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Expansion of the psychological concept of empathy to include the human relationship to the natural environment

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Expansion of the Psychological Concept of Empathy to Include The Human Relationship to the Natural Environment

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

by

Karen Day Harter

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Dedicated to Mother Nature.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Expansion of the Psychological Concept of Empathy to Include the Human Relationship to the Natural Environment

by

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Elaine Wood, Ph.D., Chairperson

In this study, Western (wo)man's relationship with nature is characterized as psychologically immature, based on egocentrism and childlike dependence. This relationship lacks the "giving and exchange" that is characteristic of mature interpersonal relationships (Fairbairn 1941/1952). Due to our current ecological crises and threats to the survival of ourselves and our planet, this study suggests a means to build a more mature and healthy relationship with nature.

The psychological theories of Harold Searles and self psychology were explored as they relate to the individual's relationship to the nonhuman environment. The norms and principles of the deep ecology movement were presented along with their suggestions about how to cultivate a more mature and healthy relationship with nature, based on "giving and exchange" (Fairbairn, 1941/1952). While psychology and deep

ecology make valuable contributions to defining a mature relationship with nature, these contributions alone do not adequately define a mature relationship with nature. Thus, this study suggests that empathy with nature is a mature means of relating to nature which can result in the type of care or "giving and exchange" (Fairbairn, 1941/1952) that is necessary to respond to the damaged condition of nature. Putting yourself aside for a moment, understanding the distress of another and responding to their needs are all qualities of empathy (Berger, 1987; Hoffman, 1982; Katz, 1963; Rogers, 1975). Thus, empathy for nature may lead to an increased sensitivity to the needs and condition of nature, a desire to care for nature, and a reduction in our tendency to exploit nature solely for our own purposes.

The evolution of the concept of empathy from the field of aesthetics to psychology was traced in order to demonstrate how empathy became limited by psychology to the interpersonal realm. In order to lay a foundation for empathy with nature, Hoffman's (1978, 1981, 1982,1984, 1987) theory of the development of empathic distress was described with an emphasis on the empathically aroused affects which lead to prosocial behavior. Theodor Reik's (Katz, 1963) model of the intrapsychic experience of empathy was utilized to describe an empathic experience of nature. Within Reik's model, the contributions of Searles, deep ecology and Hoffman, were reintroduced.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The majority of people in Western culture seem to experience an alienated relationship with nature and live unaware of the interdependence of all life forms (Devall & Sessions, 1988; Seed, Macy, Fleming & Naess, 1988). We may look to the natural environment as a source of pleasure and enjoyment or as source of natural resources for the production of man-made goods. However, our present relationship with nature seems to be psychologically immature, because the basis of this relationship is egocentrism and childlike dependency. In our childlike dependency, we look to the environment for what it can do for us and we fail to recognize and respond to the needs of the natural environment. In our egocentrism, the predominant concern is with the self (Chaplin, 1975); thinking is directed solely by individual needs and concerns (Piaget, 1959), and the individual believes that the world revolves only around them (Berger, 1980).

Not only do we use nature to serve our own needs, but we exploit and abuse nature in the process (Devall & Sessions, 1988). The destruction and deterioration of nature brought about by (wo)man can be evidenced in the following: the holes in the ozone layer, the acid rain that

kills trees and seriously threatens the health of wildlife and humans, the massive destruction of rain forests, and the overdevelopment of wilderness areas which destroys wildlife habitats and eradicates or creates endangered species. Perpetuation of the view that nature is there to serve (wo)man and our needs places us at further risk of destroying our planet and jeopardizing all life forms; we have failed to recognize that if we poison the soil, we poison ourselves (Seed, et al., 1988).

Thus, it seems imperative that we begin to repair our relationship with nature and establish a healthy, non-egocentric, more mature relationship with the natural environment. A mature relationship with the natural environment has far-reaching potential benefits for nature as well as for (wo)man.

Psychology extensively addresses the qualities of healthy, mature, interpersonal relationships. However, psychology rarely addresses our relationship with nature; and when it does, it primarily focuses on what nature does for (wo)man and not what (wo)man can do for nature. Harold Searles (1960), a noted psychoanalyst, wrote in The Nonhuman Environment In Normal Development and Schizophrenia, "It is my strong impression that the relationship which the individual has had to his nonhuman environment has been very influential in the development of his over-all personality" (p. 21). Searles was convinced that psychological theory needed to extend its investigation beyond the intrapersonal

and interpersonal realm into man's relationship to his environment. He mildly admonished psychology and psychiatry for disregarding the significance of the nonhuman environment in the face of discoveries by other scientific fields that clearly demonstrate man is not an alien to his environment but is in kinship with it. Due to our current ecological crises and the substantiating evidence that humans do have a relationship with the natural environment (Searles, 1960; Naess, 1986; Devall, et al., 1988), it seems imperative that psychology recognize the importance of this relationship and contribute a means to begin repair of our egocentric, exploitive relationship with nature.

The goal of this dissertation is to expand the psychological concept of empathy to include empathy with nature. Standing in the shoes of another, putting yourself aside for a moment and understanding the other's condition are all qualities of empathy (Katz, 1963; Rogers, 1975). Someone who is empathic is thought to be sensitive to the needs, feelings and/or circumstances of others (Berger, 1987; Goldstein et al., 1985). Hoffman (1978, 1982, 1987) developed a model of empathy which demonstrates that not only does empathy result in a sensitivity to the needs of another, but empathy is an important motivator in prosocial and altruistic behaviors. Certain empathy based affects, concludes Hoffman, lead to caring concern for a victim as well as a desire to help that victim. Therefore, empathic understanding is in stark contrast to a position of

egocentrism in which there is an inability to take the view of another (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985) and thinking is directed solely by individual needs and concerns (Piaget, 1959). Thus, empathy for nature may lead to an increased sensitivity to the needs and condition of nature, a desire to care for nature and a reduction in our tendency to exploit nature solely for our own purposes.

This dissertation will be accomplished in the following manner: I will address the cultural influences of anthropocentrism and the evolution of a market oriented culture and their role in fostering an egocentric and childlike position relative to nature. I will introduce Fairbairn's (1948) concept of "mature dependence" which will help lay the foundation for empathy as a means of experiencing a mature relationship with nature.

I will then discuss the only two psychological theories that address our relationship with nature, highlighting the contributions each makes to an understanding of our relationship with nature as well as their limitations relative to our present ecological crises. These theories are: Harold Searles' (1960) psychoanalytic theory concerning human relatedness to the nonhuman world and Self Psychology and the selfobject experience.

To offer further understanding about (wo)man's potential for a more mature and healthier relationship with nature, I will introduce the norms and principals of the deep ecology movement and their suggestions about how to

cultivate this relationship. While both deep ecology and psychology make important contibutions to the development of a mature relationship with nature, these contributions, standing alone, do not sufficiently define a mature relationship with nature. It is the suggestion of this dissertation that empathy with nature is a more encompassing process--which includes the factors described by deep ecology and psychology--and that empathy is more indicative of mature relating.

At that point, I will describe empathy and briefly trace the evolution of the concept from the field of aesthetics, which described empathy with objects, to the field of psychology which limits its definition of empathy to the interpersonal realm. I will discuss the reasons why empathy is important, with an emphasis on the relationship between empathy and altruistic and prosocial behaviors. I will also describe Martin Hoffman's (1978, 1982, 1987) model of the development of empathy because his scheme is specific to the development of altruistic and prosocial behaviors in which empathy is thought to be an important mediator. While there are many people who can express empathy, Hoffman's model also addresses an important limitation of this study because not everyone may be capable of experiencing mature empathy (Hoffman, 1984; Bergman & Wilson, 1984). Finally, I will discuss Theodor Reik's (1948) model of the intrapsychic process of empathic understanding. This model, along with Hoffman's descriptions of empathically aroused affects, will

be utilized in the final chapter as the means to demonstrate an experience of empathy with nature.

Definition of Terms

anthropocentrism: A philosophical view with the assumption that man is the center of creation and the most highly evolved of all the species.

biocentric equality: In contrast to anthropocentrism, this position supports the belief that all organisms, including humans, are part of an integrated whole in which all elements have intrinsic value and worth. This position disclaims a hierarchy of species in which humans have been traditionally placed at the top. Instead, all organisms are thought to possess equal value.

ecocentrism: A type of thinking that is ecology-centered rather than human-centered. Ecocentrism is a manifestation of biocentric equality which views humans as part of a circle of connection in which all elements have value. This type of thinking is in contrast to anthropocentrism, which views humans at the top of an hierarchy of species in which humans are the center and are believed to be more important than the other elements of nature.

ecological self: A term developed by Arne Naess (1988) to refer to an expansive view of the self in which one identifies with aspects of the natural world rather than limit identification solely to the human realm.

egocentrism: A type of thinking that is solely directed by individual needs and concerns in which the individual thinks

that the psychological and physical world revolves solely around him or her (Chaplin, 1975; Berger, 1980). The preoccupation with the self is such that one is unable to take the view of another if that view is different from one's own (Piaget, 1959).

empathy: The affective state that evolves from the apprehension of the emotional state or condition of another and that is congruent with it (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). We enter into the private world of another and experience what another is experiencing in order to understand the other's condition (Rogers, 1975). The ability to "stand" in someone elses "shoes." (Katz, 1963).

identification: An unconscious mental mechanism in which a person attempts to pattern him/herself after another person.

selfobject experience: A subjective experience with an object outside of the self which will call forth the emergence of the self and ultimately allow the self to maintain in a cohesive and integrated manner. Appropriate selfobject experiences will favor the development of a cohesive sense of self. A lack of appropriate selfobject experiences can result in deficits in self structure and self regulation which can predispose one to overreact to negative experiences (i.e., become fragmented, overwhelmed, dependent, etc.,).

self-realization: Defined according to Arne Naess (cited in

Devall & Sessions, 1988), the pioneer of the deep ecology movement, this is an active, ongoing spiritual process in which the individual goes beyond a narrow sense of self and begins to grow and mature in a direction of an "ecological self" or self that identifies with aspects of the natural or nonhuman world.

CHAPTER II

WESTERN HUMANS' RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

The relationship that traditional Western (wo)man has with the natural environment can be best understood by contrasting it with a nontraditional Western culture, that of the Native American Indian. Native American Indians have traditionally placed a high value on their relationship with nature in which there is a felt connection or "kinship" with all elements of the natural world. For Native Americans, the boundary of relatedness goes beyond a tie with others to include the experience of a deep connection with all of existence, "...from Brother Bear to Sister Stone to Father Sky to Mother Earth" (Hartke cited in McGaa, 1990, p. xiv).

According to Shepard (1982), nature was, for the tribal mother and child, a type of holding environment for the child's ontogeny or development to unfold. The child would internalize the environment along with the ministrations of the mother and tribe:

> ....the setting of that relationship was, in the evolution of mankind, a surround of living plants, rich in texture, smell and motion. The unfiltered, unpolluted air, the flicker of wild birds, real sunshine and rain, mud to be tasted and tree bark to grasp, the sounds of wind and water, the calls of animals and insects as well as human voices--all these are not vague and pleasant amenities for the infant, but the stuff out of which its second grounding, even while in its mother's arms, has begun. The outdoors is also in some sense another inside, a kind of enlivenment of that fetal landscape which is not so constant as once supposed. The surroundings are also that-which-will-be swallowed, internalized, incorporated as the self. (p. 7).

Native Americans experienced themselves as unified with nature to the degree that their internal experience or "object relationships" reflected their relationship to the nonhuman world. It was through this "kinship" with the natural environment that Native Americans derived their meaning of life and gained increased understanding about the reciprocity of relationships. The maintenance of this connection was imperative for their existence (Shepard, 1982). A deviation or disconnection from nature was thought to have deleterious effects on the developing child:

> ...it devastates the child's organizing work in two directions; it tends to diminish the potential of his understanding of social relationships by excluding the tangible nuances of events in nature that, by analogy, enrich early familial experience; and it sheds no symbolic light on the larger cosmos. (Shepard, 1982, p. 72).

Native Americans recognized their dependence on the natural world for their existence; thus the elements of the natural world were revered, even worshipped. In the majority of Indian cultures, the elements of nature were believed to be dominant over man and even more related than man to the Great Spirit or whatever "God" guided their existence (Searles, 1960). While nature was perceived as dominant, there was still a profound experience of connectedness or unity with everything in the cosmos. According to Jamake Highwater (1981), humanity is viewed by the Native American as a part of a complex network of space in which the land is a gift from powerful others. The mountains, lakes and other locations are sacred places,

places of contact with these spirits or forces. "The Indian's relationship to the world is thus structured by sacred geography. Holy people tend to treat the human mind, the human body and the whole of nature as a single integrated organism" (Highwater, 1981, p. 127).

In contrast to the profound valuing of and connection to nature experienced by the traditional Native American(s), dominant Western culture has been characterized as having an alienated relationship with nature, living unaware of the interdependence of all life forms. By viewing ourselves as standing outside and apart from nature we often fail to recognize that if we poison the soil, we poison ourselves (Seed, Macy, Fleming & Naess, 1988); and we are at risk of destroying our planet and jeopardizing all life forms. Jan Hartke, the Environmental Liasion for Earth Day 1990, wrote about the consequences of our alienated relationship with nature in the introduction to Ed McGaa's (1990) Mother Earth Spirituality:

> He [Chief Seattle] might ask, as I do, what it takes to inject a sense of urgency into this country. Do we have to tear a hole in the sky before we wake up? We'll, we've done it. Do we have to see the life-giving rain be turned so acidic that it kills fish and trees and endangers human health? Well, we've done it. Do we have to watch the great seas rise, inundate our coastlines, and disrupt agricultural patterns through global warming? Well, we're doing it. Do we have to see the great Rhine River run with a current of death caused by a disastrous pesticide spill? Well, we've seen it. Does cancer have to rise up among us like a modern plague because of radon and toxics? Well, we've seen it. Do the clouds of Chernobyl have to spew radioactivity around the globe for us to declare enough is enough? What does it take to inject a sense of urgency?...Can we not see that the miner's canary is dying--that we must save the earth if we are to save

ourselves? (pp. xiv-xv).

In this chapter, I will describe in greater detail the current state of traditional Western (wo)man's relationship to nature--a relationship which I will ultimately characterize as psychologically immature because the basis of this relationship is childlike dependency and egocentrism. I will discuss how such a relationship came about by describing what cultural values and historical influences have played a role in shaping and maintaining our current stance toward nature. First, I will discuss anthropocentrism, a prevailing viewpoint of Western culture, and the effects of such a view on our relationship to nature. Such a view is thought to interfere with our valuing of nature as it elevates humans to a position of being "better than" nature (Fox, 1990; Devall & Sessions, 1985). I will then demonstrate how technology and a market-oriented culture, which are fueled by an anthropocentric view, affect our relationship with nature by perpetuating our dominance over and subsequent devaluation and exploitation of nature for human uses. Lastly, I will demonstrate how anthropocentrism and excessive consumerism are manifest in a relationship with nature that may be described as psychologically immature because it resembles egocentric, childlike dependence.

