

BENEATH OUR FEET

An exploration of the ways psychotherapists think about the human-nature relationship,
and the clinical implications of this in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material, which to a substantial extent, has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or institution of higher learning, except when acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

Signed: Michael Apathy Date:

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John Loori planted the seed for this study. He passed away in 2009 but has not stopped teaching.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores different concepts that psychotherapists use to think about the human-nature relationship through a systematic literature review. A dialectical model is suggested, one that integrates the wide range of concepts into a relational perspective. Two dialectics of empathic versus analytic, and materialist versus idealist perspectives are also contained within the model. Difficulties in therapy are highlighted, including the difficulty of holding the importance of both internal subjective psychological realities, and that of pressing environmental issues.

The challenges of relating to nature in the Aotearoa bicultural context are explored, including dangers of ecopsychology appropriating or colonising the indigenous. It is argued that Western cultures themselves already contain resources for relating more closely to nature in the form of language that evokes a direct and intimate relationship with nature.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This literature review will attempt to answer the question: How do psychotherapists conceptualise human beings' relationships with the natural environment, and what are the theoretical and clinical implications of this in the context of Aotearoa? For the most part, this research will involve reviewing literature from the emerging field of ecopsychology, though literature from other fields will also be included. This literature from other fields will be particularly important in attempting to look at implications for the Aotearoa context – a gap in writings in the field of ecopsychology thus far.

Upon beginning this research I had strong views about the importance of the natural environment, and powerful motivations (both conscious and unconscious) for choosing this topic. My motivations and views, personal, spiritual, and political, have been sources of both bias and insight. To become more conscious and less biased by these factors, as part of the research I wrote a case study focusing on the development of my own relationship with nature. Unfortunately this publically available version of this dissertation will not include this personal information, in order to protect my privacy.

Chapter two will outline the methodology used in this research. The use of modified systematic literature reviews within psychotherapeutic research will be explored. Inclusion and exclusion criteria will be shown, as well as the literature searches themselves, in table form. Chapter three will address how the material found in the literature search will be organized in this dissertation. Two different sets of either/or distinctions that emerge from the literature will be explained and defined in detail. The first distinction is between the two different perspectives of philosophical idealism and philosophical materialism. The second distinction is between two different psychotherapeutic perspectives or stances, the analytic and the empathic. Material will be organised according to both of these distinctions, the combining of which gives the four different perspectives shown below in a brief summary of the topics of the chapters.

Chapters four to seven will review material found in the literature search as relating to the four different perspectives. Chapter four will review material relating to the analytic-materialism perspective. This includes an analysis of the colonisation of Aotearoa, the ecological impact of this colonisation, and clinical implications for working with human

destructiveness. Chapter five will review material relating to the empathic-materialism perspective. This includes a review of ways in which contact with nature can help humans, as well as an empathic stance for helping humans to bear the loss of natural environments. Chapter six will review material relating to the analytic-idealism perspective. This includes narcissistic and Oedipal dynamics in the human-nature relationship. Chapter seven will review material relating to the empathic-idealism perspective. This includes concepts of attachment and gender in the human-nature relationship.

Chapter eight will relate the four perspectives to each other in a simple model, whilst chapter nine will provide discussion and a counter point to the model and material that the prior chapters focused on. In attempting to address the Aotearoa context more fully, biculturalism and ecopsychology will be discussed, as well as the role of language in the human-nature relationship.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

This dissertation is guided by the research question: “How do psychotherapists conceptualise human beings’ relationships with the natural environment, and what are the theoretical and clinical implications of this in the context of Aotearoa?” The aim is to review some of the concepts psychotherapists use to think about this relationship, and to examine these concepts in the Aotearoa context.

The research process is drawn from the evidence based practice model, and takes the specific form of a modified systematic literature review (SLR). SLRs gather, evaluate and synthesise evidence ranging from randomised controlled studies to expert opinion, in order to provide answers to specific research questions (Gray, 1999). Evidence Based Practice often looks at quantitative research, however because the majority of psychotherapeutic literature is qualitative, this review will be modified in order to include qualitative research. The emphasis on qualitative research is also appropriate because of the generally qualitative orientation of the field of psychotherapy. Many psychotherapists are critical of statistically oriented quantitative research which they find superficial and which they find does not reflect well their everyday work with their clients (McLeod, 2010).

Systematic Literature Reviews

This dissertation will follow the key features of a systematic literature review (Gray, 1999):

- 1) Framing the research question.

- 2) Identification of research studies through database and other online searches (in the case of this research sources used were: PEP, psychINFO, EBSCO, findNZarticles, JSTOR, google scholar), and also by checking reference lists of identified literature.

- 3) Selection of studies for inclusion by keyword searches.

Method

A wide range of keywords were used, as initial searches identified a great deal of material relating to psychotherapy and the natural environment, less research relating to the part of the research addressing clinical implications, and even less on the Aotearoa context. The following criteria/topics were searched:

- 1) Ecopsychology, applied ecopsychology, and eco-therapy.
- 2) Psychotherapy and the natural environment.
- 3) Psychotherapy in Aotearoa.
- 4) Ecopsychology in Aotearoa.
- 5) New Zealanders' relationships to the natural environment.

Inclusion Criteria

The scope of the review includes literature published in English that explains concepts relevant to psychotherapists' conceptualisation of the relationship between humans and nature. Literature will also be included that is not written by psychotherapists, but is relevant enough to the psychotherapeutic endeavour to be utilized by psychotherapists to think about this relationship (for instance material by ecologists or philosophers.)

Because of a scarcity of Aotearoa-specific literature, literature written by non-psychotherapists will be particularly important in addressing the part of the research question that contextualises these concepts in Aotearoa. In this case the writings of sociologists and historians will be particularly important in understanding the context of New Zealanders' relationship with the natural environment.

In this review the word “nature” will be used to include plants, animals, and substances that are not produced by human activity or intent. Often in this review the term “human-nature relationship” is used. This term includes both the relationships between humans and the physical substance of the natural environment (thinking materialistically), and also the relationship between humans and their personal subjective experience of the natural environment (thinking in idealistic terms). For explanations of materialism and idealism, please see the next chapter.

Exclusion Criteria

A number of psychological schools’ contributions will be mainly excluded from this review. This decision has been made for two reasons. Firstly to consider all available psychological concepts would enlarge this research to unmanageable proportions, or require that they be addressed in an un-usefully brief summarized form.

Secondly, the research question’s focus on relationship may be most directly addressed by schools of psychological theorising that are most relationally oriented. The relationally oriented psychotherapy in which I have mainly been trained has been psychoanalytic psychotherapy, which has therefore in turn influenced my approach to this topic, and whose influence is evident in the way I have chosen to organise the material found in the search. I have decided to accept the limitations inherent in my grounding in psychoanalytic theory, and the limits on the extent to which I have been able to integrate different theoretical orientations with it. When, as explained below, non analytic literature is included, it will be incorporated into an analytic perspective as will be shown in a model. This psychoanalytic perspective is one of my biases as a researcher.

According to Scull (2004) psychoanalytic theories form a large part of the ecopsychology literature. Though transpersonal (including Jungian), indigenous, and humanistic psychologies are also prominent in the literature they will be excluded from this review except when they are being related to psychoanalytic concepts or literature. Having this tight and coherent perspective will allow literature not written by psychotherapists (but which is still relevant to the research question) to be integrated. This seems necessary given

the lack of material written on the human-nature relationship by New Zealand psychotherapists of any theoretical orientation. It also seems necessary given that some of the most influential writers in the field of ecopsychology such as Theodore Roszak (a historian) come from non-psychological fields.

The decision to largely exclude indigenous psychologies from the review requires particular justification, given the importance placed on indigenous peoples' relations to the environment in so much of the literature. The decision to exclude indigenous psychologies has been influenced by considering white Westerners' (such as myself) cultural identities in the light of Hardiman's identity development model (Sue, Allen, & Pederson, 1996.) Hardiman identifies five stages of identity development that are relevant in thinking about culture. The third stage of resistance, which may be highly relevant to the cultural critiques embedded in much of the literature, can include romanticisation of the other and denigration of one's own group. This is contrasted to the next stage, that of redefinition, which is more realistic and in which one focuses instead on redefining what one's own cultural identity means to oneself. Writing this dissertation as a Pakeha psychotherapist I feel that it is appropriate to focus on this redefinition – the task of coming to terms with white/Western cultural identity as it has manifested in the human-nature relationship. I hope that doing so will help myself and other Pakeha to be more open to genuine rather than romanticising or devaluing relationships with the other in the form of either indigenous peoples or the environment. For this reason indigenous and Maori literature will largely be excluded from the scope of the review, except where they are found relevant to the Pakeha task of redefinition.

