

Re-membering Ecological Self: A Personal Narrative Autoethnography

Eric Windhorst (ew14ft@brocku.ca)

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock
University, 1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way, St. Catharines, ON L2S 3A1

Abstract

This paper presents a personal narrative autoethnography of my relationship with nature. I begin by defining and describing what autoethnography is: an autobiographical writing form and research method that connects the personal to the cultural. Next, I present a series of stories of my nature experiences at different life stages—from early childhood, through adolescence, to present-day adulthood. I interweave these nature narratives with literature from depth psychology, deep ecology, ecopsychology, and environmental psychology to illustrate how my changing nature experiences reflect and complicate Western culture's evolving experience of, and relationship to, the natural world. I hope that my nature narratives inspire readers to remember ecological self in their own lives and communities.

Keywords: personal narrative autoethnography, ecological self, ecopsychology, deep ecology, nature

Re-membering Ecological Self: An Personal Narrative Autoethnography

“So you read my words
Sketched on the page
And learned of entanglement
Well, here now is my flesh
What say you, as I sing my song?
Where do you belong?” (Douglas & Carless, 2013, p. 93).

“Sometimes a tree tells you more than you can read in books” (Jung, 2002, p. 6).

In this paper I present a personal narrative autoethnography of my relationship with *nature*.¹ I begin by briefly describing what autoethnography is. I then tell my stories.

What is an Autoethnography?

Ellis, Adams, & Bochner (2011) describe autoethnography as, “An approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (p. 273). Put differently, a writer uses autoethnography to shed light on particular components of her or his culture by describing personal experience(s) of, and in, that culture (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005). In this way, autoethnography combines elements of both *autobiography* and *ethnography* (Ellis et al., 2011).

Autoethnographies can take several different forms. I employ the *personal narrative* form of autoethnography in this paper. Ellis et al. (2011) describe personal narrative autoethnography as follows:

¹ *Nature* is enigmatic. Though we tend to think of nature as “physical features and processes of nonhuman origin” (Hartig, Mitchell, de Vries, & Frumkin, 2014, p. 208), nature is a social construct whose meaning varies “across time, space, and the individual engaged in the defining” (Bratman, Hamilton, & Daily, 2012, p. 242). I embrace Richard Louv’s (2005) understanding of nature in this paper:

When I use the word ‘nature’ in a general way I mean natural wildness: biodiversity, abundance—related loose parts in a backyard or a rugged mountain ridge. Most of all, nature is reflected in our capacity for wonder. *Nasci*. To be born. (p. 8).

Personal narratives are stories about authors who view themselves as the phenomenon

Personal narratives propose to understand a self or some aspect of a life as it intersects with a cultural context... and invite readers to enter the author's world and to use what they learn there to reflect on, understand, and cope with their own lives (p. 279).

Personal narrative autoethnography is often considered the most controversial autoethnographic form—particularly if connections to existing scholarly literature are not made when employing it (Ellis, 2004; Ellis et al., 2011). In this paper, I weave my personal nature narratives with the work of depth psychologists, deep ecologists, ecopsychologists, and environmental psychologists to support my stance. Also, as an ecopsychologist, I believe I should be open to alternative ways of being, knowing, doing—and researching—that are still so often subjugated beneath conventional science's status quo (Fisher, 2013).

I am unaware of any published studies that have studied the human-nature relationship through personal narrative autoethnography. That said, several unpublished theses have explored the human-nature dynamic using other autoethnographic forms. For example, Zimmerman (2009) employed autoethnography in his master's thesis to investigate his experience with the Takhini Valley in the Yukon. Several themes stand out in Zimmerman's work, namely: vulnerability, interconnectedness, belonging, reciprocity, and spirituality. Zimmerman concluded that living landscape encounters transforms the self and can inspire individuals to cultivate creative responses to ecological problems. In her doctoral dissertation, Thompson (2014) employed embodied autoethnographic inquiry to reimagine the individuation process by exploring the horse-human relationship. Thompson showed that human-horse experiences can be self-transformative, and that such encounters challenge Western culture's "psychological constructs centered around individualism and anthropocentrism" (Thompson, 2014, p. iii).

In this paper I expand on previous autoethnographic inquiry into the human-nature relationship in two primary ways. First, I utilize personal narrative autoethnography, an autoethnographic form that has not before been used to explore the more general human-nature connection. Second, I present selected stories of my nature experiences from different life stages to illustrate how the development of my personal relationship with nature parallels and complicates Western culture's evolving experience of, and relationship to, the natural world.