Western Cultural Factors That Influence Our Relationship With Nature

Anthropocentrism

Dominant western values are criticized by the deep ecology movement for being anthropocentric (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Fox, 1990; Seed, et al., 1988). Anthropocentrism has been a major assumption in all dominant Western philosophical, social and political traditions since classical Greece (Fox, 1990). Fox (1990) cited a speech given by the European philosopher, George Santayana, in 1911 at the University of California during which Santayana characterized the philosophical systems that had been passed down since the time of Socrates as:

> ...egotistical...anthropocentric, and inspired by the conceited notion that man, or human reason, or the human distinction between good and evil, is the center and the pivot of the universe...[things would have been very different] if the philosophers had lived among your mountains... (p. 18).

Anthropocentrism establishes man as the center of creation and the most highly evolved of all the species. Humans are viewed as being at the top of the evolutionary scale and therefore more important and better than other species. This tendency towards anthropocentrism is believed to be dangerous as it magnifies our sense of self importance, which is a self-serving assumption that gives us license to exploit nature and others for our own ends (Seed, Macy, Fleming, Naess, 1988; Fox, 1990).

What an anthropocentric view does not consider is that evolution is more like a branching bush in which all life forms are part of their own distinct evolutionary path, and each kind of life form is a more or less perfect version of its own kind (Fox, 1990). For example, viruses, flies, trees, frogs, dolphins and humans cannot be compared along a linear scale of developmental perfection; therefore, no one element in nature could be meaningfully characterized as "subhuman" (Fox, 1990). Thus, an anthropocentric view supports our domination and control over nature and contributes to a devaluation and exploitation of nature.

The Evolution of a Market-Oriented Culture

Other sociocultural factors have contributed to Western (wo)man's devaluation, domination and control over nature. Carol Merchant (1979), in The Death of Nature, thinks that our domination and control over nature has been progressive. She recounts how an "organic cosmology" governed our cultural belief system until the Scientific Revolution in Europe during the 16th century brought about a market-oriented culture. The dominant cultural metaphor, she proposes, changed from an organismic view to a mechanical one. Not unlike the Native Americans, 16th century Europeans were intricately bound with each other and with nature in interdependent, cooperative organic communities.

> As a projection of the way people experienced daily life, organismic theory emphasized interdependence among the parts of the human body, subordination of individual to communal purposes in family, community, and state, and vital life permeating the cosmos to the

lowliest stone. (Merchant, 1979, p. 1)

The metaphor of an "organismic" culture or system carries with it the properties of life and life sustaining forces such as are found in nature. Nature was viewed as a nurturing mother as well as an uncontollable force that could produce storms, drought and other forms of natural chaos.

The earth as a nurturing mother is a concept that seemed to vanish when the Scientific Revolution began to transpose the world view into one that was mechanistic and rational (Merchant, 1979). The mechanical metaphor of culture and its concommitent rationalism also fostered the desire to have power and control over nature, since viewing nature as uncontrollable was too threatening to (wo)man's increased sense of his/her own power and contradicted a rational and mechanistic view (Merchant, 1979). In Merchant's opinion, viewing the earth as a nurturing mother would put constraints on the types of morally sanctioned actions performed with respect to the earth. Instead, the new images of power and mastery brought about by the machine age functioned as sanctions for the destruction of nature. These new images, Merchant believes, were necessary for society to continue the processes of industrialization and commercialism, both of which depended on earth altering activities such as mining and deforestation.

Searles (1960) and others (Merchant, 1979; Devall, et al., 1985; Fromm, 1956) believe that the processes and

products of our mechanical and technological culture have created a world that is so full of man-made artifacts that we have lost our intimate relationship with the environment. Our world is full of objects to be consumed or manipulated (Fromm, 1956) and our culture encourages us to regard possessions as status symbols which we discard in order to keep up with the changing prestige symbols of our culture (Bayrakal, 1987; Searles, 1960). Furthermore, the ongoing success of our present day capitalistic and industrialized economy requires that we consume to excess, becoming "overconsumers" of that which is produced by the economy (Searles, 1960). Devall et al. (1985) believe that the overwhelming amount of advertising and propaganda in our country fosters false needs which further our desire for consumption while perpetuating our destruction of the environment in order to gain the natural resources to manufacture these goods. Eric Fromm (1956) in The Sane Society asserts that we have lost our true valuing of things and their means of production, especially since the majority of items are made by machine rather than hewn by man out of the raw resources of nature. In pagan and more primitive culture, nature and its artifacts were worshipped; in modern culture, it seems we worship man-made goods.

Presently, our overproduction and overconsumption of man-made goods has led us to exploit our natural resources, and we seem to be in a position of denial about the limitations of these resources (Devall, et al., 1985). Not

only do we exploit the natural environment, which is evident in the destruction of rain forests, the overdevelopment of potential wilderness areas and the commercialized fishing of our oceans, for example; but we continue to discard the waste products from our massive consumption into the natural environment without regard for nature's well-being.

Western Humans' Relationship With Nature is Egocentric and Immature

A relationship with the natural environment in which we exploit for our own purposes without regard for nature could be characterized as "egocentric." Egocentrism is a concept used in the field of psychology to mean an excessive concern or preoccupation with the self (Chaplin, 1975) or a type of thinking which is directed solely by individual needs or concerns (Piaget, 1959). Egocentrism implies the inability to take the view of another, and individuals may be considered egocentric when they believe that the psychological and physical world revolves only around them (Berger, 1980).

Egocentrism is an expected characteristic of the developing child and adolescent. However, in optimal development towards maturity and adulthood, the egocentric position diminishes so that the individual is better able to take the perspective of another, is no longer solely directed by his or her own needs and concerns, and recognizes and responds to the needs of others.

It appears that our relationship with nature is predominantly egocentric, since we look to the environment for what it can do for us and we fail to recognize and respond to the needs of the natural environment. Furthermore, our relationship to nature appears childlike and immature in another way in that it does not reflect the type of interdependence expected in mature adult interpersonal relationships. Fairburn (1941/1952), a noted object relations theorist, defined the development of psychological and emotional health, as it appears in interpersonal relationships, as "mature dependence":

> Healthy adults are emotionally interdependent upon each other, in contrast to the largely skewed dependence of infancy....In mature dependence, the emphasis shifts from taking to giving and exchange.... (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983)

Because our relationship with nature is predominantly based on taking rather than giving and exchange and exemplifies childlike dependence, it can be characterized as immature. The author of this dissertation proposes that a mature and healthy relationship with nature would entail the same characteristics as mature and healthy interpersonal relationships--i.e. "mature dependence" or interdependence and the ability to recognize and respond to the needs of nature. Therefore, our relationship with nature may become more mature if we focus less on "taking" from nature and more on the process of "giving," and if we develop a reciprocity with and genuine concern for the needs of the natural environment rather than focus solely on our own

desires.

The research, theory and practice of psychology is dedicated primarily to fostering healthy, mature individual and interpersonal functioning. While psychology has the potential to contribute solutions to our present day impaired relationship with nature, psychology rarely addresses (wo)man's relationship with nature. This relative neglect will be the topic of discussion in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY AND THE HUMAN RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

Psychological theory, research and practice focus primarily on individual development and on the characteristics of interpersonal relationships and their role in the development of individual identity and healthy, mature interpersonal functioning (e.g.Fairburn, 1964; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). The contributions by psychology to our understanding of the functioning of the individual have been extensive. However, psychology has been criticized for overemphasizing the psyche of the individual as if other factors, such as the impact of society, did not exist (Sarason, 1981); and psychology rarely addresses the role of the natural environment in individual development.

Harold Searles (1960), a noted psychoanalyst, wrote in The Nonhuman Environment in Normal Development and Schizophrenia, "It is my strong impression that the relationship which the individual has had to his nonhuman environment has been very influential in the development of his over-all personality" (p. 21). He believes that the degree to which a culture either fosters or interferes with its members' healthy relationship to the natural environment has repurcussions for the individual's psychological

development and for its members' relationships with one another. Searles acknowledged the need for psychoanalytic theory to extend its investigation beyond the intrapersonal and interpersonal realm to include (wo)man's relationship to their environment. He mildly admonished psychology and psychiatry for disregarding the significance of the nonhuman environment in the face of discoveries by other scientific fields that clearly demonstrate man is not an alien to his environment but is in kinship with it.

Seamon (1984) also criticized psychology for not adequately dealing with the emotional attachment that humans feel toward their environment. While there are numerous references in literature and poetry that describe (wo)man's affective connections to the natural environment, Seamon contends that psychology fails to adequately address this connection. It is as if the person were isolated and not involved with their environment.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the only two psychological theories that describe the role of the nonhuman environment in relationship to the individual: Self psychology and the self-object experience, and Harold Searles' psychoanalytic theory concerning human relatedness to the non-human world. I will discuss the contributions of each theory to our understanding of the psychological processes that connect humans to the nonhuman or natural environment. I will also discuss the limitations of each theory relative to the assumption that our current

ecological crises may require a more mature and healthy relationship with nature based on "giving and exchange" (Greenberg et al., 1985) rather than egocentrism and childlike dependence.

Self Psychology and the Selfobject Experience

Self psychology is the study of the structure of the "self," a psychological structure of the person whose function includes subjectively making sense of their world (Wolf, 1988). A basic assumption of self psychology is that the emergence of the self during development requires more than just an inborn potential to organize experience. Also required is that others, known as "selfobjects," be present to provide the types of experiences which will "evoke" the emergence of the self and ultimately allow the self to maintain in a cohesive and integrated fashion (Wolf, 1988). Appropriate selfobject experiences--i.e., a reliable emotional attachment, help with modulating anxiety, adequate stimulation and support and encouragement with achievements--will favor the development of a cohesive sense of self. Faulty selfobject experiences, or failures to provide adequate self object experiences, can result in a predisposition to experiences of fragmentation and emptiness. Selfobjects are not to be thought of as concrete objects or people, but as the subjective experiences of a function performed by a relationship with those objects. Thus, it is the intrapsychic experience of the person in

relationship to the selfobject that has the potential to promote cohesiveness.

Age-appropriate selfobject experiences are necessary throughout the lifetime and are as vital for healthy psychological functioning as are air, water and food for physical growth (Wolf, 1988). While the infant and child are more dependent on the physical presence of a selfobject, mature adults can maintain a cohesive sense of self through symbolic representation of original selfobject experiences. For example, for a child, a mother might provide nurturance and care which will provide an age-appropriate selfobject experience that leads to further structuralization and organization of the self. As the child grows and receives further appropriate selfobject experiences, the result is a feeling of cohesion which is experienced as "selfhood" and is accompanied by self-esteem and a feeling of well-being (Wolf, 1988). While the experience of self-evoking and self-sustaining objects is necessary throughout a lifetime, the form of these selfobject experiences will change as one moves into adulthood. Whereas the child may need to be held or touched to feel a sense of well being, an adult may be able to read a book, look at a painting, or even take a walk in nature. Thus the selfobject experiences needed for adults to maintain selfhood are thought to become more symbolic. Wolf (1988) explains the adult selfobject experience in the following way:

> An adult needs a self-sustaining experience with real objects or with symbols, such as provided by art,

> literature, music, religion, ideas, which by their availability function as selfobjects for that particular adult. For example, an adult might find himself in a rather fragile self-state after a draining experience and then, perhaps, find a self-sustaining selfobject experience by listening to a late Beethoven quartet or a Bach cantata. In this particular experience, he might find himself relating to a nonverbal presence that served to mirror and soothe, whereas at other times, he might find himself enhanced by relating to an idealized grandeur. These experiences are only partly conscious, but their effect on the self is powerfully strengthening. (p. 54)

Self psychology theory enhances our understanding about how the individual develops and maintains a cohesive self and sense of well-being through selfobject experiences, and it can contribute to our understanding of the relationship between humans and nature. Like music, or a work of art, nature can provide self-sustaining selfobject experiences, possibly providing a feeling of emotional security and a sense of stability and continuity (Searles, 1960). Therefore, nature, according to a self psychology perspective, could provide an important and necessary function for many individuals to maintain a sense of well-being.

While self psychology provides useful insights about the potential contributions of nature, nonhuman objects and symbols to (wo)man's well-being, it says nothing about (wo)man's reciprocal responsibility for nature's well-being. According to this view, nonhuman objects, including nature, are deemed important for the usefulness they provide (wo)man. The self psychology view is in keeping with previously mentioned criticism about our tendency to view

nature soley in terms of how it serves (wo)man. In the next section we will discover the ways in which Harold Searles (1960) views the environment as beneficial to humans. However, Searles (1960), in contrast to self psychology, directly addresses the idea that humans can have a mature relationship with the nonhuman realm rather than view that which is nonhuman soley in terms of its potential usefulness for (wo)man.

Harold Searles' Theory of Relatedness to the Nonhuman World

A Relationship with Nature Has Positive Effects For Humans

In The Nonhuman Environment in Normal Development and Schizophrenia, Searles' (1960) primary thesis is the following:

> ...the nonhuman environment, far from being of little or no account to human personality development, constitutes one of the most basically important ingredients of human psychological existence. It is my conviction that there is within the human individual a sense, whether at a conscious or unconscious level, of relatedness to his nonhuman environment, that this relatedness is one of the transcendentally important facts of human living, that--as with other very important circumstances in human existence--it is a source of ambivalent feelings to him, and that, finally, if he tries to ignore its importance to himself, he does so at peril to his psychological well-being. (p. 5-6)

Searles listed the positive psychological effects of the natural or nonhuman environment on the individual as the following:

1) An experience of the environment can soothe various painful and anxiety-laden feeling states. Searles adds that

an experience of nature helps alleviate (wo)man's feelings of existential loneliness and fear of death. He also recognizes that an experience of nature can provide a sense of peace, stability, continuity and certainty and may neutralize feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy. The soothing quality of nature may be evidenced in the large numbers of people who visit national parks and other wilderness areas for vacations or leisurely brief hikes. Gardening, for some, also provides a respite from the stress of everyday life. There is also evidence that a pet can provide a calming and soothing experience as well as become an object for (wo)man's transference, projections and identifications (Searles, 1960).

2) A relationship with nature may cultivate a deeper sense of personal identity or self-realization through enhanced creativity and a broader realization of the extent of one's abilities. Searles describes at length how a relationship with nature enhances creativity--a fact that we often witness in writers, poets and artists. The effects of the environment on creativity can be best summed up in the following statement which is paraphrased from an interview with Pablo Picasso by Christian Zervos (cited in Searles, 1960):

> The artist is a receptacle of emotions come from no matter where: from the sky, the earth, a piece of paper, a passing figure, a cobweb....The painter passes through states of fullness and of emptying. That is the whole secret of art. I take a walk in the forest of Fontainebleau. There I get an indigestion of

> greenness. I must empty this sensation into a picture. Green dominates in it. The painter paints as if in urgent need to discharge himself of his sensations and visions. (pp. 129-130)

Another way to enhance self-realization through a relationship with the environment is in the opportunities nature provides to further develop one's abilities and gain an understanding of one's limitations. This type of relationship with nature is evidenced in mountaineering, boating, camping and other nature-bound activities that allow an opportunity to attempt mastery of the physical challenges nature offers.