Table 1: Results of Database Searches Undertaken June-August 2010

Database	Search Terms	Results	Number Relevant
PEP	“natural environment”	112	2

	“ecopsychology”	3	2
	“New Zealand” AND “environment”	2	0
	“environmentalism”	92	0
	“nature”	1000+	-
	“nature” AND “environment”	1000+	-
	“nature” AND “environmentalism”	78	0
PsycINFO	“ecopsychology”	2	0
	“natural environment”	151	-
	“natural environment” AND “relationship” (in abstracts)	11	0
	“natural environment” (in titles)	23	0
	“New Zealand” AND “natural environment” AND “relationship”	5	0
EBSCO	“ecopsychology”	50	32
	“ecopsychology” AND “New Zealand”	0	0
	“natural environment” AND “New Zealand”	60	3
	“environmentalism” AND “New Zealand”	0	0
	“natural environment” AND New Zealand” AND “relationship”	42	3
findNZarticles	“environment” AND “attitudes”	163	14
	“environmentalism”	551	-
	“psychology” AND “environment”	215	-

	“psychology” AND “environment” AND “environmentalism”	44	8
JSTOR	“New Zealand” AND “environment” AND “literature”	1000+	5
	“New Zealand” AND “environment” AND “literature” AND “psychology”	1000+	0

Searches of the above data-bases did not uncover as much material as I had expected. For example, searches of PEP database retrieved only two relevant articles, which surprised me given that psychoanalytic thinking is prominent in the field of ecopsychology. Perhaps the relatively new, fringe status of this topic has led to it being underrepresented in sources that are otherwise useful for psychotherapy research. Given this, use of reference lists for the additional non-systematic literature search was important.

Non-Systematic Literature Search

In addition to the above, literature was also identified from the following sources: book references obtained from the writer’s personal library and from those of colleagues; books and journals located through journal reference lists, and ad hoc sources; literature sourced manually or suggested by the dissertation supervisor, AUT lecturers, and/or colleagues; and key word and topic searches conducted on internet search engines (Google, Yahoo, and Google Scholar.) Search engine search terms included: ecopsychology, psychotherapy AND New Zealand, ecopsychology AND New Zealand, environment AND New Zealand.

I stopped the literature search when I reached saturation – the point at which the same concepts and information were being frequently repeated. This let me know that I had an overview of the field.

CHAPTER THREE: ORGANISING THE MATERIAL

The material found in the literature search is challenging to organise because it consists of many different perspectives and disciplines. The relevant literature is broader than the category of ecopsychology, and is written not only by psychotherapists but also those from other disciplines including historians, sociologists and ecologists. Rather than trying to organise the material according to discipline or modality I have attempted to organise it according to two other major divisions in the field that cross over the borders of modality. These divisions will hopefully be relevant for thinking about clinical implications, and also for thinking about the material in terms of relationship as required by the research question.

The first division is clearly defined (at least in the most extreme forms) in philosophy, as the divide between idealism and materialism. According to Roszak (1992), philosophies of idealism hold that our minds have the primary responsibility for forming our experience of reality, whereas in philosophies of materialism our minds more passively reflect material reality as it is governed by the laws of the science. Idealism tends to focus on the inner processes of our minds, because it holds that mind determines our experience of matter. Materialism tends to focus on the external material world because it sees the material world as determining our inner reality. Most of the literature found in the search relates more to one or the other of these perspectives, which will therefore be the perspective it will be considered from.

The tension between idealistic and materialistic perspectives is a tension that is alive within a range of literature. For instance, in ecopsychology literature one of the ways this tension is referred to is as a split between the person and the environment (Clinebell, 1996.) In some sociological literature this same tension is thought of in terms of theories privileging the material environment, versus theories of social constructionism (Sampson & Goodrich, 2009.) Materialistic and idealistic theories both speak to the relationship between matter (nature) and mind (personal subjective experience), and each assign one partner in the relationship as having the dominant or determinative role.

The second division is based on distinctions drawn in psychotherapy rather than philosophy, and is perhaps a more obviously relational distinction. According to Fay (2010) both empathic and analytic lineages of psychotherapy exist in Aotearoa. While he does not

strictly define the terms empathic and analytic, I will attempt a loose characterisation of each, for the purposes of clarifying psychotherapeutic views of the human-nature relationship.

The empathic perspective is attuned to unmet needs and attempts to join with the other in relationship (whether the other is nature itself, the client, or a culture.) In terms of psychoanalytic psychotherapy the empathic stance might correlate most closely with self-psychology and attachment theory. In contrast, the analytic perspective uncovers and interprets unconscious and unacceptable psychological material, it interprets the defences against this material's uncovering, and also the way in which this material emerges in the context of relationship . The analytic perspective might correlate with insight-oriented approaches to psychotherapy, including more classical psychoanalysis. This analytic/empathic division is imperfect and somewhat arbitrary in terms of theory as, for instance, analytic perspectives can encompass empathy (K. Tudor, personal communication, September 7, 2010.) However, as long as its limitations are held in mind, the analytic/empathic division may be useful clinically in thinking about the ways in which a clinician might shift their stance and emphasis whilst working across the breadth of the ecopsychology field, which is by its nature vast in scope.

As with the first division, literature will be sorted according to the perspective it can be most usefully related to. Sorting the literature into these divisions results in four different possibilities: analytic materialism, empathic materialism, analytic idealism, and empathic idealism. These form the next four chapters of the dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYTIC MATERIALISM

“What you learn in therapy is mainly feeling skills, how to really remember, how to let fantasy come, how to find words for invisible things, how to go deep and face things... but you don’t learn political skills or find out anything about the way the world works. Personal growth doesn’t automatically lead to political results. Look at Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Psychoanalysis was banned for decades, and look at the political changes that have come up and startled everybody. Not the result of therapy, their revolutions...” (Ventura & Hillman, 1993, p. 6-7)

This provocative statement by a psychoanalyst (who also writes on ecopsychology) critiques what he sees as a particular narrow focus in much of psychotherapy, in which the focus is not on the visible and material, but on the invisible depths of our subjectivity. In such (non-ecopsychological) psychotherapy the normal order of everyday life is inverted as the invisible is uncovered whilst the visible material world becomes invisible. In contrast, therapists and writers influenced by ecopsychology attempt to make the material visible and bring the material world back into the therapy room in a number of different ways. This chapter will view the material and its return into therapy through the analytic lens. The colonisation of Aotearoa, the ecological impact of this, and the challenge of confronting human destructiveness, will all be covered in this chapter.

A Marxist Example of Analytic Materialism

The reference to the former Soviet Bloc in the introductory quotation evokes Marxism – a set of political ideas aligned with philosophical materialism. Steven’s (1990) Marxist analysis is an example of one of the diverse ways in which psychotherapists might be able to begin to think more about the material world. Steven is particularly relevant because his writings are focused specifically on the New Zealand context, and are assigned reading in a New Zealand (Auckland University of Technology) training programme for psychotherapists.

According to Steven, Pakeha colonialists had a highly developed rationalising ideology in which colonisation and the Treaty of Waitangi were acts of benevolence towards Maori. In

contrast to this ideology which he attempts to expose, Steven analyses the material forces that demanded colonisation, and which in turn led to both genocide and most importantly for this dissertation, environmental degradation.

From a Marxist perspective, British colonisation was an attempt to solve a crisis of capitalism in which Britain had a large and potentially revolutionary lower class. Though the 1834 Poor Law Act in Britain attempted to stem population increase, a place had to be found for the current and dangerously unstable surplus working class population. Aotearoa was this place, and the high quality land (and therefore living conditions) were the necessary enticement for colonists (Steven, 1990).

Unlike in cheap labour or extractive economies where indigenous people are wanted for their labour, there was no role for Maori who occupied land required for Britain's surplus population. Their existence threatened the development of Aotearoa as a destination for destitute Britons. Pressure to develop Aotearoa in this way spilled out in genocide, (in the savagery against Maori of the Settler Wars of the 1860s) but also resulted in the undermining of Maori culture and connection to the land. The focus here is not however on this genocide, but on the centrality of the land to Pakeha motivations and identity. "It lies at the heart of who New Zealanders really are, and it also, though more indirectly, shapes our ideologies of who we think we are." (Steven, p.30) According to Steven, Maori identity in the past centred on the land, and today centres on the struggle for return of that land. The material of the land is of central importance to both behaviour and identity.

Themes and ideas dear to classical psychoanalysis are apparent in Steven's (1990) narrative of colonisation and New Zealanders' relations with the land. For instance, the defence of rationalisation could be seen in the disavowal of aggressive impulses towards Maori occupants of the land. Guilt regarding this aggression might also later be rationalised. The surplus working class, dangerously uncivilised and potentially uncontrollable like forces in Freud's id, must be controlled and found an outlet for, by the "civilised" British ruling class. The colonists themselves can be seen as being driven by the search for pleasure or at the least the avoidance of pain in a better quality of life.

Being a materialist analysis, competition for the land is the organising principle for the inter-racial relationships. This evokes the idea of Oedipal competition for possession of the

mother who is also mother earth. Driving the conflict and competition for land are the mechanisms of capitalism which match up with Freud's version of Darwin, a Darwin emphasising savage competition rather than cooperation and interdependence (Roszak, 1992).

Ecological Impacts of Pakeha Colonisation of Aotearoa

Psychoanalytic dynamics can be understood idealistically, as originating in the interior of the subjectivity of the individual, or in a materialistic analysis (such as this chapter) can be understood in relation to the material of nature. In Aotearoa's case, the material of nature has helped determine human activity, but also has itself been profoundly changed by the colonisation of Aotearoa, as will be shown.

Pakeha colonists saw the Aotearoa landscape in terms of unrealised economic potential. Initially the focus was on turning the extensive forests into timber, running sheep for wool, and turning the forests into pasture land for dairying. From this perspective, Pakeha could only perceive Maori economic relations with the land as wasteful under-utilisation. This perception formed a further justification for appropriation (Park, 1995).