A Short Methodological Note

Similar to Zimmerman (2009), I employed a heuristic self-research approach in writing this personal narrative autoethnography. Interestingly, Wall (2006) equates the autoethnographic approach with the heuristic approach, as it “inspires inquirers to connect with and honor their personal questions and problems, and suggests a process that involves imagination, intuition, self-reflection, and the tacit dimension in the quest for knowledge and understanding” (Zimmerman, 2009, p. 67). I generally adhered to Moustakas' (1990) six-stage heuristic process, namely: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis.

Re-membering Ecological Self

No Boundary

My first nature memory stems from my toddler years. My then stay-at-home mother would often take my sister (two-and-a-half years my senior) and I for summertime walks in and around our urban neighbourhood in west Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. One of my mother's frequent destinations was Victoria Park—a fairly large park located a few short blocks south of our family home. Victoria Park was, and is, beautiful. It contains ample green space and many wonderful, mature, ash, oak, and maple, trees. My mother recalls fondly how I would sit happily

in my stroller upon arriving at Victoria Park, hands neatly folded on my lap, peacefully pondering the beauty of the natural world around me. I viscerally remember those early nature encounters in my childhood park: the brilliant green grass, the dappled sunlight, the soil's earthy scent, the gentle summer breeze. I also recall the overwhelming sense of well-being that would come over me in those moments. It was as if everything was precisely as it was meant to be.

One of my favourite theorists, the controversial psychologist C. G. Jung, describes a similar early nature experience in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*:

I am lying in a pram [stroller], in the shadow of a tree. It is a fine, warm summer day, the sky blue, and golden sunlight darting through the green leaves. The hood of the pram has been left up. I have just awakened to the glorious beauty of the day, and have a sense of incredible well-being. I see the sun glittering through the leaves and blossoms of the bushes. Everything is wholly wonderful, colorful, and splendid (Jung, 1989, p. 2).

Back to my stories.

Fast-forward a few years to middle-childhood and another meaningful nature memory emerges. I now live in Stoney Creek, a relatively small suburb located just east of Hamilton. It is summertime and my neighbourhood friends and I are bored. To occupy ourselves, we decide to build a tree fort with reclaimed materials in a small stand of scraggly Manitoba Maples we discover just outside the confines of our housing complex. Despite run-ins with several unimpressed authority figures and a few close encounters with rusty nails, our collective experience is fantastic. My most meaningful memories of that tree fort, however, are from times I would visit it alone. I recall climbing the fort's flimsy ladder, finding a comfortable spot to nest on one of its higher platforms, and feeling a deep sense of peace. Supported by the tree's strong limbs, enveloped in its protective foliage, I felt at home—safe and secure.

Adults living in Western culture often recall having childhood nature encounters similar to those I describe above (for example, Carson, 1998; Louv, 2005; Macy, 2007; Naess, 2008; Pyle, 1998; Sobel, 2008). Cultural historian Theodore Roszak (1992) notes that children “greet life, and especially the natural world around them, with an instinctively animist response. It is alive and personal for them. It has a voice” (p. 297). For the vast majority of our collective evolutionary history, humans experienced nature in this visceral manner throughout their lifespans (Glendinning, 1994; Roszak, 1992; Sampson, 2012; Vakoch & Castrillón, 2014; Wilson, 1993). Our hunter-gatherer ancestors lived for tens-of-thousands of years in intimate relation with nature. To them, nature was “an enchanted world. Rocks, trees, rivers, and clouds were all seen as wondrous, alive, and human beings felt at home in this environment....[it] was a place of belonging” (Berman, 1984, p. 2).

Humanity’s close nature connection did not last, however. Ecologist and psychologist Paul Shepard (1982) argues that the human-nature relationship started unravelling 10,000 years ago when humanity opted for a more predictable, sedentary lifestyle among domesticated plants and animals. Another significant change occurred in the seventeenth century when reality was divided between mind and matter, brain and body, subject and object, by a small group of influential philosophers (Roszak, 1992). This psychic shift fueled the present-day industrial and technological revolutions: the natural world was no longer a community of subjects with which to belong, it was a collection of objects to measure, master, and manipulate (Berman, 1984; Berry, 1999; Kahn Jr. & Hasbach, 2013; White Jr., 1967).