3) Through a relationship with nature, the individual experiences a deepened sense of reality. The effect of a relationship with the natural environment, according to Searles (1960), "is the enhancement, the sharpening, the deepening, the strengthing, of the individual's experiencing his own existence, and the existence of the world around him, as being real" (p. 135). This effect is closely related to the other two effects described above.

4) A relationship with nature may result in a deeper appreciation and acceptance of other individuals. Searles thought that a relationship with nature would further human bonding and compassion for fellow (wo)men since such a relationship could enhance our awareness that we are all part of the same species--a species that is also wedded to a vast nonhuman environment.

Humans Have a "Kinship" with Nature

While Searles acknowledged the benefits of a relationship with nature for (wo)man, he also recognized that we are deeply connected to the nonhuman world in more than just psychological and emotional ways. Searles points out that we are also in "kinship" with nature in a biological, physiological and chemical way. At the physiological level, explains Searles, the basic processes that sustain human life (e.g. respiration, circulation, reproduction, excretion) have their analogues in numerous species of the animal kingdom. Many of these processes also have analogues in the vegetable kingdom as well. The gross and microscopic anatomies of the human organ systems also have similarities with many animal and plant species. At the chemical level, all seventeen chemical elements that compose the human body are found widely distributed in the alive or once-alive elements of the natural environment. Searles also gives an account by Dr. Paul Aebersold, an atomic scientist, who reports that all of the ten billion billion billion atoms that compose the human body are really "second hand" in that these atoms have been previously utilized, since the beginning of time, by plants, animals, other people and everything else that is known to be biologically exchangeable matter.

As further evidence of humans' intimate physical connection to nature, Searles cites a basic principal of the science of embryology: "Ontongeny recapitulates

phylogeny." What is meant by this is, "...that the developmental phases of the human embryo recapitulate the phylogenetic phases which transpired in the successive forms of animal life on earth, leading, finally, to the emergence of the higher forms" (p. 10). Thus, several of the organ structures which the human embryo transitorily assumes in its development are similar to the embryonic structures of other life forms.

While there are numerous other examples of our biological, physiological and chemical kinship with nature--too many to site here--I will finish this discussion with a description of this connection by Rachel Carson (1950) in The Sea Around Us:

> When they went ashore the land animals that took up a land life carried with them a part of the sea in their bodies, a heritage which they passed on to their children and which even today links each land animal with its origin in the ancient sea. Fish, amphibian, and reptile, warm-blooded bird and mammmal--each of us carries in our veins a salty stream in which the elements sodium, potassium, and calcium are combined in almost the same proportions as in sea water....And as life itself began in the sea, so each of us begins his individual life in a miniture ocean within his mother's womb.... (pp. 13-14).

Immature Relatedness to the Nonhuman Environment

While Searles emphasizes the physiological "kinship" or similarities we experience with nature and recognizes that (wo)man is part of the fabric of all living matter, he maintains that in mature development it is important for humans to recognize that they are still humans, with a unique identity that is separate from the elements of the

natural environment: "In mature development, we simultaneously maintain our own sense of individuality as a human being, a knowing that, however close our kinship, on however multiple levels, to the nonhuman environment, we are not at one with it" (p. 102) (see footnote 1).

Searles (1960) believed that people, in more primitive stages of development, may have experienced more continuity between themselves and the elements of nature. There was, he thought, less of a need for primal people to experience boundaries between themselves and the environment. This may have been a result of a lower level of friction between humans and their environment in which an experience of "oneness" could thus occur. However, in more modern and advanced cultures, emotional boundaries may be necessary, since the ego may be very vulnerable to the higher levels of threatening emotional stimulation that are produced in a modern, complex milieu. A quote from John Custance (cited in Searles, 1960), who wrote about his own manic-depressive psychotic experience in Wisdom, Madness and Folly--The Philosophy of a Lunatic, demonstrates this point:

> Just as in the physical sphere the human embryo compasses untold centuries of development into a few months, starting as a speck of protoplasm and climbing the ladder from invertebrate to vertebrate, doubtful at one moment whether to become a bird or a fish, before finally emerging as a mammal, so in the mental sphere the soul of the child seems to follow the path traced by his ancestors. He starts as a purely instinctive creature of a few urgent impulses and needs, with their corresponding sensations, and gradually puts on, partly as a part of environment and partly of development, the complicated psychological apparatus of modern civilized man. (p. 41)

Searles contends that a subjective oneness with the environment may be anxiety-provoking for two seemingly contradictory reasons: anxiety about oneness with a potentially chaotic environment and anxiety over the loss of a "cherished, omnipotent world self" (p. 39).

Searles' perspective evolved out of his extensive work with schizophrenics and other types of psychiatric patients who, in Searles' opinion, are unable to discriminate clear boundaries, or differentiate, between themselves and the nonhuman environment. The poor boundaries of the psychotic patient oftentimes result in the ego being invaded by "chaotically, uncontrollable, nonhuman elements" (p. 35), because the nonhuman environment is experienced as part of the ego and is impinging on the healthy functioning of the ego (p. 35). Therefore, there is a regression to a level where there are "insufficient ego boundaries to allow the nonhuman environment to be experienced as outside the ego" (p. 74). Some authors even refer to schizophrenic and some psychotic disorders as "primitive" (Ogden, 1979). In Searles' opinion, if a loss of ego boundaries occurs in development, this is atypical and a sign of immaturity rather than maturity.

Searles does not mean to limit our emotional experiencing of the environment; and he acknowledges that in emotional maturity, a full range of emotions will manifest in relation to the environment. He also recognized that

transitory regressions, in which we feel "at one" with the environment as we did in infancy with the "good mother," do occur in the mature individual, especially following a time of crises, loss, frustration or stress. However, he likens this state to "infantile omnipotence"--no more mature than a "melancholic who feels himself to be in union with the Bad Mother" (p. 108). In the next section I will discuss Searles' perspective about the mature person's relationship with the nonhuman or natural environment.

Mature Relatedness to the Nonhuman Environment

From the perspective of Searles (1960) and other psychoanalytic writers (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975), an important facet of healthy personality development is the ability to achieve a separate, individuated and differentiated sense of self, thus claiming a unique and bounded identity all your own. According to these theories, the infant, during the first 2-5 months of development, has not become sufficiently differentiated from others and, Searles would add, the nonhuman world. Prior to achieving a separate sense of self, the infant is thought to be "at one" or symbiotic (Mahler, et al., 1975) with the mother and nondifferentiated from the nonhuman environment as well (Searles, 1960) (see footnote 2). The infant does not distinguish between inner and outer sensations; nor is the infant thought to be able to distinguish him/herself very well from the human and nonhuman realm (Searles, 1960).

From this perspective, as the person succeeds in

differentiating him/herself from other humans and the nonhuman world, there is an increased ability for relatedness. Searles (1960) suggests that the mature person's basic attitude or emotional orientation towards the nonhuman environment is also one of "relatedness". By this, he meant that as we experience a physiological and anatomical kinship with nature, we must simultaneously maintain our individuality as human beings rather than experience the unity more common to primal man. In order for man to enjoy a mature relatedness with nature, he must be able to create a distance from it and recognize his separateness. Eric Fromm (1956), in The Sane Society, summarized our conflictual relationship with nature in this way:

> Self-awareness, reason and imagination disrupt the 'harmony' which characterizes animal existence. Their emergence has made man into an anomaly, into the freak of the universe. He is part of nature, subject to her physical laws and unable to change them, yet he transcends the rest of nature. He is set apart while being a part; he is homeless, yet chained to the home he shared with all creatures. (pp. 23-24)

Searles believes that humans relate to the nonhuman environment on a dual level. On the one hand, humans relate to a nonhuman object such as a tree or a cat in terms of the meanings this object has for the person. In this type of relating, the object may become a source of distortions, projections or transference which, in Searles opinion, are more indicative of the "psychiatrically ill" individual's relationship with the environment. On the other level, in

more mature relatedness, there is a relationship to the environment "as it exists," free of distortions, projections and transference: "to the cat as being a cat, and the tree as being a tree" (p. 19).

In summmary, Searles seems to make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the psychological importance of our deep connectedness or "kinship" with the natural enviroment. His descriptions of our biological and chemical relatedness to the elements of nature serve to remind us of our striking similarity and deep kinship with nature--a relatedness that we apparently overlook in our present culture. An acknowledgement of these similarities will be important for the conceptual development of empathy with nature in the final chapter.

While Searles highlights our "kinship" with nature, he underscores another issue facing modern (wo)man--i.e., acknowledging our uniqueness and separateness from nature, and the fact that we as humans also need to be differentiated from nature or the nonhuman realm. Differentiation, or having a separate unique identity, is a developmental goal that is widely accepted in the field of psychology as a hallmark of mature development (Erickson, 1968; Mahler, et al., 1975; Searles, 1960). Just as diversity is important in nature (Devall, et al., 1985), so is diversity among people and between people and nature. Thus, differentiation, according to Searles (1960) allows humans to relate to the environment "as it exists," which

seems to imply the potential for respect towards the natural environment, a respect that is more fully developed by the deep ecology perspective presented in the next chapter.

Searles offers some valuable contributions to our understanding of the characteristics of mature relatedness to the nonhuman world. First, he acknowledges that a mature relationship with nature involves the ability to be separate or differentiated from the elements of the natural world. Additionally, he stresses the importance of relating to the elements of nature "as they exist" as unique and separate entities; to the cat as being a cat, and the tree as being a tree" (Searles, 1960, p. 19). However, Searles fails to further develop the other aspects of mature relatedness, such as those proposed by Fairbairn (1941/1952)--i.e., "giving and exchange" versus taking--which may be relevant for the salvation of ourselves and our planet.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the deep ecology perspective about humans' relationship to nature. Deep ecology further enhances our understanding of humans' relationship with nature and offers suggestions for developing a more mature and healthy relationship with nature.

1 Some nontraditional psychological theories, such as Ken Wilber's (1979) transpersonal theory of "no boundary" consciousness, view man's evolution into higher levels of consciousness as a process of relinquishing personal boundaries between the self and the human and nonhuman world, thus becoming "at one" or unified with elements outside of the self. This "at oneness" is termed "unity consciousness." The primary means of obtaining this state of consciousness is through the practice of Eastern meditative approaches such as Zen Buddhism or Vedanta Hinduism. This perspective is more suited for those human beings who have a "self" to transcend and "unity consciousness" does not seem to be an obtainable goal for the majority of people (Wilber, 1979).

2 A more recent theory of interpersonal development by Daniel Stern (1985) questions the idea of infantile symbiosis. He believes that the infant is never in a stage of symbiosis and is able to experience various forms of separateness following birth. Merger, or union experiences, contends Stern, are only a result of the infant's "actively organizing the experience of self-being-with-another, rather than as the product of a passive failure of the ability to differentiate self from other" (p. 10). Stern believes that the developing infant is always capable of different levels of relatedness. He finds Mahler's theory of merger appealing yet is concerned that Mahler views connectedness as a failure of differentiation. Stern thinks that connectedness is a continuous experience and a success of psychic functioning and deserves more emphasis than is given by Mahler who emphasizes separation instead. Stern would view separateness and relatedness as occuring simultaneously.

CHAPTER IV

DEEP ECOLOGY PHILOSOPHY: AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON HUMANS' RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

Deep ecology's orientation to nature stands in marked contrast to the egocentric, anthropocentric stance that predominates in our culture. The deep ecology movement provides alternative ways to view our relationship with nature and makes suggestions about how to cultivate a healthier relationship with our natural environment. The purpose of this chapter is to present the ideas of deep ecology, including the suggestion that we expand our personal identity to include an identification with nature as a means to achieve a more mature and harmonious relationship with nature (Devall, et al., 1988). This purpose will be accomplished by describing the "guiding principles" or major premises of deep ecology and the norms developed by Naess (cited in Devall et al., 1988) that are intended to guide human behavior in a relationship with nature.

Definition of Deep Ecology

Deep ecology approaches ecology, which is the branch of biology that deals with the relationship between living organisms and their environment, from a philosophical and spiritual point of view (Devall & Sessions, 1985). Its advocates draw from ancient and present day spiritual and

philosphical orientations which provide alternative views regarding (wo)man's interconnectedness with nature.

Arne Naess (1973), the pioneer of the deep ecology movement, differentiated "deep ecology" from "shallow ecology" by defining shallow ecology as "a fight against pollution and resource depletion" (p. 3). Deep ecology, on the other hand, is based on the idea of asking deeper questions about ecological relationships of which humans are a part, favoring the "relational, total field image" (Fox, 1990, p. 94). Asking deeper questions, according to Naess, means going beyond the everyday technical and scientific means of inquiry about ecological relationships and into the realm of the philosophical. Rather than focus solely on conserving resources or decreasing pollution, deep ecology would address the problem in a deeper fashion by asking questions about the "why" and "how" of resource depletion that would then initiate a philosphical inquiry about man's relationship to nature. A technical and scientific inquiry about the ecological crises in which we currently find ourselves would lead to different conclusions and courses of action than would a philosophical exploration of the nature of the problem.

> The essence of deep ecology is to keep asking more searching questions about human life, society, and Nature as in the Western philosophical tradition of Socrates...Thus deep ecology goes beyond the so-called factual scientific level to the level of self and Earth wisdom...The foundations of deep ecology are the basic intuitions and experiencing of ourselves and Nature which comprise ecological consciousness. Certain outlooks on politics and public policy flow naturally

from this consciousness. (Devall, et al., 1988, p. 65)

The goal of deep ecology is to cultivate a high-quality environment that is healthy for humans and all of life and in which humans will experience a more mature and harmonious relationship with nature (Devall, et al., 1988). Towards this end, deep ecology proposes greater identification with nature by humans.

The Principles of Deep Ecology

The reader will find in the following a condensed summary of the basic principles of deep ecology, as defined by George Sessions and Arne Naess (cited in Devall, et al., 1988, p. 70) and outlined by David Rothenberg (cited in La Chappelle, 1988, p. 15):

1) There is intrinsic value in all life forms. This value is not dependent on how useful the nonhuman world is for human purposes.

2) An awareness of the importance of diversity in all life forms in nature results in a valuing of diversity itself.

3) Humans have greater ability to manipulate their environment than do other species, and therefore have a greater potential for power. However, this power means that our responsibility towards the Earth is also greater than that of any other species. If we manipulate the environment

in ways that reduce the diversity and richness of nature, we should do so only to satisfy vital needs.

4) We feel estranged from the earth, and our interference with the natural world is not only extensive but worsening.

5) We should change the basic economic, ideological and technological structures of our society and the policies which guide them.

6) We should seek quality of life rather than higher standard of living, self-realization rather than material wealth.

7) We need to find new means of fostering a greater identification with nature.