Star (2003) argues that colonists did not hate the natural environment, but that they were largely ignorant of the value of the landscape upon which they would have an irreversible impact. Western concepts of an eco-system of inter-dependent parts had not yet been developed. What environmental knowledge Pakeha had was based on the very different environment of their home-land. From this position, Pakeha were ill-equipped to understand indigenous concepts, including the resource preserving function of tapu (Star, 2003).

Park (1995) explores the history of a few Aotearoa sites that were ecologically rich and precious enough for Maori to refer to as Nga Uruora – Groves of Life. One such site (to be used here as an example of historical Pakeha relationships with the material of Aotearoa nature) was the “Immense Trees of Ooahaoruragee” which stood on the site which is now the Thames estuary and Hauraki Plains.

Park's natural history includes historical accounts of this vast forest dominated by the great kahikatea which according to Cook's account often measured 19 foot in diameter, and which were loaded with beautiful scarlet and black fruit, or koroi, which formed a staple food when in season and would be almost unimaginable to collect today. Another early Pakeha visitor recorded "the copse wood and flax, with reeds and rushes of every description, flourish most luxuriantly on the banks of this noble river; ducks, and other water-fowl, sail proudly and undisturbedly on its placid bosom, and are so remarkably tame, as to come fearlessly within reach of the paddles... the whole atmosphere seems impregnated with perfumes..." (Park, p. 34) Though early Pakeha visitors could appreciate the aesthetic significance of this area, they still saw it as a vacant wilderness "not at all difficult to seize for a colony" (Park, p. 39) (This view reflected a widespread Pakeha colonial idea that they were transforming a wasteland (Moodie, 2000.) To Maori this area was a tapu, food-rich labyrinth of waterways and forest (Park, 1995).

Only later would the first Pakeha begin to understand the Maori relationship with this land. William Swainson said years later in 1856: "They claim and exercise ownership over the whole surface of the country, and there is no part of it, however lonely, of which they do not know the owners... Forests are preserved for birds; swamps and streams for eel-weirs and fisheries. Trees, rocks and stones are used to define the well known boundaries." (Park, p. 65)

Over time Maori had artificially modified environments in rich spots such as this to utilise nine different resource zones, but they did so in a give and take relationship, and with an affinity for both nature's resilience and fragility. Furthermore the modifications were subtle, not very different from that which was present anyway (Park, 1995).

This assessment of Pakeha impacts on nature is a comparative one. The comparison is between the impacts of two peoples, one of which had already adapted in relation to material of nature in Aotearoa, the other which had not.

Confronting Human Destructiveness

The intention of this excursion into natural history is to emphasise the lack of awareness on the part of Pakeha colonists about the value of these "Groves of Life" which they were destroying in establishing their farms. Being newcomers to an eco-system unlike their own,

the colonists' lack of awareness is understandable. What is more puzzling is Pakeha New Zealanders' continuing ignorance of the vast disparity between the ecological richness that existed before colonisation, and the desert-like conditions that result when humans, through industrial agriculture, channel entire eco-systems' productive energy into themselves (Park, 1995).

Thinking analytically about the material of nature, Pakeha lack of interest in the natural history of our country could be likened to the comparative ignorance and disinterest in their own personal history that many psychotherapy clients start therapy with. Part of this ignorance may be simply that the past is past, and that these precious eco-systems of vast lowland forests (like our own personal past) no longer exist literally in the present, to be explored in a concrete and physical way. However, another element may be psychological. For Pakeha, ignorance may serve as a defence against unbearable guilt, shame, anger at the actions of our own ancestors with whom we are identified, and against grief at the loss of that which is irreplaceable (Rust, 2004).

The interpretation suggested in the preceding paragraph is not only psychological, but also ecological and political. According to Fisher (2002) "therapists have often argued that they do not belong in the political arena: a stance that is in itself a political act." (p. 54) From an eco-psychological stance that takes the material world seriously, therapeutic neutrality is no other than collusion with the systems of capitalism and with late industrial society that casts people into the unsustainable roles of consumers (Fisher, 2002). Fisher proposes a practice of therapy that is radical, a word by which he does not mean extreme, but rather that it goes to the root of issues in human relationships with nature. This would appear to be a challenging endeavour for clients, and for therapists who according to Fisher must forgo total reliance on the idea of psychologism – that if we change consciousness then the whole of society will follow. In terms of this dissertation psychologism could be thought of as an extreme idealistic focus that excludes the material from the human-nature relationship.

The challenge laid down in the ecopsychology literature, to confront clients with their responsibility for and participation in environmentally destructive systems of material exchange, is a difficult one. Therapists and writers with different political/theoretical allegiances position themselves (and their clients) differently within this challenge. For instance, writers with deep ecological allegiances cast the systemic challenges in human

(tool using and technological) vs nature terms. They consider humans' use of technology as a factor that both alienates them from, and allows them to dominate nature. More politically oriented writers cast the systemic challenges in human vs human terms, for instance highlighting the way in which through hierarchical power relations, powerful humans exploit less powerful humans and the natural environment, alike. (Bookchin, 1988)

Whether critiquing use of technology, power-relations, or other factors, I would suggest that use of powerful systemic critiques runs the risk of painfully alienating clients from participation in society with which these factors are so interwoven. As a participant in society, the therapist runs the same risk of alienation, and faces the challenge of maintaining awareness of painful systemic factors, just as therapists must be able to bear their own personal conflicts and vulnerabilities in order to bear these things in their clients.

While a joining empathic focus may support both client and therapist in bearing these difficulties, balancing systemic and individual lifestyle focuses may also be important. Confronting one's own (and possibly one's clients) polluting, and bringing one's own behaviour more in line with the realities of environmental sustainability may be a useful preparatory step. This step may prepare clients and therapists alike to hear deeper interpretations of our involvement in systemic violence towards the environment, rather than resort to various defences such as denial. This approach is the opposite of psychologism as explained above, and is instead based on the more materialistic idea that through changing behaviour consciousness may follow.

Randall (2005) gives an example of how the dilemmas of this approach might look in therapy with actual clients, when she asks

“How should one respond, for instance, to the young man who says proudly that he has passed his driving test and is acquiring his first car?... Does one analyse the narcissism in a patient's desires for environmentally damaging activities, or stay silent because they mirror one's own actions? Does one notice the manifestations of denial in a patient's behaviour or ignore them because of the mutual discomfort acknowledgment would bring? The answers to such conflicts must, as ever, start with the individual patient. But it is likely to be our environmental-mindedness which dictates whether or not we hear the hint of doubt in the boy's voice as he

tells us about the car and allows us to wonder what he has done with his knowledge of its damaging consequences.” (Randall, p. 13)

Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature that emphasises the power of material (the physical environment itself) to shape human experience. Particular attention has been given to colonisation, which Steven (1990) understands as centred around competition for land which was essential for maintaining capitalist systems of ownership and control. This capitalist process is paralleled with Oedipal struggles for possession of mother (earth), and “Freud’s Darwin” of savage competition.

The literature points towards Pakeha destructiveness towards the land as being more about ignorance than hatred of the land. Maori patterns of land-use and experience of the richness of the land is contrasted to Pakeha colonial views of Aotearoa as either a wasteland, a potential, or economically under-utilised.

Finally, the difficulty confronting human destructiveness towards the material environment is considered. Many eco-psychological writers challenge ideas of therapeutic and political neutrality as potentially collusive with defensive tendencies to disavow human destructiveness.

CHAPTER FIVE: EMPATHIC MATERIALISM

The prior chapter covering the analytic materialistic focus confronted many aspects of our relationship to with nature that we might wish to avoid acknowledging. This chapter on the Empathic Materialistic perspective considers how humans might get their needs met through positive and sustainable relationships with the material of our natural environments, and also considers an empathic approach to humans living in environmentally stressful conditions.

Using Nature to Help People

A number of studies have measured the beneficial effect that involvement with nature has on humans. According to Buzzel and Chalquist's (2009) summary of the relevant research, even bringing nature indoors in the form of potted plants provides tangible benefits, including enhanced work productivity, improved mood, decreased boredom, and increased interest in learning. Hospital patients who can view natural scenery from their beds experience less anxiety pre-surgery, and faster healing post-surgery (Ulrich, 1984). Various forms of horticultural therapy have been shown to be effective in curtailing stress and obesity, treating alcohol addiction and substance abuse, decreasing vulnerability to drug abuse in violent offenders, enhancing self esteem in those suffering various disabilities, easing the shock of displacement for refugees, and dealing with burnout in healthcare providers (Mind, 2007). Moving patients into natural environments (tent therapy) has been shown to reduce some chronic illnesses (Caplan, 1967). Kaplan (1995) found that nature is a soft (rather than hard) form of sensory stimulus. This means that nature restores our capacity for attention and engagement, rather than fatiguing these capacities as hard stimulus can.