A Self, Divided

My experience of nature evolved as I entered my teenage years. It was in high school that I discovered a love for science. I gravitated toward the fields of biology and chemistry, in

particular. I enjoyed using the scientific method to make sense of the natural world and understand its inner-workings. There was something so satisfying about testing hypotheses and coming to verifiable, statistically significant, conclusions.

I also held down a part-time job at a local, family-run greenhouse that cultivated cut flowers and potted-plants throughout my high school years. This setting provided me with an ideal opportunity to apply my newfound scientific knowledge to the real world. To my delight, I discovered that with the right combination of light, heat, water, and fertilizer, we could grow larger, more beautiful, plants, more quickly, than nature could. This experience buttressed my belief in science's power. If anything could improve humanity's lot, I began to believe, surely it was science.

My interest in, and study of, biology and chemistry continued into university. And, I excelled. Several of my professors believed I showed great promise as a fledging environmental scientist and I was offered a research assistantship in environmental toxicology between my third and fourth years. During the assistantship, I was tasked with designing and carrying-out laboratory experiments to test the mechanisms underlying the uptake of heavy metals in hydroponically-grown wheat (*Triticum durum*). I felt honoured to contribute to this important work.

To my surprise—and discomfort—I developed an unspoken affection for the wheat seedlings I was testing and tending. I remember eagerly entering the research lab each morning, excited to examine each individual seedling's overnight growth. Accompanying my excitement, however, was a sorrow felt for the seedlings that were forced to grow in heavy metal saturated solutions. The toxic slurry stunted these seedlings' growth and many of these plants began turning from their natural green to a translucent white due to their inability to manufacture

chlorophyll, a biomolecule critical to photosynthesis. I felt guilty for subjecting these seedlings to such suffering for science's sake. It just did not seem right.

The empathy I felt for my stunted seedlings was not unlike deep ecologist Arne Naess' for a flea who hopped into an acid containing petri-dish with which Naess was experimenting. Looking through his microscope into the petri-dish below, Naess knew that, "To save [the flea] was impossible. It took many minutes for the flea to die. Its movements were dreadfully expressive. Naturally, what I felt was a painful sense of compassion and empathy" (Naess, as cited in Hourdequin, 2015).

Despite my strong feelings for my suffering seedlings' plight, I chose to repress them. I felt like I had no other choice. There did not seem to be a place for empathy in science. Moreover, I feared my research supervisor would think my reactions silly and unprofessional, potentially costing me future career prospects. So I soldiered on like I believed a good scientist should, leaving my child-like feelings behind me. Or, so I thought.

The Conflict Continues

After graduating with a Bachelor of Science with a major in biology and a minor in chemistry, I landed a job as an environmental planner at a large consulting firm. The experience was initially exhilarating. I got involved in several high profile environmental assessments and believed that my efforts not only helped my clients—they protected the planet too. I worked primarily in the firm's environmental management division. My job was to assist clients in navigating the complicated world of Canadian environmental legislation, ensuring that projects received the necessary environmental approvals quickly so that they could move forward.

My vocational enthusiasm waned over time, however. Things began to turn sour when I witnessed how my firm handled public consultation processes. Due to the controversial nature of

several of our projects, public facing documents were carefully worded to ensure each project was painted in a positive light. Similar rhetoric was offered to residents at public open houses: “The construction phase of the project alone will result in the creation of thousands of much needed jobs,” and, “there will be no net impacts to any valued ecosystem components.” While our arguments were compelling, I knew that things were more complicated than our documents and presentations suggested. Each project also had drawbacks, particularly for people living close to a proposed development. Did the feelings of these concerned citizens about potential negative impacts to their local landscapes not matter?

According to the applicable environmental legislation, feelings, in fact, did not matter at all. The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* concerned itself only with a project’s potential impacts to the *physical* environment—a term that was carefully and narrowly defined (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, 2015). And, while Ontario’s *Environmental Assessment Act* recognized potential impacts to the *human* social, cultural, and economic environments, the indicators used to measure these effects were things that could be easily quantified, like the “number of residents displaced”, the “number of businesses disrupted”, and the “number of sensitive land uses within the study area” (Ontario Ministry of Environment, 2014).