Deep Ecology Norms To Guide Our Relationship With Nature

Naess (cited in Devall et. al, 1985, pp. 66-67) developed two ultimate norms to guide human behavior in accordance with the principles of deep ecology: "self realization" and "biocentric equality." Both of these norms ask that we, as humans, become "ecocentric" rather than egocentric in our relationship and approach to nature. An ecocentric position asks us to be ecology-centered rather than human-centered (Fox, 1990). An ecocentric approach views humans as part of a circle of connection in which all elements of the circle have equal value; an anthropocentric approach, on the other hand, places humans at the top of an

hierarchy in which humans are the center and are believed to be more important than the other elements of nature. A deeper understanding of ecocentrism can be derived from the following descriptions of biocentric equality and self-realization.

Biocentric Equality

"Biocentric equality," or biocentric egalitarianism, was described by Sessions (1981) as "a statement of nonanthropocentrism" (p. 5). Biocentric equality claims that all things in the biosphere have an equal right to blossom and live and to reach their own individual configuration of growth. All organisms are thought to be part of an interrelated whole in which all elements possess intrinsic worth and are valuable "for their own sake" or "in and of themselves" (Fox, 1990, p. 222). This viewpoint does not dispute the reality of mutual predation, that in order to survive, all species use other species for food and other life support necessities. Instead, biocentric equality claims that human and nonhuman elements are all deserving of respect, that all are parts of an interrelated whole, and that there is no need for a hierarchy of species which places humans at the top. Taking into consideration that humans will always modify the earth, what this viewpoint suggests is that "we should live with minimum rather than maximum impact on other species and on the Earth in general" (Devall, et al., 1988, p. 68). Deep ecology does acknowledge the fact that humans have more complex needs,

such as play, creativity, love and intimate relationships that go beyond the basics; but it also claims that these needs are probably more simple than we realize. As previously discussed, deep ecology alleges that the propaganda and advertising in our technocratic-industrial culture create false needs which result in increased production and consumption of goods. Overproduction and overconsumption of material goods result in further exploitation of natural resources and may divert us from spiritual growth and maturity (Devall, et al., 1988).

Self-Realization

Self-realization, Naess' second norm to guide human behavior in accordance with the rest of nature, is an active spiritual process, a way to live one's life, and should not be thought of as an attainable postion within a lifetime but as a striving (Rothenberg, no year). According to deep ecology, the Western self is alleged to be a "socially programmed" narrow sense of self that is narrowly defined by the prevalant "fads" of one's social reference group (Devall, et al., 1988). This narrow self, contends Naess (1988), is robbed of the opportunity to search for a unique spiritual/biological personhood which extends beyond this limited self. Self-realization goes beyond the Western concept of an "isolated ego striving primarily for hedonistic gratification or for a narrow sense of individual salvation in this life or the next" (Devall et al., 1985, p.

67). It encourages the achievement of our full potential as human beings, but also asks that we broaden and deepen ourselves through identification with the nonhuman realm (Naess, 1988). The realization that occurs through this process is conceptualized as the "self-in-Self" where the "Self" means organic wholeness:

> What deep ecology directs us toward, then, is neither an environmental axiology or theory of environmental ethics nor a minor reform of existing practices. It directs us to develop our own sense of self until it becomes Self, that is, until we realize through deepening ecological sensibilities that each of us forms a union with the natural world, and that protection of the natural world is protection of ourselves (Drengson, 1988, pp. 86-87).

The more expansive view of the self, or "self" within a larger "Self," is one in which humans are asked to identify with other aspects of the natural environment. Naess (1988) terms this expansive self the "ecological self":

> The ecological self of a person is that with which this person identifies....Human nature is such that with sufficient all-sided maturity we cannot avoid 'identifying' ourselves with all living beings, beautiful or ugly, big or small, sentinent or not. (p. 20)

The development of an "ecological self" that identifies with the elements of the nonhuman realm is the process of self-realization. The emphasis is not on the the "self" but on the process of identification, so that one's own self is not limited to the personal ego (Naess cited in Fox, 1990). Rather than view life as composed of separate, atomistic particles, deep ecology suggests that by experiencing an

identification or commonality with aspects of nature, we begin to see that there is a fundamental "oneness" to all of life (Fox, 1990).

Identification With Nature as the Means to Protect and Restore the Natural Environment

Building a stronger identification with nature is a major component of the deep ecology movement and is believed to be the primary means to de-emphasize our western values of separateness, independence and unbridled self-interest and remediate our break with nature (La Chappelle, 1990). Identification with the elements of nature stimulates psychological development to proceed from a narrow, egotistical "self" to a more expanded view of the self which identifies with all the elements of nature or the whole "Self" (Devall, cited in Fox, 1990). Deep ecology recognizes separateness/differentiation within identification--i.e., to identify with a tree does not mean that one is a tree. However, the proponents of deep ecology encourage us not to take that separateness too literally because there are physical links between ourselves and trees, as previously described by Searles (1960) in his discussion of our chemical, physiological and biological "kinship" with nature.

The belief is that if an individual, through identification, has developed an expansive sense of self or a more ecological self, then he or she will naturally protect those aspects of the expansive self (i.e., the

elements of the natural environment). Naess (cited in Fox, 1990) described this idea in the following way:

> Care flows naturally if the 'self' is widened and deepened so that protection of free Nature is felt and conceived as protection of ourselves....if your 'self' in the wider sense embraces another being, you need no moral exhortation to show care....You care for yourself without feeling any moral pressure to do it--provided you have not succumbed to a neurosis of some kind, developing self-destructive tendencies or hating yourself. (p. 217)

Thus, deep ecology proposes that an expansive more encompassing self will care for nature in a spontaneous fashion, not because of adherence to some moral demands or "oughts" (Fox, 1990). Naess (cited in Fox, 1990) stated, "I am not much interested in ethics or morals. I'm interested in how we experience the world....Ethics follows from how we experience the world" (p. 219). It is through the process of identification that the deep ecologists believe we will be able to see ourselves in nature again and protect nature as we may try to protect ourselves:

> ...I consider that this shift [to identification with the collective of all beings] is essential to our survival at this point in history precisely because it can serve in lieu of morality and because moralizing is ineffective. Sermons seldom hinder us from pursuing our self-interest, so we need to be a little more enlightened about what our self-interest is. It would not occur to me, for example, to exhort you to refrain from cutting off your leg. That wouldn't occur to me or to you, because your leg is part of you. Well, so are the trees in the Amazon Basin; they are our external lungs. We are just beginning to wake up to that. We are gradually discovering that we are our world. (Macy, 1987, p. 20).

Naess (1988) also believes that love will naturally

flow from allowing ourselves to identify with the natural world. He uses Eric Fromm's definition of love in which love is an "expression of productiveness, and implies care, respect, responsibility and knowledge" (p. 23).

Limitations of Identification as the Means to Protect and Restore the Natural Environment

Deep ecology emphasizes identification as the process that will result in the protection of our natural environment. In his description of the "ecological self" and the process of expanding our identifications to include nature, Naess (1988) did briefly refer to an experience in which he identified with the struggle of a dying insect and felt empathy. However, he added, "But the empathy was not basic, what was basic was the process of identification" (p. 22). Other writers in deep ecology seem to imply by their statements that they experience empathy with nature (Fox, 1990); however, the term "empathy" is not defined, nor is the concept emphasized or developed as a means to care about and protect the natural environment. Instead, they focus on the process of identification.

It is the suggestion of this dissertation that empathy with nature is a more encompassing process in which identification plays a necessary but not complete role. Identification, in the field of psychology, has been defined as:

> An automatic, unconscious mental process whereby an individual becomes like another person in one or

> several aspects. It is a natural accompaniment of maturation and mental development and aids in the learning process,...as well as in the acquisition of interests, ideals, mannerism, etc....For identification to occur, sufficient psychic development must have taken place for the individual to distinguish himself from others in his environment. (Moore & Fine, 1968, p. 50)

This suggestion does not dispute the fact that identification is an important process to decrease our alienation from nature and diminish our narrowed view of ourselves. However, deep ecology proponents repeatedly suggest that concern and protection of the natural environment will naturally flow from allowing ourselves to identify with elements of the natural environment. There is no substantiating evidence within the field of psychology that identification is a sufficient process to engender the moral attitude, understanding, care and reciprocity towards the natural environment that is advocated by deep ecology. In fact, with identification, one can identify with loved and admired persons as well as feared ones (Moore, et al., 1968). Therefore, identification can have negative as well as positive results, such as when children who have been abused may identify with their aggressor and themselves become perpetrators of aggressive acts.

What has been demonstrated in the field of psychology is that empathy can result in understanding, care and reciprocity towards others, since empathy has been cited as a primary motivator for prosocial and altruistic behaviors (Hoffman, 1978) in which one is responsive to the needs of

another. Thus, in the experience of empathy, it is not just the trial identification with an object that we experience (Katz, 1963) which results in a prosocial act; the affect experienced by the observer is thought to play a primary role as well (Hoffman, 1982, 1984, 1987). The experiences and/or feelings of a person and the way they resonate with our own feelings and experiences generates understanding and facilitates a capacity to respond to another (Hoffman, 1978). It has also been suggested that there may be a link between empathy, moral principles and judgement (Hoffman, 1987). Thus, it seems important to call the process by which we begin to show understanding, care and reciprocity towards the natural environment more appropriately "empathy" rather than identification.

While psychology has gathered a substantial amount of information about the process of empathy as it occurs in the interpersonal domain, psychology currently does not recognize empathy with the natural environment. Expanding the psychological concept of empathy to include empathy with nature will be the primary goal of this dissertation. The expansion of empathy to include nature allows psychology to make a contribution to the fostering of a more mature and caring relationship with nature, based on "giving and exchange" (Fairbairn, 1941/1952). The subject of interpersonal empathy will be the topic of the next chapter and will lay the foundation for the final chapter of the dissertation which describes empathy with nature.

CHAPTER V

EMPATHY

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the aspects of empathy that are germane to the task of building empathy with nature. It is not my intention to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on empathy as this would be quite extensive and is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, I wish to limit my discussions to those ideas which are relevant to developing the type of empathy with nature that may result in an altruistic, "giving and exchange" (Fairbairn, 1941/1952) with nature rather than childlike egocentrism and immature dependence.

This purpose will be accomplished in the following ways: First, I will define empathy and suggest that cultivating empathy with nature is a means to diminsh our egocentric relationship with nature, thus allowing for a more mature relationship with nature. I will then provide an overview of the historical development of the concept of empathy. This overview is relevant because it demonstrates again, similar to Searles' criticism of psychology, how psychology currently omits or deemphasizes the relevance of a relationship to the nonhuman realm. Then I will discuss the reasons why empathy is important, with an emphasis on empathy as a motivator for altruistic and prosocial behaviors. A discussion of Martin Hoffman's (1978, 1982,

1987) model of the development of empathy will follow because his developmental scheme is specific to the development of altruistic motivation in which empathy is thought to be an important mediator. Within the section that describes the development of empathy, I will also discuss the innate capacity for empathy, which is thought to play a role in the evolution and survival of certain species, including humans (Plutchik, 1987; Katz, 1963, Hoffman, 1982). Finally, I will describe Theodore Reik's model of empathic understanding, which is not a developmental model but instead describes the process of empathy as it is unfolding in an interpersonal encounter. Reik's description of this process will lay the foundation for understanding an empathic experience with nature as it is occuring.

Definition of Empathy

The concept of empathy has been an important construct in several disciplines, including aesthetics, sociology and psychology. In the field of psychology, empathy has been defined and described in numerous ways including the following:

> ...the recognition of the self in the other....the expansion of the self to include the other....and accepting, confirming and understanding the echo evoked by the self. (Ornstein, 1978, p. 84)
>
> ...an affective state that stems from the apprehension of another's emotional state or condition and that is congruent with it. (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987, p. 13)

When we experience empathy, we feel as if we were

> experiencing someone else's feelings as our own. We see, we feel, we respond, and we understand as if we were, in fact, the other person. We stand in his shoes. We get under his skin....When we take the position of another person, our imagination projects us out of ourselves and into the other person (p. 3)....Empathy ultimately is vicarious introspection--we introject the other person into ourselves and contemplate him inwardly (p. 93)....Empathy is based on the principal of an a priori similarity. Our inner activity is a reservoir of feeling which is then tapped when we see a specific object. The linkage between this object and ourselves is instantaneous so that we spring from our own identity to the identity of the object. (Katz, 1963, p. 87)

> [Empathy is a process that involves] entering the private perceptual world of another and becoming thoroughly at home in it....It means temporarily living in his/her life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments, sensing meanings of which he/she is scarcely aware....It includes communicating your sensings of his/her world....It means frequently checking with him/her as to the accuracy of your sensings, and being guided by the responses you receive....To be with another in this way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter another world without prejudice. (Rogers, 1975, p. 4)

As evidenced in the above descriptions, standing in the shoes of another, putting yourself aside for the moment, and understanding another's condition are all qualities of empathy. Someone who is empathic is thought to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others (Berger, 1987; Goldstein & Michaels, 1985). Hoffman (1978, 1982, 1985) developed a model of empathy which demonstrates that not only does empathy result in a sensitivity to the needs of another, but empathy is an important motivator in prosocial and altruistic behaviors. Certain empathy based affects, concludes Hoffman, lead to caring and concern for a victim as well as a desire to help a victim. Characterized in

these ways, empathy stands in stark contrast to the position of egocentrism discussed in chapter 2. Egocentrism means that the predominant concern is with the self (Chaplin, 1975), and thinking is directed solely by individual needs and concerns (Piaget, 1959). Egocentrism also implies the disinterest in or unwillingness or inability to take the view of another. Individuals may be considered egocentric when they believe that the psychological and physical worlds revolve only around them (Berger, 1980). Egocentrism is an expected characteristic of the developing child. However, in optimal development towards adulthood, the egocentric position diminishes, the individual becomes better able to take the perspective of another, is no longer solely directed by his or her own needs and concerns, and recognizes and responds to the needs of others.

As was previously discussed, our relationship with nature could be considered egocentric, since our present relationship to the environment is directed by our own needs and concerns we fail to recognize and respond to the needs of the natural environment. It is suggested in this dissertation that creating empathy with nature is a means to diminish an egocentric position so that we can see outside of our own needs and "stand in the shoes" of nature. Empathy for nature may help us understand its damaged condition and lead to a desire to care for nature, thus diminishing our tendency to exploit nature solely for our own purposes.