While this small sample of the available research shows that immersion in nature is of itself therapeutic, there are also a variety of approaches that involve nature to enhance the effectiveness of therapy. For instance, many eco-psychologists make the considered and deliberate choice to expand the frame and boundaries of therapy by doing therapy in an outdoor setting during warmer seasons. This can influence the therapy in many ways. For instance, it can increase the sense of safety for some clients, for whom nature was a place

of retreat from destructive family dynamics that were enacted inside the family home. For other clients being outdoors may enhance a sense of playfulness in the therapy, due to associations of indoors being a place for work, while outdoors is for recreation (Rust in Buzzel & Chalquist, 2009).

Doing therapy in nature can also allow us to use nature as a mirror, to reflect back aspects of the client's self and relationships often through symbolism and metaphor. Thoughts and feelings evoked in this way can in turn aid the process of inner reflection. For instance, the seasons of life particularly evoke themes of change: death, birth, growth and renewal (Jordan, 2009a). These themes, important in any therapy, are not only evoked but also implicitly normalised and universalised by their appearance in the natural context rather than appearing in isolation inside the individual self.

While environmental restoration projects are far from traditional psychotherapy, they are an example of humans engaging with nature in a way that reflects Roszak's (n.d.) ecopsychological principle of reciprocity between humans and nature. The benefits for the natural environment are obvious, for instance the way in which tree planting can enrich a barren eco-system. Less obviously, environmental restoration work can also spontaneously engender deep and lasting changes in people, including a sense of dignity and belonging, a tolerance for diversity, and a sustainable ecological sensibility. Helping the web of life in a particular place to heal and renew itself can serve as a mirror and an impetus for individual and community renewal (Shapiro, 1995.)

Being Empathic to the Loss of the Natural

Having considered the multiple benefits for humans of relating to nature more closely, we will now consider the impact of the loss of such a relationship. According to Hillman (1995) "the 'bad place I'm in' may refer not only to a depressed mood or anxious state of mind; it may refer to a sealed-up office tower where I work, a set-apart suburban subdivision where I sleep, the jammed freeway where I commute between the two..." (p. xvii).

When the client's subjectivity is not arbitrarily defined by therapists as being encapsulated by their physical skin or primary interpersonal relationships, then therapists will enlarge the scope with which they can empathise with clients who are affected by 'bad places.'

Hillman (1995) gives this example to clarify: According to him some cancers are hypothesised to begin in people suffering losses of personal relationships. Therapists are attuned to empathising with such a loss because it involves the client's personal subjectivity as they are used to defining it in dyadic relationship and manifesting within the self as bound by the skin. Empathy regarding "the less conscious but overwhelming loss – the slow disappearance of the natural world, a loss endemic to our entire civilisation" (Hillman, 1995, p. xxi) requires that therapists open up to a sense of self that is wider than that which is immediately obvious.

Awareness (conscious or unconscious) of overwhelming loss of the natural environment can also require the working through of environmental despair. This parallels the process by which bereaved persons unblock their numbed energies by acknowledging and grieving the loss of a loved one (Macy, 2005.)

According to Macy, there are three widespread psychological strategies for dealing with loss of the natural environment. The first strategy, that of disbelief, makes it difficult to believe the gravity and immediacy of environmental crises. This is bolstered by the fact that many of the dangers are either concealed or invisible, for instance invisible or untasteable toxins in the air or food, or landfills and clear-cuts that are screened from public view. The second strategy of denial tends to make the environmental crisis a matter of conjecture or debate, which then leads to downplaying environmental reports or impugning the motives of "special interest" environmental groups. The third strategy is that of leading a double life. In this case individuals separate out the anguish and distress attached to their knowledge of environmental destruction, and maintain an upbeat capacity to carry on with life as normal (Macy, 2005).

Working empathically with these responses to environmental loss first of all requires that the therapist is willing to acknowledge environmental loss, instead of interpreting environment related distress as being merely symbolic of individual personal issues. Secondly, it requires that the therapist empathically respond to issues such as fears of pain, of guilt, powerlessness, of causing distress to others, of appearing morbid, too emotional, or stupid (Macy, 2005).

Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature about using nature to help people, as well as literature on working empathically with the loss of the natural. A substantial amount of research confirms that natural environments are beneficial to humans' physical and psychological wellbeing. A number of therapists take this beneficial effect further by using natural settings to enhance the psychotherapeutic process. In both these cases the relationship between humans and nature can be conceptualised as being beneficially harmonious.

The flip side of the close relationship between humans and nature can be thought of in terms of the impact on humans of the destruction of natural environments. Writers such as Macy attend to pathological strategies to manage this impact, as well as the healing potential of empathic responses from therapists.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYTIC IDEALISM

While chapters four and five analysed the human-nature relationship as determined by the material, this chapter and the next will analyse the determinants in the relationship from an idealistic perspective. This includes internal subjective models of relationships, affects, and cognitions. Chapter six may comprise the most personally confronting section of the dissertation, as the spotlight is shone on the internal and personal causes of our environmental destructiveness. The chapter will review literature on relating narcissistically to nature, some other defences in the human nature relationship, and Oedipus and Oedipal dynamics.

Relating Narcissistically to Nature

Ecopsychologist O'Connor (1995) writes that he has “even, upon occasion, interrupted a client’s self-absorbed soliloquy by asking ‘are you aware that the planet is dying?’” (p 149) This confrontative approach to narcissistic self-absorption could be likened to the Kernbergian approach of aggressively confronting narcissistic defences. More empathic approaches that could be likened to a Kohutian approach to narcissism will be explored in the next section, empathic idealism.

Ecopsychologists have used the concept of narcissism extensively to consider human relations with the environment. The concept of normative narcissism is based in a cultural critique, rather than the psychoanalytic basis for ideas of narcissism that will be discussed later in this section. There are two commonly cited culturally based causes for humans to have developed an objectifying narcissistic relationship with nature. Firstly, According to Metzner, (1999) in the West Judeo-Christian religion supplanted paganism and pantheism and attempted to transcend matter and nature in order to reach the divine. Humans were given dominion over animals and plants alike, who lacking the transcendent nature that is the soul, came to be seen as unfeeling objects.

The second cited cause of the normative objectification of nature is the influence of mechanistic science. According to Metzner (1999), during the scientific revolution of the 16th century a split developed in which science came to deal with matter whilst values became the territory of religion. As religion has become further marginalised science has developed an idea of progress that is still detached from values in the form of ethics.

Without embedded values and ethics to the contrary, science and scientific “progress” become driven by the two environmentally destructive ends of warfare and profit. Both mechanistic science and transcendent monotheism are implicated in critiques of patriarchy and the exploitation of nature, to be discussed later in this section.

Axelrod and Suedfeld (1995) are unusual in the ecopsychology literature in putting forth a more moderate and less countercultural view which argues against the two cultural critiques above. In regard to Western monotheism their arguments serve as reminders that some of the critiques are based on selective interpretations of relatively few biblical passages, and do not represent well the breadth of complex religious traditions. In regard to technology, they highlight the role of technology not only in unsustainably extracting resources, but also in regulating human activity to conserve the environment. Axelrod and Suedfeld’s (1995) counter arguments could perhaps be best understood not as a total contradiction of more radical ecopsychological views, but as a caution against relying on sweeping generalisations and ignoring specific cases that do not fit these generalisations.

Moving on from critiques of culturally based normative narcissism, the review will now consider psychoanalytic understandings of narcissism. One of the aspects of the narcissistic personality type is a preoccupation with issues of identity (McWilliams 1994). According to Gomes and Kanner (1995), for consumers, consumption has become literally central to identity. As we consume we do not only seek to fill an empty self, but we wish to identify with the idealised consumer whom we see in advertising as physically perfect and filled up with pleasure. The emphasis on the pleasure principle is combined with a narcissistic disregard for the reality principle, as represented by the environmental constraints on consumption (Gomes & Kanner, 1995.)

While limitless consumption has become part of individual identities through advertising, it has, according to Lasch (1980), also become part of the identities of Western cultures. President Bush (jnr) defending unbridled consumption as a non-negotiable part of the American way of life is a particularly blatant example of entitlement as part of first world cultures’ identities and a general “culture of narcissism.”

Fantasies of “endless comfort and convenience, of every wish instantly becoming the world’s command” (Gomes & Kanner, 1995, p. 78) are also part of the grandiose narcissistic style, a compensation for an inner sense of lack and emptiness.

Defence Mechanisms in the Human-Nature Relationship

While being at times related to narcissistic defences, consumption also fulfils other defensive purposes. Shopping, for instance, can be formulated as a manic defence against acknowledging the terrifying realities of the consequences of our unsustainable use of resources (Randall, 2005). Rust (2008) suggests that consumerism can act as an opiate to subdue our wild natures. Manic activity and affect can mask a more empty depressive self in an oral dynamic - drinking from the breast reassures us that the milk will never run out (Randall 2005).

Denial is perhaps the most commonly cited defence throughout the surveyed literature, and perhaps the most confronting to come to terms with. Most often the defence of denial is cited as being used to ward off acknowledgement of both present and impending danger to the individual, danger due to the consequences of degradation of the natural environment. This use of the defence of denial fits well with Freud’s original concept of denial as a disavowal of something that would otherwise be experienced as traumatic (Randall, 2005). Formulating denial as a response to potential trauma may be significant in shifting theorists, clinicians and activists towards a more empathic and supportive stance that takes into account vulnerability to trauma (with similarities to Judith Herman’s trauma therapy, see Jensen, 2004), as opposed to confronting denial or other defences head on. Similarly, principles of acknowledging and valuing defences may also apply here, as well as not taking away defences before a better psychological alternative (perhaps a more mature defence) is available (McWilliams, 1994).