It was around this time that I discovered ecopsychology and got my hands on an copy of Theodore Roszak’s elusive book, *The Voice of the Earth*. Roszak’s words helped me make sense of my situation. He stated that feelings had been excluded from science from the very beginning. The decision to dismiss emotion from science was made, Roszak argued,

Quite deliberately, by a handful of European scientific thinkers in the seventeenth century. Impatiently seeking a practical clarity in their approach to the baffling complexity of nature, they elected to cut away the portion of the world that proved more

elusive to observation and more difficult to quantify: the realm of personal experience and emotion (Roszak, 1992, p. 45)

The reason my firm did not take concerned citizens feelings seriously therefore, was because we were working out of a scientific framework that maintained such *subjective* perspectives were worth-less than *objective* measures which could be easily calculated and quickly quantified.

Roszak went even further, however. He indicted modern science's rejection of "personal experience and emotion" (Roszak, 1992, p. 45) in the creation and maintenance of the environmental crisis plaguing our planet—the very crisis I thought I was helping to alleviate in my scientific environmental planner role. Roszak claimed that science's denial of the experiential and emotional realm cut humans off from their biophilic instincts, their innate urge to affiliate with other living things and protect them (Kellert & Wilson, 1993; Roszak, 1995). Through its thorough objectification of nature, science freed humans,

From any responsibility to the rest of the biosphere; we [gave] ourselves license to engage other animals, plants, landforms and natural elements merely as resources waiting to be used by our species, as a clutch of fixed and finished entities waiting to be manipulated and engineered to suit our purposes (Abram, 2014).

In this way, concerned citizens' anxiety about the possible degradation of their local landscapes was actually a more *fully* human response to a proposed development than was my firm's one-sided, rational approach. My colleagues and I were living in our heads. It seems science had cut us off from our hearts.

Re-membering My Many Parts

I was compelled by my discovery of ecopsychology to reconnect with nature so that I could test Roszak's ideas for myself: would reconnecting with nature rejuvenate my biophilic instincts? Fortunately, though I now lived with my wife and two young children in a fairly urban area in west Hamilton (only a few blocks from my first childhood home), we had accessible to us many expansive natural places to explore—such as lands owned and managed by Royal Botanical Gardens and Hamilton Conservation Authority.

I made a point of escaping to natural areas as often as my busy schedule permitted. At first, I found these nature excursions difficult and boring. On each venture into nature, my mind would always initially wander from my immediate experience, worrying itself with the many responsibilities I felt I should be attending. When those initial fears subsided, I felt the lack of stimulation nature afforded uninteresting. I began to wonder whether this Thoreau-like endeavour was silly, a waste of time—time that I should be spending more productively.

But, never one to quit, I remained committed to my ecopsychology experiment. And, eventually, my determination paid off. After several excursions, something switched. My senses seemed to wake-up. I suddenly became more attuned to the nuances of the natural world around me. I began noticing things I normally ignored: the unique calls of chickadees, juncos, robins, and cardinals; the musty scent of the moist earth after a rainfall; the summer-sun dancing on the leaves of a large red oak, the rough, flaky skin of a shagbark hickory. I began experiencing nature immediately and intimately. Accompanying this sensorial shift was an overwhelming sense of well-being. I felt at home. I felt like I belonged. I felt like I did during my childhood nature encounters.

Western-trained psychologist Robert Wolff, who spent several years living with and learning from the Sng'oi people—an indigenous Malaysian tribe who still live as hunter-

gatherers—experienced a shift which seems similar. Immersed in the Sng’oi culture, Wolff began experiencing the natural world directly and personally, “Rather than through layers of learned concepts of what the world *should* be” (Wolff, 2001, p. 4), Wolff (2001) recognized that deep down he always knew that he was one with the world, “but had suppressed that knowing, buried it under words and theories” (p. 4).

I came away from my own nature encounters revitalized, understanding intuitively that I was intertwined with, and inseparable from, the natural world around me. Accompanying this comfort and insight was a strong desire to take care of nature. I was grateful for these experiences and I wanted to give back to her.

In deep ecologist Arne Naess’ words, I was developing—or perhaps, re-membering—an ecological self. Naess (2008) believed that through affiliating with nature, a person’s identity expands to include environmental elements: plants, trees, animals, water bodies, landscapes, and eventually the entire earth could be incorporated into an individual’s self-construal. Naess (1989) argued that cultivating ecological self leads to a form of self-actualization where, “One experiences oneself to be a genuine part of all life” (p. 174). Moreover, Naess suggested that by way of the ecological self, caring for nature becomes self-care, while harming nature becomes self-harm (Naess, 2007).