History of Empathy

Wispe (1987) traced the history of the concept of empathy and discovered its origins in the word "Einfuhlung," a term first used by Robert Vischer in 1873. "Einfuhlung," which translated as "feeling oneself into" an object, was used by Vischer in his writings about the psychology of aesthetics and form perception. It was Theodor Lipps who further developed the term for use by psychology (Wispe, 1987). Lipps, who studied the psychology of immediate experience, believed "Einfuhlung" to mean an experience of examining and contemplating an object (i.e., of art or nature, etc.), in which one projects oneself into the object and establishes an identification between the object and oneself. According to Lipps, the primary means to know about an object is through sensory information, followed by projection of oneself into the object of perception so that "objects are felt as well as seen" (Wispe, 1987, p. 20). The observer "feels himself into the object, loses consciousness of himself, and experiences the object as if his own identity had disappeared and he had become the object himself" (Katz, 1963, p. 85). Through this process of "inner imitation" or "feeling together with," one came to appreciate and understand this particular object of contemplation (Goldstein, et al., 1985, p. 4). Wispe (1987) discusses how Lipps viewed this resonance between object and self:

> ...the appearance in the senses of the object of beauty may provide the object of aesthetic satisfaction, but

> is not itself the aesthetic satisfaction. Rather it is the striving self that is aesthetically pleased. It is the self that feels itself striving, yielding, overcoming obstacles--in short, feels various internal activities. Thus, aesthetic satisfaction consists of the object, but does not reside in the object. It is in the self. This distinction between self and object...is the crux of the concept of 'Einfuhlung.' 'Einfuhlung' implies that the apprehension of the sensible object involves an immediate tendency in the beholder to a particular type of activity (p. 19).

In 1926, Lipps extended his definition of "Einfuhlung" to include humans (Goldstein et al., 1985). Empathy, for Lipps, occured as a result of projection and imitation in which the targets could be either people or objects. He thought that humans demonstrated empathy towards one another through motor mimicry in which one would consciously or unconsciously take on the physical stances, gestures or expressions of another.

Freud (1905/1960) first used "Einfuhlung" in his writings about humor and described it as a process in which "we take the producing person's psychical state into consideration, put ourselves into it and try to understand it by comparing it with our own" (p. 186). Katz (1963) cited Freud's belief that both identification and imitation were relevant to empathy:

> A path leads from identification by way of imitation to empathy, that is to the comprehension of the mechanism by means of which we are enabled to take up any attitude at all towards another mental life. (p. 110)

Later, Freud (1921/1949) thought that empathy played, "...the largest part in our understanding of what is inherently foreign to our ego in other people" (p. 66). However, he did not develop the concept any further (Wispe,

1987).

In 1910, Tichner translated "Einfuhlung" as "empathy" (Wispe, 1987). Tichner was an experimental psychologist who believed that sensation was the origin of all knowledge and that images accompanied sensation (Wispe, 1987). Images could be visual, auditory and/or kinesthetic. Tichner (1915) relates sensation and imagery with empathy in the following way:

> We have a natural tendency to feel ourselves into what we perceive or imagine. As we read about the forest, we may, as it were, become the explorer; we feel for ourselves the gloom, the silence, the humidity, the oppression, the sense of lurking danger; everything is strange but it is to us that this strange experience comes....This tendency to feel oneself into a situation is called EMPATHY;--on the analogy of sympathy, which is feeling together with another; and empathic ideas are psychologically interesting because they are the converse of perceptions; their core is imaginal, and their context is made up of sensations, the kinaesthetic and organic sensations that carry the empathic meaning. Like the feeling of strangeness, they are characteristics of imagination (p. 198).

George Mead (1934), a sociologist, added a cognitive component to the already existing affective component in the definition of empathy. The cognitive aspect of empathy was described as an "ability to understand" in which the empathizer temporarily "took the role of another" (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985, p. 4). In this definition, the merging of self and other was transitory in that you were not becoming that other person, but were simply putting yourself in their place.

Some psychologists who practiced therapy added a "communicative" component to the definition of empathy which

is thought to play an important role in the therapeutic process (Rogers, 1975; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967; Kohut, 1971). Thus, empathizing not only entailed the ability to comprehend the emotional experience of another, but was extended to include an accurate and sensitive conveyance of this understanding to the other person(s) (Goldstein et al., 1985). The process of empathy has since gained wide recognition and use by the field of clinical psychology and is assumed to refer to empathy as it unfolds in the interpersonal domain.

Historically, the concept of empathy has gone through numerous redefinitions and reinterpretations (Wispe, 1987) so that the definition and processes central to its operation have been somewhat controversial (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985). In her review of the concept of empathy Eisenberg (1987) comes to the conclusion that there is not a correct definition of the term--only different definitions. A lack of consensus in the definition of empathy may be due, in part, to the fact that the concept of empathy is shared, though approached differently, by several disciplines, including, aesthetics, sociology and psychology--social, experimental and clinical.

The definition of empathy is related to the frame of reference used by the discipline in which the term is used (Katz, 1963). Aesthetics emphasizes the experience of "feeling oneself into" and temporarily merging with an object of contemplation such as art. Sociology emphasizes

mutual understanding between members of the same social group. Within psychology, empathy as used by social psychology emphasizes role taking, while in psycholanalytic theory it refers to a means of knowing about and understanding another (Berger, 1987). Also within the field of psychology, empathy has been variously described as a process which includes affective, cognitive and communicative components; however, there is no complete agreement about which components should receive more research or definitional emphasis. Some developmental researchers view empathy as a multidimensional process (Goldstein et al., 1985). This multidimensionality is evident in Keefe's (1976) definition of empathy in which the components are perceptual-affective-cognitive-communicative. However, for some psychologists, the primary target of empathy is the emotional state of another person (Hoffman, 1978) whereas for others, the cognitive component or ability to take the role of another carries more weight (Feshback, 1978).

In summary, the current definition of empathy is complicated by the fact that there are various definitions of empathy along with differences about which components--affective, cognitive or communicative--should be emphasized. Additionally, within psychology, the original definition of empathy or "Einfhulung" in which objects were sources of empathy--where one "feels himself into the object, loses consciousness of himself, and experiences the objects as if

his own identity had disappeared and he had become the object himself" (Katz, 1963, p. 85)--has been completely lost. In fact, Lipps' inclusion of inanimate objects in the meaning of "Einfuhlung"/empathy was considered to be "wild animism" by many of his later critics (Wispe, 1987). Thus, within psychology the concept of empathy came to apply only to the interpersonal domain.

Reasons Why Empathy is Important

Empathy As Important for Psychological Development

The Development of the Self.

Self Psychology takes the position that failures in maternal empathy in the beginning of life may be responsible for weaknesses and deficits of self-cohesion that are particularly apparent in borderline and narcissistic disorders (Stern, 1985; Kohut, 1977). Therefore, in therapy, empathy has been used by therapists as a means to assist their clients' recovery from psychological and emotional deprivation (Katz, 1963). Through the use of empathy, the therapist can gain insight about the client's inner experiences (Berger, 1987; Wolf, 1988) and comprehend the needs of the client by imagining him or herself in their client's situation (Goldstein, et al., 1985).

Bonding and Survival.

Plutchik (1987) recognizes the importance of empathy in an evolutionary context as it serves to bond individuals,

especially mother and infant. The emotions of the infant serve to attract the adult to a hungry or lost infant, thus engaging the adult's attention, care and support. This, he concludes, has adaptive consequences for survival, since without it, the chances of species survival would be slim. Hoffman (1981) seems to agree with Plutchik's suggestions and adds that empathy may serve a purpose in group survival, since recent evolutionary theory proposes that survival was higher for those individuals who lived in groups rather than alone.

In the animal kingdom, as well, empathy increases the chances for survival (Plutchik 1987). Plutchik cites numerous examples of empathic behaviors as they occur between various species. Animals, he reports, engage in the signaling of emotional states, which is a survival-related function. The receiver of a signal probably experiences some of the same emotions as the sender and therefore reacts in a similar fashion. Animals also demonstrate various imitative behaviors which have benefits for survival, especially when it comes to securing new food sources. Animals also send various display signals for the purpose of mating, challenge, greeting and other such interactions. Plutchik reports that these displays have in common a high probability that similar feelings will be present in the sender and reciever of such displays.

There is also some evidence that empathy may have an important role in diminishing aggressive behaviors (Feshbach

& Feshbach, 1969). Katz (1963) thinks that empathy, when practiced by therapists with their clients, may act as a control over authoritarianism:

> ...the therapist should be able to project himself imaginatively into the role of his patient and such vicarious expereince should have the effect of greatly extending his self-awareness. It should help to control his incipient authoritarianism. He would be less susceptible to feelings of superiority, complacency, and dogmatism if he could step into the shoes of his client. (p. 173)

Empathy As a Motivator of Prosocial and Altruistic Behaviors

The capacity for empathy has also been cited as an important motivator of prosocial and altruistic behaviors (Hoffman, 1982; Aronfreed, 1970; Batson, 1987). Eisenberg and Miller (1989) define prosocial behavior as "voluntary actions that are intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals" (p. 3). These behaviors are prosocial because their intended outcome is to benefit others and they are performed in a voluntary fashion as opposed to under duress. It is this particular outcome of empathy--prosocial behavior--that seems highly relevant for a mature relationship with nature, because prosocial behavior involves the "giving and exchange" (Fairbairn, 1941/1952) that may be necessary to repair nature and our relationship with it.

Eisenberg and Mussen (1989) wrote about prosocial behaviors. They suggest that some people are egoistic and self-seeking, endlessly pursuing their own desires and interests and placing their needs above others. By contrast, the primary concern of altruistic individuals is

the well-being of others and the good of the whole. In the following descriptions, Eisenberg et al., (1989) give examples of egoistic versus altruistic or prosocial behaviors. The Ik, a mountain tribe in Uganda, after being deprived of their hunting ground, disintegrated as a social group and became involved in personal survival and all the potentially ruthless qualities this may engender such as stealing, lying, plotting and killing. Generosity, caring and kindness (behaviors labeled by the authors as prosocial) no longer existed. The authors contrast this behavior with the traditional Hopi way of living. Hopi's view every human and natural aspect of the universe as part of an interrelated and interdependent whole. Cooperation is essential for survival.

> From earliest childhood onward, nothing is more important to the Hopi than having a 'Hopi good heart,' defined as having trust and respect for others, having concern for everyone's rights, welfare, and feelings, seeking inner peacefulness, and practicing avoidance of conflict. In the Hopi family, the needs of the individdual and those of the household are both served through helpfulness and cooperation; family interactions are not controlled by rules and regulations. (Eisenberg et al., 1989, p. 2)

These descriptions of prosocial behavior point out the relevance of prosocial behavior to the survival of the individual as well as the group.

Eisenberg et al., (1989) differentiate altruistic from prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior may result in personal gain or be the result of ulterior motives. Altruism, on the other hand, is a specific kind of prosocial

behavior which is intrinsically motivated or motivated by values and personal rewards that do not necessarily entail self gain. Altruism may be motivated by values that include a belief in the importance of the well being of others. Behaving in a way that is consistent with these values may evoke personal feelings of self satisfaction and self esteem. Altruism is viewed as less egoistic than prosocial behaviors; however, Eisenberg et al., (1989) acknowledge the difficulty in assessing underlying motives. Therefore, there may be no way to discriminate between the two behaviors.

Most people are not completely altruistic or egoistic but lie somewhere inbetween so that egoism and altruism may exist in a person at the same time (Eisenberg et al., 1989; Hoffman, 1981). Also, acquiring or learning prosocial behavior does not mean the individual will act upon it. The knowledge one has about the norms of a society (the cultural expectations about how one should act) are thought to be acquired early in life through identification, imitation and learning. To act, one must first perceive the needs of others and interpret them. One must also feel competent to provide what is necessary, and the risk of helping must not be so great that it is prohibitive. Hoffman (1981) believes that the individual posesses a mechanism which may determine which is a more appropriate response, egoism or altruism. He thinks that if the benefit to the victim exceeds the cost to the individual, then

altruism may result. The benefit-cost ratio may increase, according to Hoffman, if there is a closer kinship between the observer and the victim. He bases this idea on the evolutionary aspects of individual and group survival.

Eisenberg and Miller (1987) reviewed the empirical research on the relationship of empathy to altruistic and prosocial behaviors. They concluded that in general, for adults, a variety of measures of empathy relate positively to the enactment of prosocial behaviors. The results for children were mixed and less consistent but did indicate that there was a relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior (Eisenberg, et al., 1989). Hoffman (1981) also cites numerous studies in which empathic distress is a motivator of helping behavior.

Hoffman (1982) connects empathy with prosocial and altruistic behaviors by proposing that empathic feelings of concern, sadness or distress for someone who is in need usually preceed helping behavior. Hoffman (1987) describes this link in the following way:

> The empathic affects and caring operate in the same direction--that is, toward considering the welfare of others. This link appears to be reflected in the empathic moral reasoning that often accompanies people's behavior when they encounter someone in distress. (p. 60)

Thus empathy involves an emotional response as well as the cognitive ability to take the role of another (Hoffman, 1984, 1987; Feshbach, 1978). According to Hoffman, the primary basis of the empathic experience is an emotional or affective response rather than reasoning or logic. The

observer has an empathic reaction to another's distress which produces one of two basic affects in the observer: empathic distress or sympathetic distress. Also, depending on the attributions or causes assigned to the source of the distress, additional affects may be experienced such as guilt, empathic anger, and empathic injustice. Hoffman (1987) characterizes these empathy based affects as "moral affects" that lead to caring and concern for a victim along with a conscious desire to help that victim.

Hoffman differentiates empathic distress from sympathetic distress in the following way. He suggests that empathic distress is the basic empathic affective response to the distress of another. Empathic distress transforms to sympathetic distress as children develop and become cognitively aware that others are separate or distinct from themselves. With empathic distress, the child wishes to terminate the victim's distress in order to terminate distress within him/her self. According to Hoffman, this response is not purely egoistic but is both egoistic and prosocial since one has to relieve another's distress in order to relieve one's own. Sympathetic distress, however, is prosocial. With sympathetic distress, the observer feels distress within him/herself and compassion for another, with a desire to relieve the victim's distress. This desire stems from feelings of concern for the victim, rather than the desire to relieve one's own distress. they feel sorry for the victim and not just to relieve their own distress.

When sympathetic distress is experienced, the observer responds to the distress of another without making any causal attributions about the victim's plight. The victim may be perceived to have no control over what is happening to them. In this case, the observer also feels as if they have no control over the source of the victim's distress.

In the case of empathic guilt, empathic anger, or empathic injustice, there are salient cues about the cause of the victim's distress; thus, some of the observer's attention may be diverted from the victim(s) to the culprit(s). With empathic guilt, the observer perceives him/herself to be the cause of the victim's distress. Empathic guilt may also arise if the observer perceives that by not intervening, the victim's distress will continue--i.e., guilt is due to inaction on the part of the observer.

If someone else causes the distress, the observer may experience empathic anger towards the culprit because one may feel sympathy for the victim or feel empathy because they feel attacked vicariously. For example, a child may tell his parent that other children at school were calling him/her names. This report may arouse the parent's empathic distress for the child as a victim as well as empathic anger towards the culprits. In order to alleviate the child's distress, protect the child and seek justice, the parent may be motivated to attempt a reversal of the situation. In the experience of empathic anger, the culprit may also be perceived as a group (e.g., society, an institution, etc.).