Denial can be considered a first response, initially useful to avoid being overwhelmed by traumatic material that can only be assimilated gradually. If conditions are not supportive enough for this assimilation to occur the splitting off of the truth can become permanent, and can be followed by further splits in order to contain anxiety. Splitting is a commonly cited defence in the literature and is considered in global forms (for instance that of a

psychological split between humans and nature, Buzzel & Chalquist, 2009) and in more specific forms (for instance splitting mother nature into a “good breast” and “bad breast”, rather than having an integrated experience of nature as being at times indifferent and other times nurturing (Randall, 2005).

Oedipus and the Oedipal Complex

Like defences, the Oedipal complex is a key concept of classical psychoanalysis. Oedipal dynamics in the human-nature relationship occur when the government or environmentalists come to be seen as the repressive father who is trying to deny access to the desired mother-earth. Infantile competitive dynamics also come into play when we feel that we are being treated unfairly, that others (sibling figures) are being given more access to the resources of mother-earth. The infantile impulse is then to resist, spoil her plans, or find a way to outwit mother. (Randall, 2005)

Though novel in its application to environmental issues, the above use of the Oedipal complex is orthodox compared to Katzenbach’s (2002) reinterpretation of the story of Oedipus that originally inspired Freud.

“The seed we plant determines what will grow, including the seed of a discipline. We can graft the original plant to another, we can transplant, we can trim and shape, but we cannot change the seed itself. But it can happen that we discover the seed is not what we thought it was.” (Katzenbach, 2002. p. 1.)

This quotation relates to a central tension present in the psychotherapeutic literature about the human-nature relationship. It is a tension between radically nature centred theorists and writers (eco-psychologists) on the one hand, and more mainstream theorists and practitioners. At what point does the tension reach breaking point, resulting in eco-psychologists losing conceptual coherence with the psychoanalytic psychotherapy tradition, and perhaps no longer being considered psychotherapeutic or psychoanalytic by either themselves or more mainstream practitioners?

Katzenbach attempts to resolve this tension through the radical act of re-reading and re-interpreting the story of Oedipus that was the seed for Freud's pivotal Oedipal complex. Her claiming of one of the seeds of the psychoanalytic tradition as an eco-psychological fable is reflective of a wider trend within the ecopsychology literature. This trend is that of ecopsychology both recognizing itself as a radical new turn in the development of psychotherapy, and also making claim to being a continuation of an original or natural profession, state of consciousness, or knowledge. An example of this use of older or original knowledge is ecopsychology's interest in and utilisation of indigenous knowledge and techniques, and identification of similarities between the role of the shaman and psychotherapist.

Katzenbach explores Sophocles' ancient play Oedipus Rex as a fable about the nature of humans, and our place in creation. Through the play the main character, Oedipus, uncovers his past as a client does in therapy. Interestingly, the incentive for him to embark on this uncovering is not his own personal suffering, but the ecological catastrophe that has engulfed Thebes as "buds turn to rust... Stillbirths, no births, and miscarriages afflict animals and humans alike. Rashes appear on human and animal skin, and the air itself is poison. Crops wither in a constant, scorching, mad heat, as if Sophocles were predicting global warming, eco-systemic estrogen mayhem, acid rain, pollution and toxic waste 2500 years ago." (Katzenbach, 2002, p. 1)

According to Katzenbach the cause of this ecological catastrophe is Oedipus's fundamental misunderstanding of his parentage – his place in creation. This leads him to a mindset of cleverness, competitiveness, hyper-individualism, and ultimately the perversion of his creative powers (this is paralleled with our use of technology) in the act of incest.

Like a good therapist, Sophocles does not leave his readers alone with the tragedy of Oedipus Rex as an endpoint. His later play Oedipus at Colonus (in Katzenbach, 2003) contains many of the important elements of ecopsychology that are addressed throughout the dissertation: Oedipus' twenty years exile in nature can be understood as an attachment experience with nature, his close relationship with his daughter (rather than his sons) reflects critiques of patriarchy, the struggle for territory and terrorism in the play reflecting

struggles for resources and the concern for social-justice embodied in ecopsychology, and the dangers of cultural appropriation or green-washing are reflected in Oedipus's needing to prove himself trustworthy in order to enter into the sacred grove in which healing rituals can be performed. In summary, Katzenbach's re-interpretation of Oedipus serves as a meta-narrative to understand human function and dysfunction in a cultural context, and also in an ecological context.

Summary

The literature reviewed placed a strong emphasis on humans relating narcissistically towards nature. This includes the narcissistic tendency towards objectification, amorality, pre-occupation with issues of identity (as consumers), and sense of entitlement. Non-narcissistic defences are also addressed in the literature, including mania, denial, and splitting.

Particular attention is given in this chapter to the work of Katzenbach, who interprets the story of Oedipus in a different way than Freud did with his Oedipal complex. According to Katzenbach, Oedipus's incest represents his misunderstanding of his parentage – his place in creation. This re-reading of Oedipus serves as a meta-narrative that encompasses many eco-psychological concepts, and also serves to lay claim to the writer Sophocles as an influential Western eco-psychological “ancestor.”

CHAPTER SEVEN: EMPATHIC IDEALISM

In Sophocles' play Oedipus blinds himself once he realises his origins and his participation in incest. Out of this Freud developed his ideas about the unconscious – a repository of our unacceptable sexual and aggressive impulses (Katzenbach, 2002.) Moving away from psychoanalytic orthodoxy, later psychoanalytic theorists developed the idea of the unconscious further, as have eco-psychologists in developing the concept of the ecological unconscious and in reassessing Freud's topographical model of the mind. This section, empathic idealism, will consider these adaptations of classical psychoanalytic ideas, as well as the use of later developments such as attachment theory.

The Ecological Unconscious

The ecological unconscious is understood by Roszak (1992) as being that part of us that has evolved in adaptation to the natural environment. Although our ecological unconscious adapts us to the natural environment, many of us find ourselves living in an artificial urban environment to which we have no corresponding unconscious adaption. The reason we are not adapted to this new environment is because in evolutionary timescales urbanisation is too recent a phenomenon (Roszak, 1992).

The functioning of the ecological unconscious is evident in the child's enchanted sense of the world, an innately animistic quality of experience (Roszak, 1992.) Kelly (n.d.) suggests that the latency period is particularly important in the developing relationship to nature. This is because in childhood the boundaries between self and other are thought to be plastic, and because during latency the child is available to nature, rather than being either infantile or caught up in the storms of adolescence. The opposite of such a close relationship to nature, is considered by Roszak (1992) to be a repression of the ecological unconscious, a sense of alienation from nature and objectification of nature.

Functioning with a mature ecological ego is compared to functioning with a repressed ecological unconscious. The person functioning with a mature ecological ego is characterised by a sense of reciprocity towards nature, rather than by the sort of exploitation that is associated with the objectification of nature. As in classical psychoanalysis, the goal of working in ecopsychology with the unconscious is that of insight into and access to the unconscious. Because the relationship between the person and

environment is reciprocal, awakening a sense of reciprocity with nature is considered healing for both the individual and the natural environment. Indigenous people are often held up as being exemplars of reciprocity and mature ecological egos (Roszak, 1992.)

In Freud's topographical model the unconscious is the id, which is characterised as being primitive, needing to be controlled, and dangerous because being unable to distinguish between self and other it is boundary-less. In ecopsychology this same boundary-lessness is valued as a capacity to identify with and connect to the whole of the environment. The childhood basis of Freud's oceanic feelings of unity are valued and cultivated not as illusory or narcissistic, but as valid experiences of human inseparability from nature. This joining experience is essentially empathic and healing, being an experience of wholeness. In reciprocal fashion, the healing is not only for the human who has the experience, but leads to healing for the earth as those who identify with the earth will protect it as naturally as they will protect themselves. (Roszak, n.d.)

Gender and Nature

According to Chodorow (1989), boys receive subtle messages that to be properly male they must pull away from the intensity of the first intimate relationship – generally with their mother. Instead they are expected to identify with a father figure who is often distant. As a result men learn to disconnect and deny relationship and particularly their dependency. In intimate relationships this often plays out in men distancing themselves from their partners, or dominating them even to the point of rape or physical violence in order to manage their own fear of dependency. The same dynamics can be seen in the ways that patriarchal cultures relate to the earth. Whilst actual independence from nature is impossible, those in patriarchal cultures may deny their dependency, and are therefore unable to form relationships with the earth that are based in reciprocity and gratitude (Gomes & Kanner, 1995.)

While the application of Chodorow's theory may explain an almost universal factor affecting gender and the environment, constructions of gender are still culture specific. According to Culbertson (n.d.), from the beginning of colonisation New Zealand was organised around particularly strict gender roles, rather than organising primarily around race or class as other parts of the British empire did. Separated from women and family, the

land, and the protector/provider/procreator masculine roles, Pakeha men developed a “Man Alone” identity that may represent a particularly strong rejection of dependency. This rejection of dependency and definition of masculinity is policed by the threat of visible and invisible, internalised and interpersonal shaming. Culbertson describes another influence on New Zealand masculinity, that of Muscular Christianity which was premised on the physical superiority of males in order to (amongst other purposes) conquer nature. Particular attention to Pakeha men’s vulnerability to shame, and to power and control issues may be necessary in order to help men develop more intimate and reciprocal relationships in psychotherapy in general, and also with nature.