Interestingly, Naess’ ecological self intuitions are supported by a growing body of empirical evidence. Individuals often report coming away from nature experiences feeling deeply and meaningfully interconnected with the natural world (e.g., Hébert, 2014; Vakoch & Castrillón, 2014; White, 2013; Zimmerman, 2009). Moreover, environmental psychologists have shown many times over that individuals who are more nature connected tend to engage more

often in pro-environmental behaviours (e.g., Beery & Wolf-Watz, 2014; Frantz & Mayer, 2014; Geng, Xu, Ye, Zhou, & Zhou, 2015).

While my shift to a more ecological sense of self has been positive overall—it has not been all sunshine and roses. Although I often came away from nature experiences rejuvenated, there were also times when my new nature-connected identity caused distress. When I heard of environmental destruction—whether it be the removal of several one-hundred-year-old ash trees from nearby Victoria Park or the news of *another* poorly maintained oil pipeline bursting thousands of miles away—I acutely felt the earth’s pain. At these times, I longed to disconnect from nature. But I could not longer extract my self from my ecology. Depth psychologist Bill Plotkin’s (2008) insights provided solace during these difficult moments: “Experiencing this distress is [also] natural. It is an essential component of our collective healing. The purpose of the pain, after all, is to warn us to take remedial action” (p. 327).

My more ecological identity compelled me to simplify my lifestyle and reevaluate my vocational goals. I knew that my occupation had to help in the healing of the human-nature rift, to assist in bringing humanity back down to earth. Environmental planning’s disavowal of human feeling meant that I needed to find an alternative venue in which to contribute to this great work (Berry, 1999). It was not that I believed that I—or wider Western culture—needed to leave science and the many advantages and insights it affords behind. Rather, I felt strongly that my culture, and I, needed to achieve a new balance: between our heads and our hearts, between our intellects and our intuitions, between our analytical minds and our animal bodies.

Eventually—after much fear and trembling—I decided to return to school to explore how I could most meaningfully contribute to creating a life-sustaining society (Macy & Brown, 2014). This search led me to my current PhD project in which I am studying how different

individuals experience ecological self, insights that I am incorporating into my own nature-based counselling practice. I also teach geography and environmental studies courses part-time at a local university. In the course I instruct on environmental assessment, I critically evaluate Canada's current environmental management system and frequently inject lessons with ecopsychological learnings—(hopefully) inspiring my students to be change agents too.

At times I feel like I am alone swimming against the Western cultural current. In weaker moments I catch myself wondering if any amount of nature connection and ecological self formation could ever stop the juggernaut that is our industrial growth society (Macy & Brown, 2014). But then I re-member my own transformation: from an environmental scientist ingrained in Western ways of being, knowing, and doing, to a human animal hyper-aware of his wider ecological connections. If my sense of self, and that of others (e.g., Abram, 1996; Macy, 2007; Thompson, 2014; Zimmerman, 2009), could shift so significantly, maybe there is much hope for a more collective change in others' Westernized psyches?

I hope that my stories inspire other Westerners to re-connect with their many parts, to re-awaken to the intimate connection between the personal and the planetary. In some small way maybe my nature narratives will help others realize that,

To shut ourselves off from...other voices, to continue by our lifestyles to condemn these other sensibilities to the oblivion of extinction, is to rob our own senses of their integrity, and to rob our minds of their coherence. We are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human (Abram, 1996, p. 22).

References

- Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Abram, D. (2014). The experience of nature: Phenomenologies of the earth. In D. A. Vakoch & F. Castrillón (Eds.), *Ecopsychology, phenomenology, and the environment: The experience of nature*. San Francisco, CA: Springer.
- Beery, T. H., & Wolf-Watz, D. (2014). Nature to place: Rethinking the environmental connectedness perspective. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 40*, 198–205.
<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2014.06.006>
- Berman, M. (1984). *The reenchancement of the world*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Berry, T. (1999). *The great work: Our way into the future*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Bratman, G. N., Hamilton, J. P., & Daily, G. C. (2012). The impacts of nature experience on human cognitive function and mental health. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1249*, 118–36. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2011.06400.x>
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. (2015). Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency - acts and regulations - Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012. Retrieved from <https://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en&n=16254939-1>
- Carson, R. (1998). *The sense of wonder*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research, 36*(4), 273–290. <http://doi.org/Article>
- Fisher, A. (2013). *Radical ecopsychology: Psychology in the service of life* (2nd ed.). Albany,

New York: State University of New York Press.

Frantz, C. M., & Mayer, F. S. (2014). The importance of connection to nature in assessing environmental education programs. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 41*, 85–89.

