk has developed a synergistic process of healing that offers a replicable testable protocol. Nature is the essential third element of this model and Puk eschews the title of 'therapist', framing his role as a 'guide'.

Mayhew and Kampman consider how nature can facilitate posttraumatic growth (PTG). While some earlier studies neglected the importance of corporeal PTG, this paper emphasises the embodied dimensions. Nature emerges as an active relational presence in the therapeutic process, which participants experienced as an "old friend" or "parental force." For some, this became their primary source of support when human connections failed. The study documents diverse embodied experiences across various natural settings—energy surges, emotional release, feelings of lightness and strength.

In common with others in this volume, the authors highlight reflexivity, questioning their tendency to ‘romanticise’ nature while confronting uncomfortable realities of not feeling safe in nature, accessibility and pollution natural spaces.

Focusing is not widely known in ecotherapy, so I was pleased to receive Ollagnier-Beldame's paper. Focusing emerged from Gendlin's research with Rogers in the 1960s. He identified a transformative way of sensing into embodied sensations ('felt senses') that he called 'Focusing' (1978). Ollagnier-Beldame begins with a clear overview of Focusing, drawing out parallels with existing work in ecopsychology.

The paper brings Gendlin's work into conversation with ecopsychology, revealing how Focusing can reveal our everyday existence as a belonging to the more-than-human world. Gendlin offers a radical reorientation of what it means to be a human body in a living world; the body is not a sealed, autonomous unit, but "is the situation" (p. 163). Ollagnier-Beldame identifies the ethical and political ramifications of this insight; environmental destruction is not occurring ‘out there’ but within the very processes that constitute us.

Several themes emerge across this Volume. Many writers challenge Western ontoepistemology, sometimes highlighting the animistic experience of participation rather than observation. There are echoes here of Roszak’s conclusion that a key role of ecopsychology is to "recover the child's innately animistic quality of experience in functionally 'sane' adults" (1992: p.132). Others highlight relational belonging, developing ecopsychology's core claim that psychological well-being depends on a sense of connection to ecosystems. There are important lessons here for a culture that so urgently needs deeper interconnectedness to the "other-than-human" world.

References

Gendlin, E.T. (1978). Focusing (first edition). New York: Everest House.

Puk, T., *Nature-based Regenerative Healing: A case-study of interpersonal ecotherapy* European Journal of Ecopsychology 7: 19 - 40 (2021)

Roszak, T., (1992). *The voice of the Earth*. Simon & Schuster.