Attaching to Nature – New Territory for Attachment Theory

Themes of dependence and independency, while important in considering gender are also prominent in attachment theory, which has been taken up by ecopsychologists. In ecopsychological applications the natural environment is seen as being a secure base – a regulator of affect (Jordan, 2009b). Strong evidence does exist that the natural environment can regulate affect, as shown by the sample of studies in the empathic materialistic section of this dissertation. A further question exists, can the different styles with which we attach to secure bases also be seen in human relationships to the natural environment?

Jordan (2009b) argues that the avoidant style’s reluctance to acknowledge dependency and need (and the avoidant tendency towards exploitativeness) corresponds with common Western attitudes towards the environment. The anxious/ambivalent style could also be seen at play in the consumerist need to acquire and possess the material of the natural environment to soothe anxiety about not getting enough, or anxiety about not getting close enough, or about abandonment (that the resources will run out.)

Attachment occurs in the context of intense emotional experiences. Therapists may be able to facilitate the development of more secure attachments to nature by helping clients to have positive emotional experiences in nature through numerous different approaches including those mentioned in the empathic materialistic section of the dissertation. Sociological studies of attachment to place give further clues about the development of attachment by listing six different ways in which this occurs. These are: genealogical

attachment, economic attachment, attachment via loss or destruction of place, cosmological attachment, religious or spiritual attachment, and attachment via narrative or storytelling (Sampson & Goodrich, 2009). While the focus in psychoanalytic attachment theory is often on the dyad, sociological research on place attachment stresses the importance of community in constructing meaning, which is essential for attachment and identification with place. Furthermore, it is likely that the six types of attachment listed above will often take place in community rather than dyadic or solitary contexts (Sampson & Goodrich, 2009.) Hay's (1998) research in Aotearoa supports the importance of community for sense of place, which is related though not identical to place attachment.

Part of the strength of attachment theory is the evidence not only for how the different attachment styles manifest in adult relationship, but also for how our internal working models of attachment were developed in the past in the context of the first emotion regulating relationship with the primary care-giver. To understand the origin of our attachment styles with nature Jordan (2009b) proposes that we widen our view to encompass the wider context in which early attachments and attachment experiences may have taken place: the natural environment consisting of living plants, wild birds, bark, rain, etc. He proposes that these surroundings are internalised as self, in the same way that the infant finds its sense of self in relationship with the primary care-giver. These issues of attachment and construction of self may link well with non- attachment related studies of identification with place and role of place in construction of identity. Studies of the effects of migration and territorial dispossession (which may be particularly relevant in the Aotearoa context) may help to clarify and test the concept of attachment to nature and place, in the same way that the strange situation experiment helped to validate attachment theory.

While at this stage there is a scarcity of empirical validation for ecopsychological theory and practice, Bragg's (1996) research into the effect on behaviour and attitudes of participants in Joanna Macy's *Council Of All Beings* workshop is supportive of theories of attachment and identification. In this workshop participants imaginatively identify with roles of different species and together process deep rooted emotional responses to environmental destruction and loss. In this process identification and attachment takes place in a group rather than dyadic context. Significantly, Bragg found that increases in pro-

environmental attitudes and behaviours due to attendance at the workshop were only sustained in the long term by participants who continued to be involved in some sort of pro-environmental group context. This may be explained in part by Prentice's (2003) thinking, in which awareness of traumatic ecological destruction is only possible once a societal movement exists to support the exploration of that traumatic material. This is consistent with the history of other traumas being only made accessible in the contexts of social movements such as the women's movement or treatment of veterans following the Vietnam war.

Further empirical research supports the assumption of eco-psychological practices such as Macy's workshop, that explicit links need to be made to attach to nature. In other words, attachment/identification itself is not enough, it must be attachment to nature. Gifford & Scannell's (2010) research found identification with the civic (human created) environment was not predictive of pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour, while attachment/identification with the natural environment was predictive.

Attachment to nature via group or place may seem different from more conventional ideas of an early attachment figure (person.) However, Morgan's (2010) research empirically validates the claim that the process of attachment is the same. She proposes the concept of rather than an attachment figure, a more diffuse attachment field.

Summary

This chapter reviews literature regarding the ecological unconscious, which is based on and compared to Freud's topographical model of the mind. The writers emphasise reciprocity and identification with nature as beneficial adaptations to the natural environment. One of the barriers to forming a reciprocal relationship with nature is discussed in terms of gender (masculine fears of dependency). While these fears are more commonly recognised as playing out in male-female relationships, they can also play out in an abusive and exploitative relationship with nature. Finally, attachment theory is explored in terms of human attachment to the environment. Significant empirical validation is found for this application of attachment theory. Overall, this chapter considers nature as a nurturing feminine environment, and considers our relationship with nature as the site in which our conflicts over our dependency may be played out.

CHAPTER EIGHT: A MODEL FOR CLINICAL APPLICATION

So far this review has drawn on a literature from a wide variety of disciplines including natural history, sociology, politics, and a variety of forms of psychology and psychotherapy. This attempt has been in line with Scull's (2004) call to honour the diversity of approaches within this diverse field, rather than to propagate a monoculture of approaches to ecopsychology.

The danger of including these diverse disciplines in this review is that the whole may become incoherent and self-contradictory, and therefore difficult to confidently apply clinically. In the model below are some suggested clinical applications of the ideas from prior chapters, arranged in a model intended to assist clinicians in navigating the bewildering array of possibilities.

Dialectics:	Materialism	Idealism
Empathic	<p>Involve clients in nature and educate them about physical and mental health benefits of this.</p> <p>Use outdoor contexts for therapy to evoke natural themes, to mirror symbolically the client’s inner world, and to promote playfulness.</p> <p>Participate in or lead group activism such as environmental restoration projects.</p> <p>Recognise and work empathically with the impact of stressful unnatural environments on clients.</p> <p>Empathically work with client’s conscious and unconscious defences and affect in response to the destruction of natural environments.</p>	<p>Reawaken ecological unconscious/id.</p> <p>Use transpersonal approaches to unify/join with nature.</p> <p>Attune to issues of power and control.</p> <p>Attune to issues of shame over dependency, as they relate to mother-nature, and as they may relate to gender identities.</p> <p>Promote secure attachment to nature and to specific places.</p> <p>Work with insecure attachment styles to nature.</p> <p>Recognise and utilise the role of community in constructing the meaning of places and in promoting identification with place.</p>
Analytic	<p>Analyse colonialism from Marxist (and other political/economic/ecological materialist) perspectives.</p> <p>Make links between forms of economic organisation and patterns of land use.</p> <p>Increase awareness of natural history and physical transformations of the environment.</p> <p>Apply political analyses of effects of unequal power relations.</p> <p>Interpret alienation from nature caused by technology.</p> <p>Raise consciousness of both personal polluting and systemic causes of pollution.</p>	<p>Interpret/confront narcissistic objectification, grandiosity and entitlement in regard to nature.</p> <p>Critique environmentally destructive cultural dynamics, including sense of entitlement of citizens of first world countries, the amorality of science, and religious devaluation of nature/material.</p> <p>Interpret underlying anxieties and oral dynamics involved in compulsive consumption.</p> <p>Interpret infantile oedipal/competitive dynamics as they play out in relation to mother earth.</p> <p>Reinterpret Western cultural stories to reveal or re-reveal ecological themes.</p>

This model does not imply that the four groupings of ecopsychological ways of working with the human-nature relationship are separate and unrelated to each other. The placing of these ways of working on two axes is not meant to suggest that empathic or analytic stances, or materialistic or idealistic theories are incompatible. Instead, each axis is intended to be seen as a dialectic, a spectrum at some point along which clinicians might situate themselves with different clients, in different contexts, or at different moments of the therapy. Furthermore, each axis represents potential splits for clinicians to hold in awareness. The historical Western tendency to split mind and matter is represented in the idealistic-materialistic axis, whilst the tendency to split victim vs victimiser or guilty vs tragic is represented in the analytic-empathic axis. Being represented as a dialectic, the invitation is to hold both ends of the dialectic in mind, as well as to hold in mind the paradox that one end may be right or wrong at different times, or that despite seeming contradictions both ends of the dialectic may be true.

More practically speaking, different clients in different therapeutic relationships may be more open to being engaged by one of the approaches than by others, or may profit from developing in an area that they are underdeveloped in, or which they might be consciously or unconsciously avoiding. Similarly, clinicians may wish to play to their strengths or develop in areas they feel are their blind-spots or that they are less capable in.

CHAPTER NINE: COMING HOME

“How peculiar it is that you could study at a university in New York or in California or in Texas or New Mexico, and you’d learn the very same things. We’re taught the same information because the place where we are, the particular ecology, is thought to have no bearing on knowledge and thinking.” (Abram, 1997, p. 51)

Thus far relevant literature has been summarised in a model that might provide a useful map to orient clinicians. However, in following Abram’s example (above) of valuing place, it seems impossible not to more fully address culture in this place of New Zealand, a country founded on biculturalism (even though founding bicultural relationships were often not honoured). While this further stretches the scope of an already wide-reaching review, more fully addressing the local context seems important. This chapter considers possibilities of working with the human-nature relationship whilst holding the intersections of culture and place in mind. Possible dangers of Pakeha “borrowing” of indigenous techniques are highlighted, and an alternative is suggested, that of focusing on the possibilities of language to stimulate and embody an earth-centred world-view.