One may experience empathic injustice if they perceive a discrepancy between a person's character and their plight. For example, empathic injustice may be evoked if someone you view as basically a "good" person and a hard worker gets laid off from their job.

In summary, an empathic reaction to the distress of another produces two basic affects: sympathetic and/or empathic distress. Depending on the type of causal attributions one makes about the source of the distress, one may feel, in addition, empathic anger, guilt or empathic injustice. Thus, one may experience a complex combination of these empathic moral affects.

Hoffman (1975, 1982, 1984, 1987) has developed a theory that maps the growth and change of empathic distress during infancy and early childhood in which he emphasizes the affective and cognitive aspects of empathy as underlying altruistic behavior.

> The central idea of the theory...is that since a fully developed empathic reaction is an internal response to cues about the affective states of someone else, the empathic reaction must depend heavily on the the actor's cognitive sense of the other as distinct from himself which undergoes dramatic changes developmentally. The development of a sense of the other...interacts with the individual's early empathic responses to lay the basis for altruistic motivation. (Hoffman, 1975, p. 610).

According to Hoffman's (1982, 1984, 1987) theory, empathy-based responses--empathic distress in particular--are either consequences of biologically determined capacities or early classical conditioning experiences. Katz (1963)

also believes that a combination of biological and social factors contribute to an empathic experience with others. Katz stresses that the basis of empathy is a similarity with others, which is a combination of biological factors and social experience.

In the next section, I will discuss the development of the capacity for empathy. First I will present Katz's (1963) discussion of the biological factors which contribute to the development of the capacity for empathy. (The ideas presented by Plutchik (1987) regarding a biological basis for empathy and its role in survival have already been presented.) Then, I will discuss Hoffman's (1978, 1982, 1984, 1987) scheme for the development of empathy, since his model is relevant to prosocial and altruistic behaviors.

Development of the Capacity for Empathy

Biological Factors

Humans are similar to one another in that they share a commmon genetic unity or common life substance. Humans also evolved out of a common source and, according to Katz (1963), therefore possess an innate "primordial empathy" for one another. Furthermore, Katz alludes to the idea that humans may also experience a "primordial" similarity with all of nature:

> Once we were one....Before we existed as individuals, we were part of a larger whole. Even though we have achieved a measure of separateness or individuality, we still carry traces of our original genetic unity. If we are able to recognize the emotions of others, we are actually engaging in an act of 're-cognition.' We are recalling something that we once knew. An earlier

> sense of unity is reawakened so that we identify in others something that originally united others and ourselves. (pp. 64-65)

Katz also recognizes that humans share other things in common such as experiences, communication systems and basic emotional states. These resemblences, which are central to empathy, are derived from what was a common undifferentiated ego. Katz (1963) cites a passage from Freud (1961) to clarify his point:

> The ego feeling we are aware of now is thus only a shrunken vestige of a far more extensive feeling--a feeling which embraced the universe and expressed an inseparable connection of the ego with the external world. (p. 68)

From Katz' perspective, when we experience empathy, the original sense of identity or oneness is re-experienced, and we resonate kinaesthetically and psychologically with others. Despite the process of civilization, which he believes stresses a type of detachment, he alleges that we cannot eradicate this more primitive mentality in which individuals were not as aware of ego boundaries.

> When we feel into the other person, we become more conscious of an archaic and original unity and we recognize the ego that is common to both....Nothing in a human being can be truly alien to us. When we are stimulated by the experiences of others, we recollect the original experience as living parts of a whole....Such recollection may involve a regression beyond the uterine experience of the child back into the primitive stages in the evolution of the race. All psychological knowledge is therefore unitary. Men become forgetful and in regressive empathy they retrieve some of the lost knowledge of their own nature which is at the same time the nature of every other human being. (p. 66-67)

Apart from humans sharing common basic emotions, anatomical structures, commmunication systems and

experiences, Katz (1963) and others ((Adler, 1927; Ferenczi, 1955; Murphy, 1947) suggest that we are born with an innate capacity to imagine and apprehend the feelings of others. The basis of our similarity is that we all belong to a common humanity; however, imagination allows us to further place ourselves into the experiences of another when our own experiences or emotions are not an exact match (Katz, 1963) or when we have lost touch with that experience within ourselves. Such might be the case when an adult is trying to empathize with a child, even though the adult may have difficulty remembering his or her own similar childhood feelings and experiences.

Another aspect of empathy that Katz attributes to the innate capacities of the individual is the capacity to imitate. Katz thought that the capacity to imitate and play was more germane to empathy than was the secondary process of thinking. He believes that both lower and higher forms of life can engage in playful imitation--both imaginative and physical--in which they take on the behaviors of others and demonstrate a capacity for "as if" behavior.

Hoffman's Developmental Model of Empathic Distress

While cognitive processes are thought to play an important role in empathy, Hoffman's (1982, 1984, 1987) model of the development of empathy has affective rather than cognitive responses at its core. Central to Hoffman's model is empathic distress which he believes is the primary

motivator towards altruism and prosocial behavior. Empathic distress is an affective response to the distress of another.

In Hoffman's (1982, 1987) model, he identifies five different modes of empathic arousal or ways inn which empathy is evoked. The modes of arousal follow a developmental progression and are not to be thought of as stages in which one replaces the other. The five modes of affect arousal are:

1) The reactive newborn cry. Infants respond to distress signals in others with a distress reaction of their own. The infant may initially respond to the stimulus cry of another infant, unable to tell the difference between their cry and his or her own, but then may continue to cry with the feeling that the cry is indeed their own. The reactive cry is thought to be innate, a primary circular reaction, or to be associated with a memory of the infant's actual past experiences of distress (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985). The reactive cry can be thought of as a precursor of empathy; however, it is not a complete empathic response.

2) Mimicry or automatic imitation of others. The capacity to imitate may be innate (Hoffman, 1982). Infants are thought to be able to imitate the facial expressions of others and eventually the postures of others. These imitative movements may cause kinaesthetic cues that facilitate the child's understanding of the feeling state being generated by another.

3) Classical conditioning in which direct associations are

formed. This mode appears in later infancy when there are some perceptual discriminating abilities. For example, a mother may be tense while holding her infant which may cause the infant to become distressed. The distress cues from others become conditioned stimuli for a feeling of distress in the self. Because of the previously experienced association, the infant may begin to cry simply by viewing the mother's tense face, which accompanied the earlier distressing experience (Hoffman, 1982).

4) Symbolic Association. The fourth mode of empathic affect arousal involves language mediated associations of a higher cognitive level such as symbolic association. Arousal is elicited by symbolic cues of distress such as the description of an emotional event by another or by pictures that may evoke an emotional response.

5) Role taking. The fifth mode is a type of role taking which also requires higher cognitive processes. The child must be able to form a mental representation of him/herself in the situation of the victim. This mode is more deliberative than the others because it involves the cognitive act of imagining the experience of another person. Taking the role of another is thought to elicit associations with actual events in the child's past in which the same or a similar emotion was experienced (Goldstein et al., 1985).

The first mode of empathic arousal probably drops out after infancy because we are then more capable of controlling our crying, and the fifth mode may be

infrequently experienced by those other than parents or therapists (Hoffman, 1982). The other three modes may begin at various phases of development during infancy and childhood and operate throughout the lifetime. Which mode is in operation at any given time may depend on the types of cues that are present. For example, if expressive cues from another are present, then mimicry may be the mode experienced by the observer. Oftentimes, more than one type of cue is present which may mean that empathy is an overdetermined response in humans (Hoffman, 1982).

Along with the modes of affect arousal, Hoffman (1987) suggests that the development of empathy also corresponds to the child's cognitive development of a sense of others. How a person experiences empathy is dependent on how they cognize others. The cognitive sense of others goes through various changes and stages as the child develops. Drawing from several bodies of research that depict the development of a cognitive sense of others, Hoffman (1982) proposes the following four stages of development:

1) During the first year of life, there is a fusion of self and other in which there is lack of a clear separation.

2) At about 12 months, the infant develops object permanence or an awareness that others are physically distinct from the self.

3) At about the age of 2-3, the child has a beginning ability to take the perspective of another with a realization that others can have feelings and internal

states that are independent of the child's.

4) By late childhood or early adolescence, there is development of a personal identity in which others have a history and experiences that may be thought of as different from the child's and which go beyond the immediate situation.

Because of these cognitive changes, the affective component of empathy will be experienced differently in each stage. Hoffman (1987) then proposes that there are four developmental levels of empathic distress which are a coalescence of the empathic affect and cognitive development described above. Each level exemplifies a change in the way one empathizes with another person in distress. These levels of empathy are:

1) Global empathy. During the first year of life, before "person permanence" is acquired, distress signals from another may evoke a global empathic distress response. This response is termed "global" because there is thought to be a fusion of uncomfortable feelings from the infant's body, from the other person and from the situation. The infant is unable to differentiate clearly where the distress is coming from and may behave as if distressing experience of another is really their own.

> For example, a colleague's 11-month-old daughter who saw another child fall and cry responded as follows: She first stared at the victim, looking as though she were about to cry herself, and then put her thumb in her mouth and buried her head in her mother's lap, which is what she does when she hurts herself. (Hoffman, 1982, p. 287)

The second level of empathy is approached when the child begins to approach person permanence, or when they are aware of others as distinct physical entities.

2) "Egocentric" empathy. At this stage, from about age 1-2, the child is aware that self and other are distinct physical entities and can experience empathic distress with an awareness that someone other than him/herself is the victim. Children at this age, however, see the world only from their own perspective and may not realize that the feelings and traits of others are different from theirs and may confuse them with their own. Because of this, they may come up with inappropriate means of attempting to relieve the distress of another. Hoffman (1982) put quotes around egocentric because he did not think this term was entirely accurate since the child can respond with affect that is appropriate to the other's situation.

3) Empathy for the feelings of another. At about age 2-3, others are viewed as physically distinct and the child is more aware that the feelings of others may be different from their own. Also, the child may be aware that the perspective of another is based on the other's interpretation of events. Children at this age are more capable of role taking, so they are better able to take the place of another and discover the source of that person's distress. With the development of language, the child is also able to interpret symbolic cues of affect that go beyond physical and facial expressions.

4) Empathy for the experiences of another that go beyond the situation at hand. Up to the age of 6-7, children's empathy may be limited to an immediate situation-specific distress. As children mature, they are able to understand how people and conditions continue to exist beyond the present situation, and they are better able to react to more general conditions such as oppression, illness, etc. As an extension of this level, children may become better able to empathize with the plight of an entire group (i.e., homeless, mentally retarded, economically disadvantaged, etc.). According to Hoffman (1982), the perceived plight of an entire group, combined with empathic affect, according to Hoffman (1982) may be the most developmentally advanced expression of empathic distress. This form of empathy, adds Hoffman (1982), may provide the motivation for certain ideologies that begin to form in adolescence and may result in an attempt to alleviate the plight of less fortunate groups of people (Hoffman, 1982).

In summary, empathic distress, according to Hoffman's model, has an affective and a cognitive component. The cognitive component is derived from the observer's cognitive sense of another. How we perceive another is related to empathically aroused affect because it alters the quality of the observer's affective experience. As children develop a sense of others as separate from themselves, their own empathic distress--which is almost an exact replication of the victim's feelings of distress--can be partially

transformed into a reciprocal feeling of concern for that other person. Observers may feel highly distressed themselves, but they also experience empathic distress or a feeling of compassion which may generate a desire to help alleviate the victim's distress and not just a desire to relieve their own distress.

Thus, Hoffman underscores the importance of a cognitive sense of self that is separate from others as the developmental achievement that allows empathy to transform into a reciprocal concern for another. Similarly, Harold Searles (1960) stresses the importance of a differentiated and individuated self for mature relatedness to the human as well as nonhuman environment. A mature relatedness with the nonhuman realm, contends Searles, is one in which the person is able to relate to the environment "as it exists," free of distortions, projections and transference.

Based on Hoffman's theory, achieving stage four of empathic development--empathy for the experiences of another that go beyond the situation at hand--may be the level of empathy we need to experience in order to alleviate the present day distress of our natural environment which appears to be in rapid deterioration. At this level of empathy, the person is able to understand that conditions continue to exist beyond the present situation. Also, this level of empathy is thought to provide the motivation for certain ideologies that may then result in an attempt to alleviate the plight of less fortunate groups of people

(Hoffman, 1982) or, in this case, the natural environment.

Theories of development attempt to describe optimal development; therefore, what must be taken into consideration is that some people may not adequately progress through all phases or achieve a position of develomental maturity. Thus, some people may not have developed the capacity for mature empathy. According to Bergman and Wilson (1984), "The capacity for concern and mature empathy is possible only when self and other have been sufficiently separated for the self to be concerned with the other" (p. 73).

Hoffman (1982) acknowledges that there are other limitations for the consideration of empathy as a motivator of prosocial and altruistic behaviors. His theory does not explain how people achieve a balance between egoistic concerns and helping another. Also, empathic proclivities may make a person more receptive to certain values (i.e., the importance of helping and caring for others); however, empathy may only be one of many factors that explain how people formulate certain moral ideologies and apply them.

Hoffman's model is instructive about the development of empathy and empathic distress in particular. His model demonstrates how the experience of empathic or sympathetic distress can result in compassion and concern for another and can generate a desire to alleviate the victim's distress. Hoffman (1987) also describes other empathic related affects--empathic anger, empathic anger, guilt, and

empathic injustice--that can lead to caring and concern for a victim along with a conscious desire to help that victim.

The experience of these empathically aroused affects will be further elucidated in the next chapter in which I will demonstrate an empathic experience with nature. To demonstrate an empathic experience with nature, I will utilize Theodore Reik's model (Katz, 1963) of the phases of empathic understanding. While the emphasis of Hoffman's model is the development of empathy and empathically aroused affects, Reik's (1948) model is not developmental, but instead illustrates the full cycle of the phases of empathic understanding as it is occurring intrapsychically. Reik's model includes a "reverberation" phase, during which ones' affect is aroused as well as a phase of "identification." I will define the "reverberation" phase during which I will superimpose Hoffman's (1978, 1982, 1984, 1987) description of the empathically aroused affects as they apply to an affective reaction to the condition of nature.

I will also describe the "identification" phase during which I will reintroduce the deep ecology concept, "ecological self" in which the process of identification is extended beyond the human realm to include elements of the natural world. Identification with nature, or the development of an "ecological self," is a major contribution by the deep ecology movement and is considered an important step in order to reconnect with nature (Naess, 1988; Fox, 1990; Devall et al., 1988). Also, in the next and final

chapter, I will discuss the limitations of this study and my future recommendations for psychological theory, research and practice, which may be relevant to building a mature relationship with nature.