<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2013.10.001>

Geng, L., Xu, J., Ye, L., Zhou, W., & Zhou, K. (2015). Connections with nature and environmental behaviors. *Plos One, 10*(5), e0127247.

<http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0127247>

Glendinning, C. (1994). *“My name is Chellis and I’m in recovery from western civilization.”*

Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Hartig, T., Mitchell, R., de Vries, S., & Frumkin, H. (2014). Nature and health. *Annual Review of Public Health, 35*, 207–28. <http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032013-182443>

Hébert, I.-M. (2014). Mountain reflections: Reverence for the consciousness of nature. In D. A. Vakoch & F. Castrillón (Eds.), *Ecopsychology, phenomenology, and the environment: The experience of nature* (pp. 27–46). San Francisco, CA: Springer.

Holman Jones, S. (2005). Autoethnography: Making the personal political. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 763–791). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hourdequin, M. (2015). *Environmental ethics: From theory to practice*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Jung, C. G. (1989). *Memories, dreams, reflections*. (A. Jaffe, Ed., R. Winston & C. Winston, Trans.). New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Jung, C. G. (2002). *The earth has a soul: The nature writings of C.G. Jung*. (M. A. Sabini, Ed.). Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Kahn Jr., P. H., & Hasbach, P. H. (Eds.). (2013). *The rediscovery of the wild*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kellert, S. R., & Wilson, E. O. (Eds.). (1993). *The biophilia hypothesis*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature deficit disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

Macy, J. (2007). *World as lover, world as self: Courage for global justice and ecological renewal*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.

Macy, J., & Brown, M. (2014). *Coming back to life*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and application*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Naess, A. (1989). *Ecology, community, and lifestyle: Outline of an ecosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Naess, A. (2007). Self realization: An ecological approach to being in the world. In J. Seed, J. Macy, P. Fleming, & A. Naess (Eds.), *Thinking like a mountain: Towards a council of all beings* (pp. 19–31). Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Naess, A. (2008). *The ecology of wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess*. (A. Drengson & B. Devall, Eds.). Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint.

Ontario Ministry of Environment. (2014). *Code of Practice: Preparing and reviewing Terms of Reference for Environmental Assessments in Ontario*. Retrieved from <https://dr6j45jk9xcmk.cloudfront.net/documents/1809/3-8a-11-preparing-and-reviewing-eas-en.pdf>

- Plotkin, B. (2008). *Nature and the human soul: Cultivating wholeness and community in a fragmented world*. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Pyle, R. M. (1998). *The thunder tree: Lessons from an urban wildland* (1st ed.). Guilford, CT: Lyons Press.
- Roszak, T. (1992). *The voice of the earth: An exploration of ecopsychology*. New York, NY: Touchstone.
- Roszak, T. (1995). Where psyche meets gaia. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth, healing the mind* (pp. 1–17). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.
- Sampson, S. D. (2012). The topophilia hypothesis. In P. H. Kahn Jr. & P. H. Hasbach (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Science, totems, and the technological species* (pp. 23–53). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Shepard, P. (1982). *Nature and madness*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Sobel, D. (2008). *Childhood and nature: Design principles for educators*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Thompson, A. (2014). *Equus in the moon: A Re-membering of the horse-human relationship*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Pacifica Graduate Institute, Carpinteria, CA.
- Vakoch, D. A., & Castrillón, F. (Eds.). (2014). *Ecopsychology, phenomenology, and the environment: The experience of nature*. San Francisco, CA: Springer.
- Wall, S. (2006). An autoethnography on learning about autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(2), 1–12. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0891241610387135>
- White, P. R. (2013). An autophenomenographical investigation of nature connection: A transpersonal focus. *Ecopsychology*, 5(4), 242–254. <http://doi.org/10.1089/eco.2013.0034>

White Jr., L. (1967). The historical roots of our ecological crisis. *Science*, 155(3767), 1203–1207. <http://doi.org/10.1126/science.155.3767.1203>

Wilson, E. O. (1993). Biophilia and the conservation ethic. In S. R. Kellert & E. O. Wilson (Eds.), *The biophilia hypothesis* (pp. 31–41). Washington, DC: Island Press.

Wolff, R. (2001). *Original wisdom: Stories of an ancient way of knowing*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions.

Zimmerman, P. (2009). *Living landscape: An autoethnography*. (Unpublished master's thesis) Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto, CA.