Biculturalism and the Human-Nature Relationship – Questions and Controversies

There is a lack of literature directly addressing the human-nature relationship and biculturalism. This may be because most ecopsychology articles are written in the United States (particularly California) or the U.K., where biculturalism does not get as much attention as in Aotearoa.

Much of the general material on ecopsychology focuses on helping humans to become more intimate and connected with the land. This aim of ecopsychology becomes more complicated in a Aotearoa bicultural context. With a relative scarcity of literature, questions about this are easier to ask than answer. Could a non-bicultural ecopsychology that helps Pakeha and Tau Iwi to feel more like “people of the land” end up simply being an extension of colonisation, which historically prioritised non Maori’s relationship to the land, and dispossessed Maori?

Coates, Grey, and Hetherington’s (2006) research on bicultural social work initiatives in Canada would suggest that though colonisation is a danger in bicultural initiatives, the alignment of eco-psychological values such as interconnectedness and spirituality with

indigenous worldviews is promising. Woodard (2008) confirms the importance of interconnectedness as central to the Maori sense of self, and links the concept of mana ake with Roszak's integrated ecological self.

Some ecopsychology does draw on indigenous ideas (mainly indigenous North American), in the form of the four directions model, vision quest experiences, talking circle rituals, etc (Almass, n.d). It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to assess the validity of this. That said, the question does seem important: Is this a creative sharing of cultural knowledge, or a form of cultural appropriation that bears little relationship to the actual indigenous relationship to the earth? Thinking relationally in the Aotearoa context, would any such initiatives be carried out unilaterally or in relationship with Maori? Leslie Gray, the indigenous North American founder of shamanic counselling, makes some suggestions that may be relevant for Aotearoa for an ecopsychological bicultural relationship.

“I think a little humility is in order. There is a tendency for people in the overculture to presume a lack of sophistication among those who don't rely heavily on industrial methods. So if ecopsychologists honour the fact that they have a great deal to learn from primal people, they will be getting off to a good start. First show respect, and then really listen. I don't recommend running around Indian reservations looking for enlightenment. Pitch in first and ask how you can serve their needs as they define them... Those who would seek to learn might first roll up their sleeves and ask how they can help. There is so much work that needs to be done. Native communities are plagued by high rates of teenage suicide, infant mortality, and unemployment, by environmental assault by business and government, and on and on... ecopsychologists should support the struggles for native survival and native sovereignty.” (Gray, 1995, p. 181-182)

What may be most important about Gray's recommendations for inter-cultural ecopsychological relationships, is what she does not say. She does not pre-define what non-indigenous eco-psychologists might learn (though she does separately suggest that it may be more about sharing a more earth-centered world-view than about trying to utilise an indigenous practitioner's techniques), and she leaves open the question of what indigenous people might choose to define as their needs.

Gray's recommendations match Totton's (2005) view of socially engaged psychotherapy (including ecopsychology) as a form of local knowledge, not general technical knowledge. Engaging with the human-nature relationship as psychotherapists may require knowledge and engagement with local culture and communities, a sort of engagement that is not automatically facilitated by the training and knowledge taught at universities that may not consider place important.

This focus on the local context is not intended to discredit other forms of knowing, such as that afforded by the general ecopsychology literature, or as suggested by the seemingly universally applicable model suggested earlier in the dissertation. Instead this local focus and the other arguments made in this chapter are suggested as a counter-point to earlier parts of this review, and to the sense of knowing that a model or an overview of the literature might engender.

While Gray does not in the earlier quote specifically define what she means by an earth centred world-view, Abram's ideas as explored in the next section may be a useful entry point for non-indigenous psychotherapists. In particular, his ideas raise the possibility of using language that evokes animistic consciousness, which in turn produces an earth centred world-view that includes an experience of relating to nature as family.

Language and the Experience of Nature-As-Family

Abram is an influential writer on the human-nature relationship whose ideas focus on language. Being a philosopher rather than a psychotherapist, Abram is not focused on technique, but instead offers an analysis of Western culture's movement away from an earth-centred world view and away from an animistic state of consciousness. His analysis is based on the centrality of language in the human-nature relationship, and the impact upon that relationship of the development of increasingly abstract Western language that is separated from the natural context (Abram, 1996.) I will argue that Abram's focus on language offers ways in which ecopsychology and indigenous views might be able to meet biculturally without needing to attempt to fit indigenous ideas into a Western model, or without non-indigenous people appropriating indigenous techniques, ceremonies, or ideas.

According to Abram (1996), human language first developed in the context of the other “languages of nature”, of animal tracks and calls and the signs embedded in the natural environment that humans without industrial technology, and with a more animistic consciousness were attuned to. By gradual steps language became less connected to the signs of the natural environment, coming to function, for instance, as an ark for the Jewish people in their exile from their land.

In Western cultures written signs of language gradually lost their references to the natural environment, becoming entirely abstract and self-referring. The move away from Western cultures being primarily oral cultures meant that language was no longer linked to the context of person, the relationship of storytelling, and the embodiment of language by the human animal. The loss of language that is intimately tied to the natural context has resulted in a loss of animistic consciousness. Animistic consciousness is important in Abram’s analysis because animism, (holding an awareness of humans as members of a family of creation including animals, plants, and the earth itself) is inherently ecological (Abram, 1996.) In an animistic worldview and consciousness, the relationships between humans and nature are family relationships, involving all of the reciprocity, obligation, intimacy, and intensity that family relationships between humans do.

Given the importance to ecopsychologists of reciprocity in the human-nature relationship, it is no wonder that Abram’s thinking has been influential as a meta-theory about the human-nature relationship. In terms of clinical implications, applying Abram’s ideas does not require a complete re-writing of Western languages. Even though Western languages are abstract and estranged from nature, there are still, according to Abram, “beautiful ways of speaking that are true to our direct sensory experience.” (p. 65) Psychotherapists may be well placed to appreciate these beautiful ways of speaking, given their attunement to the use and effects of language, and that the work of psychotherapy is largely oral and relational rather than written.

For example, a psychotherapist without any eco-psychological orientation reported saying to a South African client that “sometimes an issue looms large and we can’t see around or beyond it - like standing close to the foot of a hill. Therapy can be seen as standing in a different place so that, while the hill can still be seen, it is part of a more inclusive landscape.” Instead of using the English word “hill”, the therapist (also of South African

origin) used the Afrikaans word “koppie.” (personal communication, Steve Appel, August 2010)

In terms of ecopsychology this therapist’s intervention could be understood in a number of different ways. The client’s past direct sensory experiences of nature were evoked by imaginatively placing them in the natural environment. Furthermore, the client’s attachment to his/her mother-land was evoked by the use of the word koppie, a word which to an immigrant might carry a very different emotional meaning from the word hill. Using the koppie as a metaphor normalises (or perhaps naturalises) the experience of being personally challenged – it places the experience in a natural context rather than in an individual (and therefore potentially shaming or disconnecting) context. In terms of Abram’s theories, speaking in ways that are true to direct sensory experience helps the listener to shift into a closer relationship with nature (Abrams 1996).

Poetic Language as a Western Cultural Resource for Relating to Nature

Beyond this example, for Pakeha to intimately engage with the Aotearoa natural context and with biculturalism, may require them to reclaim, recognise, and use ways of speaking that are true to direct sensory experience, and that are already part of the Western tradition. As Maori arrived in Aotearoa in their Waka, this would require Pakeha to arrive, to disembark, to drag their “ark” of context-less language up out of the water and up the beach, and to begin to find language to explore their new land as a home. For Pakeha this would be a very different enterprise from that which is a norm for many of us, who are used to interacting only with human signs in what Abram (1997) calls a “sort of intra-species incest.”

If, as Freud and Sophocles and Katzenbach might suggest, a sort of self-referential incestuousness might fundamentally permeate Western culture, then there is also no lack of Westerners willing to address this through “story, and poetry which speaks as the body speaks, rather than as the mind.... words that are not just abstract terms, words that still have the soil clinging to their roots, that feel earthy, that are appropriate to the body and land.” (Abram, 1997, p. 74)

Katzenbach’s (2003) reinterpretation of Oedipus is potent not only because of Sophocles’ literary power, but also because despite his status as one of the great ancestors or

originators of Western culture, he can also be credibly claimed as an ecopsychologist. Furthermore, Sophocle's vision does not end with the tragedy at Thebes, but continues through tragedy to later plays which depicts a form of ecological redemption that he refers to as "flourishing."

While I emphasise Sophocles as being important because of the poetic power of his language, and because he is within the Western cultural stream, he is also distant from Aotearoa in both time and place. American ecopsychologists have drawn liberally on a source closer to their home, the poet Walt Whitman. In Whitman's poem, *There was a Child went Forth*, he captures the ideas of attachment to nature, and internalisation of the natural world, perhaps more evocatively than any psychotherapist has:

There was a child went forth every day;
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became;
And that object became part of him for the day, or a certain part of the day, or for
many years, or stretching cycles of years.
The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass, and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover, and the
song of the phoebe-bird,
And the Third-month lambs, and the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal, and
the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barn-yard, or by the mire of the pond-side,
And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there—and the beautiful
curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads—all became part of him...