CHAPTER VI

EMPATHY WITH NATURE

Once We Were One

There is considerable evidence that humans and nature evolved out of a common life substance (Carson, 1961) and as a result, humans share physiological, biological, chemical and anatomical similarities with nature (Searles, 1960). Because of our commonality with nature, Katz (1963) suggests that a primitive resonance exists between humans and their surroundings which he calls "primordial empathy":

> Once we were one....We become more sympathetic to the principle of primordial empathy if we think of humanity as evolving out of a common source. Before we existed as individuals, we were part of a larger whole. Even though we have achieved a measure of separateness or individuality, we still carry traces of our original genetic unity...There are many ways of thinking about the unity of mankind. For the philosopher, it is an original moral unity; for the geneticist, a common life substance; for the social psychologist, a flow of experience before the dam of selfhood has been built; for the psychoanalyst, a common element that remains in the unconscious. (pp. 64-65)

Searles (1960) asserts that early (wo)man appeared to experience him/herself as more similar and thus more connected to nature. He describes that in ancient Greek mythology, (wo)man was portrayed as interchangeable with nature. He discusses several myths in which mankind was to have emerged or evolved from a "primordial animal state, or even an inorganic state" (p. 41). He cites a passage from a myth found in Edith Hamilton's book, Mythology, in which the gods created mankind from stone:

> 'Earth is the mother of all,' he told his wife. 'Her bones are the stones. These we may cast behind us without doing wrong.' So they did, and as the stones fell, they took human shape. They were called the Stone People, and they were a hard, enduring race, as was to be expected and, indeed, as they had need to be to rescue the earth from the desolation left by the flood. (p. 42)

Acknowledging our similarity or identification with nature is an important process in rebuilding our connection to nature (Naess, 1988; Devall et al., 1988; Fox, 1990). Katz (1963) believes that the similarity we experience with others is the basis for empathy; thus, the commonality we allow ourselves to experience with nature is an important part of experiencing empathy with nature. According to some writers, our ability to identify or experience a similarity with the natural world declined with the advent of a more modern civilization (Searles, 1960; Katz, 1963; Reik, 1948). And, as was discussed in the first chapter, there are certain cultural views that have developed that have also perpetuated our disconnection from nature.

Our Disconnection From Nature

Civilization and the Development of Psychological Boundaries

Reik (1948) asserts that we can temporarily transform ourselves to share the experience of other animate and inanimate beings as if these experiences were our own. However, Reik (1948) goes on to report that our ability to share in the experiences of animate and inanimate objects has changed with the advent of a more modern and civilized culture:

> The capacity to transform the ego easily and variously must have played an incomparably larger part in the early days of the human race than it does today. It is not for nothing that myths and fairy tales are full of such metamorphoses. With the disappearance of the animistic outlook and the mounting repression of instinct, civilization has caused this capacity, likewise, to shrink to a feeble residuum. (pp. 360-361)

According to Searles (1960), the evolution of (wo)man and the development of a more modern and complex civilization produced the need for a more differentiated self with boundaries that can filter out the potentially chaotic stimuli of the mileu. This, differentiation, he believes, is essential for healthy functioning. Others (Cobb, 1977; Katz, 1963) also suggest that civilization encourages detachment from nature and the development of boundaries between self and nature. This detachment from nature and can be witnessed as the child develops into adulthood. During childhood, children experience more freedom to utilize their senses (i.e., touch, taste, hearing, sight and smell) which allows them to be more involved with their environment. It is suggested that this capacity is more active in childhood and fades with adulthood (Katz, 1963; Cobb, 1977). For example, in his autobiography, Bernard Berenson (cited in Cobb, 1977) described a childhood experience of "oneness":

> As I look back on fully seventy years of awareness and recall the moments of greatest happiness, they were for the most part moments when I lost myself all but completely in some instant of perfect harmony....In childhood and boyhood this ectasy overtook me when I was happy out of doors. Was I five or six?...It was morning in early summer. A silver haze shimmered and trembled over the lime trees. The air was laden with

> their fragrance. The temperature was like a caress. I remember--I need not recall--that I climbed up a tree stump and felt suddenly immersed in Itness. I did not call it by that name. I had no need for words. It and I were one. (p. 32)

According to this hypothesis, as the child grows into adulthood, use of some of these senses (touch, taste and smell) is discouraged so that sight and hearing become preferred modes of experiencing the environment thus, producing further estrangement from the natural world.

The development of boundaries may be a necessary product of the evolution of a progressive, modern, complex culture; however, flexibility of these boundaries may be necessary for (wo)man to reconnect to nature. This ability to experience "plasticity" of boundaries was described by Cobb in the following way:

> It follows that plasticity of perceptual response in man is greater than that of any other animal species. This is especially true in childhood. This plasticity varies, however, from individual to individual, ranging from excessive malleability to rigidity. High-precision work of the intellect may be accompanied by rigidity of world view, narrowness of interest, and impoverishment of human relationships. Excessive plasticity and malleability of response can, on the other hand, become an 'embarras de richesses' and induce a loss of identity (a loss of boundaries between self and world).... (p. 63)

Even if we permit ourselves to experience flexibility in boundaries, allowing ourselves to experience a similarity and connection to nature, there are still cultural views about nature--also products of an advanced civilization--that render this connection exploitive and immature.

Civlization and the Development of an Immature Relationship With Nature

In the first chapter, it was suggested that our connection to nature has evolved into a relationship that is, for the most part, psychologically immature. Our position relative to nature is anthropocentric, egocentric and resembles childlike dependence. Because of our anthropocentrism, we view ourselves as the center of the universe, more important than nature; and we view nature's purpose as being to serve (wo)man. In our egocentrism, we do not take the needs of nature into consideration; and our actions relative to nature are primarily directed by individual needs and concerns. This lack of reciprocity in relationships, or this tendency to take but not to give in return, has been described by Fairbairn (1941/1952) as "immature dependence." In contrast, "mature dependence" or interdependence, involves the ability to respond to the needs of another with a shift from "taking to giving and exchange" Greenberg et al., 1983, p. 161). Thus, in our present relationship with nature, we are immature--depending on nature to serve our needs and failing to respond sensitively and adequately to the needs of nature.

Developing a Mature Relationship With Nature

For the sake of the survival of the planet, it seems of paramount importance for (wo)man to outgrow our anthropocentric, egocentric and childlike position and begin to treat nature in a more mature fashion, as another living

being. For example, the Native American Indians' relationship with nature was one in which the sense of connectedness went beyond the human realm to include a deep connection with all of existence, "...from Brother Bear to Sister Stone to Father Sky to Mother Earth" (Hartke cited in McGaa, 1990, p. xiv). In view of our present environmental crises in which nature is in such distress, it seems imperative that we develop a relationship with nature wherein we value it as a living being and base our actions on mature reciprocity and caring/concern for the needs of nature.

Two positions have been previously discussed which make suggestions about a mature relationship with nature: Harold Searles' theory of mature relatedness to the nonhuman environment and the deep ecology perspective. Harold Searles (1960) suggests, "In mature development, we simultaneously maintain our own sense of individuality as a human being, a knowing that, however close our kinship, on however multiple levels, to the nonhuman environment, we are not at one with it" (p. 102). He suggests that in our modern and advanced culture, ego boundaries are necessary to protect the ego from the higher levels of emotional stimulation that are produced in a modern, complex mileu. Thus, Searles suggests that mature relatedness is dependent on the ability to differentiate oneself from the nonhuman environment and relate to it as a separate "other." According to this perspective, viewing oneself as separate

from the elements of the nonhuman world allows one to experience the environment "as it exists," free of distortions, projections and transference; "to the cat as being a cat, and the tree as being a tree" (p. 19). Such a viewpoint implies the potential for valuing the elements of the nonhuman realm as entities unto themselves; however, Searles fails to further develop the other aspects of mature relatedness--i.e. "giving and exchange" (Fairbairn, 1941/1952)--that may be imperative for the salvation of ourselves and our planet.

The deep ecology perspective provides alternative ways to view our relationship with nature and makes suggestions about how to cultivate a more mature and healthy relationship with the natural environment. Deep ecology advocates that we begin to view ourselves more appropriately as part of an interdependent web of life in which each element of nature plays a vital role. The principles and norms of deep ecology reflect an ecocentric perspective in which humans and the other elements of nature have equal value; and each part of the intricate web of life is seen to be a necessary part of a diverse system of existence. It is important for the welfare of all existence that each element of nature--not just humans--has the opportunity to fluorish. Deep ecology calls us to look at our relationship with nature in a deep and philosophical manner and encourages us to reduce our exploitation of nature, responding to nature instead with respect, care and compassion.

Deep ecology proposes that the means to diminsh our separateness from and subsequent exploitation of nature is to develop an "ecological self" in which we identify with the elements of nature (Naess, 1988). The belief is that if an individual, through identification, develops an expansive sense of self or "ecological self" which includes identifications with nature, then he or she will naturally protect those aspects of the expansive self (i.e., the elements of nature). While deep ecology acknowledges that (wo)man must decrease their alienation from nature and begin to care for the needs of nature--the type of "giving and exchange" that has been suggested as part of mature relating--there is no substantiating evidence that identification is a sufficient process to engender the understanding, care and reciprocity advocated by deep ecology and suggested by psychology as components of mature interpersonal relationships.

An Empathic Experience of Nature as Mature Relatedness

While Searles suggests differentiation as a key element of mature relatedness to the nonhuman realm and deep ecology advocates for humans to identify with nature, neither process standing alone sufficiently defines a mature relationship to nature. It is the suggestion of this dissertation that empathy with nature is a more encompassing process, in which differentiation and identification play a role. In the experience of empathy, it is not just

the trial identification or similarity with an object that we experience (Katz, 1963) which leads to a prosocial act; the affect experienced by the observer and the cognitive sense of another as separate from oneself all interact in an empathic experience and are the basis for altruistic motivation (Hoffman, 1975). According to Hoffman's theory (1978, 1982, 1984, 1987), when we experience empathy, we react to the distress of another--in this case nature--which can lead us to a caring concern for the needs of nature and a desire to help. Thus, fostering empathy can result in a mature relationship with nature that involves the care and reciprocity that is so vitally needed.

Empathy which results in a desire to help is representative of interdependence or mature dependence because there is a tendency towards giving and/or responding to the needs of another. Interdependence is in contrast to childlike dependence, which is a position of "taking", and egocentrism in which there is little or no concern for the needs of others. Thus, mature empathy may diminish our anthropocentrism, egocentrism and childlike dependence on nature, reducing our tendency to exploit nature for our own purposes.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will illustrate an empathic experience with nature using Theodor Reik's model (1948) of empathic understanding. Reik's model describes the intrapsychic experience of empathy as it is occuring interpersonally. However, based on earlier definitions of

empathy or "Einfhulung," in which we experienced empathy with objects, and the norms and principles of deep ecology, which suggest that nature be valued equally with humans and be considered a living entity, it is assumed that limiting empathy solely to the interpersonal domain is inappropriate.

Before illustrating empathy with nature, I will discuss how an empathic response to nature may differ from empathy with humans. Many elements of nature do not have feelings to which we can react emotionally; however, we still may react to nature's experience or condition empathically.

Then, I will define each phase of Reik's empathic process--identification, introjection, reverberation and detachment--and will include examples from literature in order to enhance and deepen our understanding of an empathic experience with nature. Within the description of the phase of "identification," I will reintroduce the deep ecology concept of the "ecological self" (Naess, 1988); a concept that expands the range of potential identifications beyond the human realm to include the elements of nature. Also of relevance to this phase is Searles' discussion of how we are biologically, physiologically, anatomically and chemically similiar to nature, which enhances the potential for (wo)man to identify with nature.

Hoffman's (1982, 1984, 1987) empathically aroused affects--empathic/sympathetic distress, empathic anger, empathic injustice, guilt--will be reintroduced in the discussion of the "reverberation" phase, since this phase

describes the resonance of another's feelings and/or experiences with our own feelings and experiences. During the reverberation phase of the process, these empathy-based affects described by Hoffman (1982, 1984, 1987) may become aroused, leading to an experience of care for the victim--in this case nature--and a desire to help this victim. While all of these phases assume that one is sufficiently differentiated or separate enough to be concerned about another--a process deemed important for mature relating (Searles, 1960; Fairbairn, 1941/1952; Hoffman, 1978, 1982, 1984, 1987)--the idea of differentiation or separateness will be highlighted in the "detachment" phase. Finally, I will conclude with limitations in experiencing empathy with nature and make recommendations for psychological theory, research and practice which may be relevant to improving our relationship with nature.

Empathy With Animate and Inanimate Objects

Hoffman (1987) describes empathy as, "An affective response more appropriate to someone else's situation than one's own" (p. 48). An observer who experiences empathy has an affective reaction to the emotional state, experiences or condition of another person (Eisenberg, et al., 1987; Katz, 1963). An empathic experience with nature may be the result of an emotional reaction on the part of the observer to the perceived emotional state of an animal (such as distress) or to the experience or condition of an animate or inanimate object such as a mountain or a river. Lois Crisler (cited

in Anderson, 1991) described her observation of empathy by wolves for the distressed feelings and experiences of various dogs:

> [Wolves] feel concern for an animal in trouble even when they cannot do anything for it. A dog got his nose full of porcupine quills on our walk one day. All the way home the wolf Alatna hovered anxious-eyed around his face, whimpering when the dog cried in trying to tramp the quills out....A new dog was chained and crying. All night a wolf stayed near him, whimpering a little when he cried....A young dog wandered off, on our daily walk. The wolf with us ran to me, cried up to my face, then standing beside me looked searchingly around, call-howling again and again. When the dog sauntered into view the wolf bounded to him and kissed him, overjoyed. (p. 211)

Thus, our empathy for an animal may be elicited by the feelings or experiences of that animal; however, inanimate objects (i.e., rocks, mountains, trees, etc.) do not express feelings that can elicit our empathy. What can elicit our empathy for inanimate objects is the condition or experience of that object which then resonates with our own history of experiences and the feelings associated with those experiences. This means of evoking empathy was recognized by the field of aesthetics and the early psychology of sensation and perception as an experience of "Einfhulung," or empathy, in which one "feels himself into the object as if his own identity had disappeared and he had become the object himself" (Katz, 1963). Through this process of "inner imitation" or "feeling together with," one came to appreciate and understand a particular object of contemplation (Goldstein, et al., 1985, p. 4). An example of "feeling together with" an inanimate object might occur

during a hike in nature in which one stops by the side of a river and becomes immersed in contemplating the river. Your empathy could be aroused, for instance, if someone were to come along and throw trash in the river. Empathy for an inanimate object may also be experienced if one were to view a hearty, established tree being cut down in order to build an office building, a house or a parking lot.

An Empathic Experience Of Nature Based on Theodor Reik's Model

While Reik (1948) wrote about empathy in Listening With the Third Ear, it was Katz (1963) who extracted and delineated the phases of Reik's model as the following: identification, introjection, reverberation and detachment. These phases describe an intrapsychic experience of empathic understanding. The phases do not necessarily occur in the order described (Katz, 1963). The phases are also not discrete so that one or more phase may be occuring at the same time and the overall experience of these phases is considered to be empathic understanding. In the sections which follow, I will expand the concept of empathy to include nature by describing the intrapsychic processes involved in each phase and by providing illustrations from poetry and literature that elucidate how each phase may be experienced relative to nature.

