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NATURAL STRENGTHS AND ECOLOGICAL
ALIENATION, CONSIDERATIONS FOR FAMILY PRACTICE:
LINKING ECO-SPIRITUAL HELPING AND
SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY

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Abstract

Modernity has alienated humans from the rest of the natural world. Violence toward nature and other living beings is a symptom of this alienation. Current therapeutic regimens have arisen out of the current worldview, and most models fragment the whole person, focusing on the human mind and its superiority over the balance of nature. This article proposes an alternative therapeutic model for expanding human consciousness of and creating reconnection with, the natural world: Eco-Spiritual Helping. Historical roots of the model are presented along with its basic principles. A composite case example illustrates how Eco-Spiritual Helping may utilize Solution Focused Brief Intervention in order to operationalize the core principles of Eco-Spiritual Helping. The article concludes with an appeal for mental health professionals to aid in the reconnection of humans with the natural world.

Alternative Strategies for Change:

Eco-Spiritual Helping and Solution Focused Brief Intervention

Mental health perspectives consider the client possessing internal and external resources that practitioners may mobilize in the helping process (Cowger, 1994; De Jong & Miller, 1995; Poulin, 2000; Saleebey, 1996, 1997, 2000). Ecological models of practice and the new prominence accorded spiritually diverse practice are yielding integrative perspectives for fostering client change while assisting society's transformation to principles of justice and ecological sustainability (Bullis, 1996; Canda, 1998, Canda & Furman, 1999; Dudley & Helfgott, 1990; Gottlieb, 1999; Hoff, 1998; Russel, 1998; Sheridan, 1999).

A recent stratagem, building on this new emphasis, is the work to link direct practice with spirituality, justice and a deeper ecological awareness (Bartlett, 2000; Besthorn, 1997; 2000a, 2000b, 2001a; Besthorn and Canda, 2002; Coates, 1999, 2000; Moules, 2000). This effort makes mental health practice more effective by demonstrating the connection between personal change and a range of justice-based orientations. Recent professional initiatives, (Global Alliance for a Deep Ecological Social Work, 2001; Social Work Mandela, 2002) identifies the natural world as critical to the biological, psychological, social and spiritual well-being of all human and non-human species. They

stress that humans, particularly those of the modern, western socioeconomic tradition, have wreaked havoc on the world to the lasting harm of eco-systems and disadvantaged groups everywhere. Deep ecological mental health practice is not simply about asking practitioners to be more sensitive to environmental issues. Rather, it invites direct service workers to an earth conscious, anti-oppressive ecological awareness rooted in a full reclamation of humanity's ancient relationship with the natural world. It offers a distinctive vantage point and greater depth of content from which to view human potential in a changing global context, especially in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks.

Eco-Spiritual Helping (ESH) and Solution Focused Brief Intervention (SFBI) are two direct practice models which help practitioners realize a deep ecological awareness that builds on the full spectrum of client resources for healing and social transformation (Besthorn, 2002a, 2002b; Besthorn & McMillen, 2002; Besthorn & Tegtmeier, 1999; de Shazer, 1988; Macy & Brown, 1998; Moules, 2000; Robbins, Chatterjee & Canda, 1998). ESH is a multidimensional ensemble of change constructs cultivated and sustained in healthy interaction with nature. Its central recognition is the ongoing ecological alienation of individuals and societies from their ancient moorings to their natural place on earth (Berry, 1988; Clinebell, 1996; Fox, 2001; Howard, 1996; Kahn, 1999; Wilson, 1984). ESH focuses on the complete mind/body/spirit relationship matrix of helping rather than problems associated with internal pathology (Metzner, 1999).

Solution Focused Brief Intervention (SFBI) shares similar assumptions. It

compliments and operationalizes ESH by providing specific, solution focused questions and technique as creative and alternative opportunities for transformation rather than corrective tools of social control for reestablishing of some degree of normalcy. The linkage of ESH and SFBI enables the practitioner to be present with the client by creating sacred places for discovery in lieu of diagnosing that which is purportedly diseased or abnormal. The practitioner utilizes the client's total ecology (Walter & Peller, 1992).

This article extends conventional ecological models, broadens our helping narratives and has applications to mental health education, direct practice and social justice. It can assist curriculum development by helping educators provide students with greater depth of content in preparation for their work with clients. Its contribution rests in providing conceptual insight for combining central premises of ESH and SFBT and assessing the long-range implications of incorporating these in mental health practice.

Care, Helping and Nature in Pre-History

Eco-Spiritual Helping (ESH), broadly defined, is a multifaceted grouping of healing constructs and practices cultivated and nurtured in healthy interaction with nature. The central theme of ESH is the necessity of addressing modern humanity's ecological alienation from their primordial moorings to the natural world. An individual's growth and transformative potential in larger system structures is strengthened through engagement with the restorative capacity of nature.