While the content of this poem could be thought of in terms of the empathic sectors of the specifically Western model presented earlier, the poetic and true to sensory experience (Abram, 1996) style of expression might be more important than the content, in thinking about meeting biculturally. Another example in Whitman's *Song of the Rolling Earth*, combines beautiful and direct expression with ecological content:

I swear the earth shall surely be complete
to him or her who shall be complete.

The earth remains jagged and broken only
to him or her who remains jagged and
broken.

While Whitman's poetry is powerful and widely appealing, at times it jars for New Zealanders who might not know the sound of the song of the phoebe-bird. In contrast, James K. Baxter is a poet who grappled extensively with New Zealand – both the social context and landscape. According to Gillespie (n.d.):

“New Zealand is only a nice idea for most. Even for those who live in New Zealand it is more of a concept than a living reality, an unconscious experience of a land as unknown as the nature of our true selves. We admire New Zealand on postcards and in still and moving image, but few in a nation of recent settlers have attempted to live and embody New Zealand, to truly understand what it is and then explain that to others. James K. Baxter attempted to do this.”

Baxter's poem *High Country Weather* is below:

Alone we are born
and die alone
Yet see the red-gold cirrus
over snow-mountain shine
upon the upland road
ride easy stranger
Surrender to the sky
your heart of anger.

The quoting of this poetry in relation to Abram's ideas is not intended to suggest the use of poetry as a therapeutic intervention (as much as some clients might find this helpful in relating to nature.) These poets are suggested as examples of those who have found their voices to speak as human animals in the midst of nature, human animals who *are* nature through and through. Poets might embody their relationship to nature poetically, while therapists may have to find their own voices, and to find ways of speaking to and of nature. In doing so they may help their clients to do the same.

Summary

In order to think more about the human-nature relationship, this chapter linked some literature regarding ecopsychology, biculturalism, and the power of language. Firstly, shared values between Western eco-psychological attempts to relate to nature, and indigenous traditions, were considered. Similarities may help these two traditions to harmonise, or may facilitate colonisation of indigenous cultures. Ecopsychologists' use of indigenous North American shamanic rituals (an attempt to relate more intimately with nature), was considered as a borrowing of technique. Gray's recommendation contrasts the sharing of an earth centred worldview with such a borrowing of technique. This borrowing of indigenous techniques is related to the favouring of universalised technical knowledge over local knowledge.

The second section of this chapter drew mainly on Abram's ideas about the link between language and animistic consciousness. Animistic consciousness is explained as the producer of an earth centred world-view, and the experience of relating to nature as family. Relating to nature as family includes a sense of reciprocity and interdependency with nature. These ideas are related to clinical work through an example of an intervention by a non eco-psychological psychotherapist.

The final section continues with the theme of language, including the authors Sophocles, Whitman, and Baxter. These three figures are used as an example of direct and beautiful language that is true to sensory experience. In accord with Abram's theories, it may be worthwhile for clinicians to pay attention to the power of language to impact clients' relationships with nature.

CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH

The review draws mainly on literature from the field of ecopsychology in asking how psychotherapists conceptualise the relationship between humans and the natural environment, and what the clinical implications of this might be. Particular attention is given to the Aotearoa context. The answers to this question came in two parts.

The first part spans the majority of the review, chapters three to eight. Psychotherapists' concepts about the relationship were organised into four categories. The concepts were organised in this way in an attempt to emphasise the clinical implications, which were referred to throughout these chapters. Each of the four categories offers different way of thinking about the human-nature relationship, which then lend themselves to different clinical interventions.

Chapter four reviewed concepts in the literature that were organised into the category of analytic materialism. Material reviewed regarding the colonisation of Aotearoa revealed themes of power and control, in which working class (mainly) English colonists were thrust into a competitive relationship with Maori. The land formed the basis of identity and sustenance for both Maori and colonists, then and now. Overall the relationship with nature from the perspective of this literature is one of competition and possessiveness, evoking oedipal themes. Pakeha ignorance of the ecology of Aotearoa was compared to Maori knowledge, and was considered to be a factor contributing to ecological destructiveness. Clinical implications of literature reviewed in this section focused on working with destructiveness and ignorance in the human-nature relationship. Various writers critiqued therapeutic neutrality as potential collusion with destructiveness, and also critiqued “psychologism” as ignorance of material reality.

Chapter five reviewed concepts in the literature that were organised into the category of empathic materialism. Literature consistently emphasised the powerful relationship between human wellbeing and the natural environment. A passive beneficial effect was well supported by quantitative evidence. Exposure to natural environments is in and of itself beneficial for a wide range of physical and mental illnesses. Literature also reviewed more active beneficial effects arising from conducting therapy in natural settings. Lastly, literature reviewed in this chapter emphasised the effect of loss of natural environments,

loss that may be concealed by notions of a discrete subjective self bounded by the physical skin. Therapists must bear their own emotional responses to the loss of the natural, in order to empathise with the impact of this on their clients. The material in this chapter emphasises relationships with nature that are often overlooked or underestimated, be they healing relationships or relationships filled with agonising loss and despair.

Chapter six reviewed concepts in the literature that were organised into the category of analytic idealism. The majority of the literature in this section characterised humans as often having a narcissistic relationship with nature, with particular emphasis on narcissistic objectification, devaluation, and exploitation of the natural world. Literature emphasised the role of dominant Western culture in this narcissistic relationship, implicating aspects of religion, science, and consumerism. Katzenbach's reinterpretation of Oedipus contextualises the cultural critique at the birth of Western culture, and also offers the powerful metaphor of the perversion of human creativity in the act of incest. In the metaphor of incest the comparison is between natural and unnatural ways and objects of relating.

Chapter seven reviewed concepts in the literature that were organised into the category of empathic idealism. The literature emphasised gender and attachment. Chodorow's theories are used to consider masculine fears of dependency, as they might play out in relationship with nature. Evidence in the literature supported the relevance of attachment theory, in which relationship with nature regulates emotion and establishes sense of self. Modifications to attachment theory include the concept of an attachment "field" rather than figure, an emphasis on the latency period in developing an ecological ego, and an emphasis on the group, individual, or societal context rather than dyadic context for attachment to nature.

This first part of the dissertation reviewed an array of concepts regarding the human-nature relationship, concepts that might lend themselves to a wide range of therapeutic interventions. While Aotearoa examples were used when possible, much of the material and concepts are universal to Western cultural contexts. The second part of the answers suggested in this dissertation, chapter nine, attempted to respond to the first part, bearing in mind critiques in the literature regarding universalised, technical, context-less knowledge. In chapter nine emphasis shifted from the model that has been suggested, to an emphasis on

language as essential to the process of therapy addressing relations to nature. Abram's suggestions were utilised regarding the power of embodied, direct, beautiful, and poetic language to bring into consciousness an animistic and familial relationship with nature. Such a relationship, and the resources within western culture for recapturing this, was suggested as a foundation for relating to nature with biculturalism in mind – a biculturalism that might avoid colonising Maori or idealising or devaluing either Pakeha or Maori culture.

Whilst the concepts reviewed may be able to promote intimacy, reciprocity, healing, and insight in the human-nature relationship, in terms of research there is a huge amount of work still to be done in exploring how this might best occur. The strength of this piece of research has been to relate together the contributions of diverse fields into a whole that is coherent from a psychotherapy (particularly psychoanalytic) perspective. In my own reflections on this research process I have thought of this as being like piecing together the corner and edge pieces in a puzzle, a puzzle in which the centre is largely uncompleted and a great many puzzle pieces still lie about unsorted.

While this dissertation, and much of the field of ecopsychology, has worked on building a frame or meta-theory for the puzzle of working with the human-nature relationship, hopefully future research will begin filling in some of the centre pieces. These centre pieces might include more thorough research on clinical implications including application of Abram's language-animism link in therapy, more outcome research on the effect on behaviour of eco-psychological group and one to one interventions, more case studies of both one to one and group therapy in order to more fully map the depth of unconscious processes in the relationship, and more research addressing working with culture and biculturalism in relation to the environment. Whilst this review has attempted to draw some links to biculturalism, this has been limited. More full explorations of biculturalism and the human-nature relationship may not be forthcoming until there is a context of a larger social movement and more experienced researchers taking this up.

Research such as that suggested above would add more depth and detail, developing a field that is still young, and by its nature ambitiously broad in scope. Future researchers and clinicians may still have to go through a developmental step of finding their own broad meta-theories and frames for this work, before proceeding on to more detailed and deeper

work. This would provide the necessary intellectual platform that, if the literature on the development of eco-psychologists is correct, would need to also be accompanied by more emotional and experiential processes of being deeply immersed in and connected to nature.

While there is a great deal of work to be done in developing clinicians and developing a depth of understanding about the psychology of the human-nature relationship, time is a factor. Recent projections indicate that in a matter of decades the consequences of global warming will be severe enough to radically affect every aspect of human civilisation (Le Page, 2007). Like all other life on earth, psychotherapists may have to adapt quickly to find their niche amidst this change.

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