Identification With Nature

According to Katz (1963), identification occurs through a relaxation of our conscious controls in which we allow ourselves to become absorbed in the contemplation of another person and their experiences and we lose consciousness of our self. We do not project our own attitudes off onto another; we project ourselves into another so that who that person is acts upon us: "In any case of empathic understanding...it is likely that we begin by feeling ourselves into others or coming to resemble them" (Katz, 1963). This process is similar to the original description of "Einfhulung" or empathy with an object in which the observer "feels themselves into an object, loses consciousness of himself, and experiences the object as if his own identity had disappeared and he had become the object himself" (Katz, 1963, p. 85).

Katz (1963) believes that the unconscious acknowledgement of our similiarity with others facilitates our ability to identify with others. According to Katz, the similarity we experience with others is the basis for empathy. While Katz limits his discussion of similarity primarily to the human realm, Searles (1960) and others (Carson, 1961; Naess, 1988) recognize the strong similarity or "kinship" we experience with nature at the biological, physiological, anatomical and chemical levels. Thus, this common life substance and similarity of structure and function allows us to experience "trial identifications"

with nature.

Modern (wo)man of Western culture apparently experiences a diminised capacity to identify with nature and to view ourselves as similiar to nature. Deep ecology is advocating that we rebuild our lost connection with nature by developing an "ecological self," a self that extends its range of identifications beyond the human realm to include an identification with the elements of nature (Naess, 1988). By allowing ourselves the experience of our commonality with nature, we may begin to see, as was experienced in more primal times, a fundamental "oneness" to all of life (Fox, 1990). Therefore, identification with nature constitutes an important building block for an empathic experience of nature.

Even though Western culture and psychological theory do not foster an identification with nature, art, poetry and literature are rich with images, sybmols and metaphors which compare or identify human qualities with elements of the natural world (Searles, 1960). Paul Klee (cited in Cobb, 1977), a 20th century artist, used the metaphor of a tree to describe the artist's orientation in the world:

> The artist has busied himself with this world of many forms and, let us assume, he has in some measure got his bearings in it; quietly, all by himself. He is so clearly oriented that he orders the flux of phenomena and experiences. I shall liken this orientation, in the things of nature and of life, this complicated order, to the roots of the tree....From the roots the sap rises up into the artist, flows through him and his eyes. He is the trunk of the tree....And yet all he does in his appointed place in the tree trunk is to gather what rises from the depths and pass it on. He

> neither serves nor commands, but only acts as a go-between. His position is humble. He himself is not the beauty of the crown; it has merely passed through him. (p. 36)

The author Gretel Ehrlich (cited in Anderson, 1991) also used the tree as a metaphor to describe our similarity with nature:

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> A tree is an aerial garden, a botanical migration from the sea, from those earliest plants, the seaweeds; it is a purchase on crumbled rock, on ground. The human, standing, is only a different upsweep and articulation of cells. How treelike we are, how human the tree. (p. 113)

The phase of introjection, the next phase of Reik's empathic understanding to be discussed, is a process related to identification and, along with the other phases, gives us a complete picture of an empathic experience of nature.

Introjection of Nature

The process of introjection was described by Freud (cited in Katz, 1963) as a component of identification. According to Freud (cited in Katz, 1963), the process of identification includes the elements of introjection, imitation and regression and calls upon the senses, emotions and imagination. In infancy, the child attempts to physically incorporate objects through swallowing but later learns to incorporate objects through psychological introjection. The child introjects and then imitates what he has introjected in order to take posession of another person or object and then resemble them. The following description exemplifies the process of introjection (Katz

uses incorporation and introjection interchangeably) and identification:

> The child feels inadequate and helpless and finds in the father [or mother] figure a model of strength and authority. To overcome his own weakness, the child incorporates the strength of the father or imitates his features. He puts himself into his father's situation and unconsciously assumes his strength. (Katz, 1963, pp. 72-73).

Introjection is the act of taking another person's experience into ourselves (Chaplin, 1982; Katz, 1963). Through identification, we project ourself into another; through introjection, we introject another person into ourself. Both of these phases help us to sense the reality of the experience of another. Katz (1963) acknowledges the semantic difficulties of these two terms--identification and introjection/incorporation--not to mention the problem of attempting to explain these processes in a logical and rational manner. However, he does suggest that these problems should not make us overlook the role of these two phases which is to facilitate a connection between subject and object. The dual processes of identification and introjection relative to nature are apparent in the following poem by Walt Whitman (cited in Untermeyer, 1949):

> There was a child went forth every day.
> And the first object he looked 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 the grass and the 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.

(p. 346)

According to Reik (1948), for introjection to occur, there needs to be an openness and willingness to take the object into the ego. For instance, if you want to know how an unknown food tastes, you must be willing to try a mouthful. Thus, it seems, our ability to empathize with nature is dependent on a willingness or desire to allow nature to become a part of us. Therefore, the ability to empathize may be related to the ability to maintain flexible versus rigid or no boundaries (Cobb, 1977; Searles, 1960). In our present culture, the mileu has become so complex and stimulating that boundaries allow a level of functioning that may not be possible if one was constantly being bombarded by various stimuli. Letting down a boundary to the self is like opening a door to your house, allowing whatever is outside the door to enter. Maintaining flexible boundaries, as opposed to rigid or no boundaries, means being able to open and close the door to your house at will, thus allowing whatever one chooses to enter. Thus, flexible boundaries relative to an experience of nature and the ability to not lose one's identity in nature, but instead make a "trial identification" (Katz, 1963), may be prerequisite to an experience of mature empathy with nature.

Reverberation With Nature

That which we have taken into ourselves now resonates with part of our own experiences and feelings, thus

awakening a new appreciation (Reik, 1948; Katz, 1963). There is an interplay between these two sets of experiences. It is during this phase that our affect is aroused. According to Hoffman (1982, 1984, 1987), the primary basis of an empathic experience is an emotional response. Based on Hoffman's theory, a feeling of concern, sadness or distress for someone who is in need precedes prosocial or helping behavior. The four empathy-based affects--empathic/sympathetic distress, empathic anger, empathic guilt and empathic injustice--that Hoffman (1987) characterized as "moral" affects which lead to a caring concern for a victim and a conscious desire to help that victim were defined in the previous chapter on empathy. In the descriptions which follow, I will provide examples of the distressed condition of nature that may arouse these empathically based affects.

In the following excerpt of one of her poems, Adrienne Rich (cited in Anderson, 1991), a feminist poet, captures the process of identification with nature and her empathic/sympathetic distress with nature's condition:

> The problem, unstated till now, is how
> to live in a damaged body
> in a world where pain is meant to be gagged
> uncured, ungrieved over. The problem is
> to connect, without hysteria, the pain
> of any one's body with the pain of the body's world.
> For it is the body's world
> they are trying to destroy forever....(p. 319)

Naess (cited in Fox, 1990) describes how an identification and reverberation with nature can lead to positive or distressed feelings on the observer's part:

> My concern here is the human capability of identification, the human joy in the identification with {for example} the salmon on its way to its spawning grounds, and the sorrow felt upon the thoughtless reduction of the access to such important places....(p. 231)

Perhaps, in this example, our empathic/sympathetic distress, empathic anger and even empathic guilt may be aroused in such an empathic experience. If we were to become angry, for example, with the industrial plant which dumps chemicals in the river or experience guilt for buying the products the plant produces, we might respond with care and concern and a desire to help discover the causes and solutions for the salmon's plight.

Rachel Carson (cited in Anderson, 1991) also provides an example of an experience of empathic/sympathetic distress, empathic anger and empathic guilt. She describes an environmental tragedy which occured as a result of the destruction, in certain parts of the West, of the naturally growing sagebrush, a plant that provides an important ecological function. The sagebrush was eradicated in order to plant non-native grasses for the grazing of cattle.

> But even if the program succeeds in its immediate objective, it is clear that the whole closely knit fabric of life has been ripped apart. The antelope and grouse will disappear along with the sage. The deer will suffer, too, and the land will be poorer for the destruction of the wild things that belong to it. Even the livestock which are the intended beneficiaries will suffer; no amount of lush green grass in summer can help the sheep starving in winter storms for lack of the sage and bitterbrush and other wild vegetation of the plains. (p. 294)

Just as we may experience empathic/sympathetic distress for

the poor that go hungry, may we not also experience these same feelings for the plight of the antelope, grouse, deer and sheep? We may feel angry at the cattle ranchers and beef industry for destroying natural habitats in order to produce more beef. Our craving for beef may result in increased cultivation of cattle; thus, becoming aware of the destruction of habitat for the cultivation of beef may arouse our empathic guilt.

Dorothy Richards and Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci (cited in Anderson, 1991) give a clear example of an experience of empathic anger at humans who hunt beavers, and empathic injustice for the plight of beavers:

> If it were not for one persistent sadness, Beaversprite would be heaven. A beaver trapping season is opened each year, and as soon as it is over I have to say goodbye to those [beavers] who have been with me for two years. If they could stay within the bounds of the Beaversprite sanctuary they might have a chance to live normal and long lives....As I write, the current trapping season is still open, and ads in local papers offer thirty-four dollars for a beaver pelt, for the life of a beautiful intelligent creature who benefits the world and could teach human beings a great deal about gentleness, thrift, and morals in general. Beavers'enemies now consist entirely of two species--man and dogs. (p. 353)

Deep ecology recognizes that (wo)man has complex needs and that we will always modify the earth in order to satisfy these needs. However, deep ecology suggests that "...we should live with minimum rather than maximum impact on other species and on the Earth in general" (Devall et al., 1988, p. 68). This guiding principle, along with our emotional reaction to the distress of nature as experienced in the above examples, can motivate us to take action to curtail

our present exploitation of nature.

Detachment From Nature

In the experience of mature empathy, there is a paradoxical process occuring in which we are able to identify with another while we experience our own separate identity (Reik, 1948; Katz, 1963). While we have vast physiological, anatomical and chemical similarities with nature, in mature development, (wo)man is still differentiated from nature (Searles, 1960). Having a separate identity implies an ability to remove oneself from an experience and become detached, thus more capable of reason and scrutiny. It is during this "detachment" phase of empathy that we withdraw from the subjective involvement and are thus able to use reason and scrutiny about our empathic involvement (Katz, 1963; Reik, 1948).

Taking action to remediate another's distress may follow empathic affects. Overinvolvement or lack of differentiation from the other may lead to inappropriate impulsive attempts to rescue the victim or punish the perceived culprit. For example, a parent may be overly enmeshed with a child and have an empathic response to the distress the child is experiencing in a particular situation. As a result, the parent may try to alleviate the child's distress by controlling or changing the situation rather than empowering the child to change the situation. What seems to be important is an understanding of the

child's needs; does the child need to just feel better, or does the child need to be supported by the parent to try a response on their own? Thus, with nature, if we attempt to remedy all the ills of nature in a superficial manner because our distress, and the distress of nature is so great, then we may circumvent the real needs of nature, or fail to determine what can be done to empower nature. This decision-making calls for a certain amount of detachment, reason and scrutiny and an understanding of the needs of nature. For example, if we found a way to clean up oil spills that proves to be adequate, removing the immediate symptoms, we might lose our ability to react to the tragedy of any future oil spills and thus foster continued estrangement from our environment. Oil spills may become "no big deal."

As one of the deep ecology principles advocates, because of our greater ability to manipulate the environment, we have a greater potential for power than the vast majority of nature (except for such things as earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.). This power should not mean power over nature, but should translate into a greater responsibility for the well-being of the earth--a greater responsibility than that of any other species. Just as we need to be aware of the needs of others in mature development, we must also increase our knowledge about the needs of nature. This awareness can happen, in part, through environmental education which emphasizes the

interdependence of all life forms and a realization of the functions and needs of the elements of nature.

Limitations of the Study

Cultivating empathy with nature is not a panacea for our environmental crises. In fact, there may be several limitations in the indivdual and the culture which interfere with an empathic experience of nature. As was previously mentioned, in the chapter on empathy, the development of mature empathy is dependent on the development of a cognitive sense of others as separate from oneself. Because this is an optimal developmental goal, it is assumed that some people have not had the optimal developmental experiences to allow them to attain such a level of development. Therfore, empathy for some may be impaired or non-esixtent.

Empathy for nature which results in helping nature may also require personal sacrifices; a reduction in what deep ecology calls "false needs," and a change in the way we go about our daily lives (i.e., carpooling, recycling, finding alternatives to pesticides, decreasing land development, etc.,). Thus, even those who are capable of mature empathy may chose not to experience empathy with nature because doing so could drastically alter the way they live their lives.

And, culturally, we live in a society that values capitalistic endeavors. Thus when making money comes into

conflict with empathy for the environment, profit motives may win. Also, government policy, which is strongly influenced by capitalistic values, may be unempathic to nature's condition and may continue to sanction further exploitation of nature's resources.

Future Recommendations

Searles wrote in 1960 that psychology and psychiatry failed to acknowledge the importance of the nonhuman environment for human development. Thirty years later, psychology still fails to adequately address the importance of the nonhuman environment for human development and rarely acknowledges the fact that a relationship between (wo)man and nature does exist. In light of our current ecological crises and the abundance of information, including the work of the deep ecologists, which clearly indicates that (wo)man is part of an interconnected and interdependent web of life, it seems imperative that psychology begin to adequately address (wo)man's connection to nature in a way that fosters development that is healthy for the individual, society and nature. Psychology's inattention to (wo)man's relationship with nature perpetuates an anthropocentric view and does nothing to improve our immature way of relating to nature.

Psychology needs to recognize our interconnectedness with nature through the further development of theory which considers an ecological or systemic framework rather than an individual framework. We do not exist apart from nature, and the longer we perpetuate such a view, the less

psychology contributes to the continued healthy existence of our planet and therefore the individual. Perpetuation of an individual view fails to recognize the fact that when we poison the soil, we poison ourselves (Seed, et al., 1988).

Psychology must continue to learn from other disciplines and cultures (i.e., deep ecology, Native American Indians, etc.) about our relationship to nature. Additionally, since psychology and psychiatry are the "experts" on the qualities of mature interpersonal relationships, the integration of our knowledge about healthy, mature interpersonal relationships with the knowledge from these disciplines and cultures about our relationship with nature can only improve our understanding about our relationship with nature. Such an integration allows future theories to be developed that will give us a blueprint for the cultivation of healthy interconnected and interdependent functioning--a way of functioning that has been lost with the advent of a complex, modern, civilized culture.

The demonstration of empathy with nature presented in this dissertation has been one such attempt to encourage mature relating to the environment that is healthy for the individual as well as nature. This attempt, however, is merely another seed that has been planted, a seed that must be watered by psychology and other disciplines in order for it to grow. Searles' suggestion that psychology and psychiatry acknowledge the importance of (wo)man's

relationship to nature has remained virtually ignored by these fields for 30 years. If we wait another 30, we will have missed vital opportunities to contribute timely solutions to the salvation of our planet and therefore ourselves.

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