Eco-Spiritual Helping has deep and ancient roots in socio-cultural traditions from

around the world. A growing body of research confirms that prehistoric societies utilized ritual practices of collective and individual healing which fully utilized the life-giving and sustaining capacities of nature (Diamond, 1987; Johnson & Sandage, 1999; Moules, 2000; Oelschlaeger, 1991). Indigenous cultures, even to this day, maintain initiation rituals (for example, vision quests and medicine man initiations) which appear in western minds to be designed to terrorize the initiate, but in fact are a way of connecting the initiate to a greater whole beyond the self (Benedict, 1923; Dugan, 1985; Elkin, 1994). The natural world was instinctively recognized as the perennial life force energizing all endeavors. Nature was not an abstraction or philosophical premise upon which a whole host of propositional statements of rational belief were created. All of nature was alive and could be known through experience. It is in its essence relational. Nature was in our bones, our cells and in our dreams because ancients knew and traditional indigenous cultures know yet today that, in the solemn moments of their phenomenological awareness, humans are nothing but the stuff of nature. As Chard (1994, p. 19) notes, “all our parts, including our brains and consciousness, are crafted from the raw materials of the Earth”.

As illustrated by Table 1, early cultures shared intuitive awareness of the unique connection between humans and all natural or organic processes. This connection included everything that exists from soil to sun and beyond, the magna mater (Oelschlaeger, 1991). These organic ways of viewing the self in relationship to the rest of the earth ordered the lives of pre-enlightenment peoples. They were imbued with deep spiritual significance

which was revealed in the visible world around them. It was a spirituality of intimate relationship with place, land, animals and the rhythmic cycle of the seasons. Through ritual, one dies to the illusion of self disconnected from the whole:

At the end of the ritual journey, with its trial, loneliness, “death,” revelations, and rejoicing, he can say: ‘Whereas previously I was blind to the significance of the seasons, of natural species, of heavenly bodies, and of man himself, now I begin to see; and whereas before I did not understand the secret of life, now I begin to know.’ (Elkin, 1994, pp. 3-4)

The earth consciousness of early cultures determined their values and provided the context for their sense of collective identity. Earth provided medicinal and nutritive resources for both physical survival and emotional well-being as well as inspiration for individual and collective action. Merchant (1992), for example, observes that the analogy of earth as a nurturing, sustaining and benevolent mother permeated many early societies through the Renaissance period. This earth/mother metaphor prescribed acceptable and unacceptable action because one does not readily slay a mother, dig into her entrails for gold, or mutilate her body. As long as the earth was conceptualized as alive and sensitive, it could be considered a breach of human ethical behavior to carry out destructive acts against it (p. 43).

With the beginning of the early industrial period, views of ancient, earth-based culture tended to reflect the anthropocentric and enthusiastic, techno-utopian dreams of the time. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century attitudes quite erroneously envisioned early peoples as wanting desperately to escape their primitive wilderness wandering and monotonous lifestyle. They clearly must have hoped for a more civilized, technological, economic, progress oriented and self-actualized existence that the industrial period was now about to usher in. This view of peoples being very different or of indigenous cultures as primitive underlies western society's current views, even as expressed in the popular language of third and fourth world cultures.

The modern industrial mind finds it difficult to imagine a form of existence or definition of human-beingness, except her own. From this vantage point, prehistory is little more than quaint anecdotes of debased barbarians living lives that were nasty, brutish, and short (Oelschlaeger, 1991). This view represents a subtle, collective histio-centrism that fails to conceive of a positive alternative framework to explain ancient realities because modern culture is so bound up with its current perspective. It also marginalizes current struggles of Aboriginal and Indigenous groups to keep alive their holistic approach to the interrelatedness of all things and to protect their sacred lands from the ravages of industrial development carried out by rapacious, transnational, corporate conglomerates (Kinsley, 1995; Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992).

Early psychology and psychotherapy entered onto the world's epistemological stage

at about the same moment that early industrial culture was feeling most flushed with its potential and place in the hierarchical ordering of the universe. Collective care had diminished, personal rights was the new mantra, and helping became individualized, resting primarily on a secularized view of an isolated me nested within the confines of the physical skin and direct consequential behavior. As Hillman (1995, p. xvii) notes “the subject was simply me in my body and in my relationship with other subjects”. Transcendence was replaced with immediacy, spirit with ego and outward relationship with inward familiarity.

Early modern psychology and psychotherapeutic regimens did little to challenge the prevailing idea that ancient peoples were primitive because of their nature inspired ethos of communal life, mutual helping, and inspirited animism (Gross, 1978; Hillman & Ventura, 1992; Roszak, 1995). These views still go largely unchallenged in most sectors of modern life and in most psychotherapeutic protocols (Chriss, 1999; Metzner, 1999; Moules, 2000). Modern society tends to presume that dominant psychotherapeutic ideas of self-contained egos and cultural icons of fast paced, competitive, consumer-oriented civilization have triumphed (Durning, 1995). Most current models of helping continue to reinforce the prevailing value structure that encourages us to think of ourselves as exquisitely rational, primarily independent and therefore ultimately superior, because we have achieved a scientific understanding of the world, subdued nature through technology, and abandoned our mythological beliefs and collective practices (Oelschlaeger, 1991). Riane Eisler (1987) and more recent scholarship (Capra, 1996; Griffin, 1995, Macy & Brown, 1998; Merchant,

1990; Wink, 1992) suggests that the current “western” cultural crisis of identity and world-wide struggle for a more equitable social transformation have been a part of the western ontological and epistemological counter tradition since at least World War I.

Principles of Eco-Spiritual Helping

One of the effects of the modern industrial, techno-scientific worldview is the constriction and elimination of language to communicate views of reality inconsistent with the dominant worldview. This article seeks to address this deficit by creating a new phrase to explicate an interventive framework introduced in this article: Eco-Spiritual Helping (ESH). ESH is not a single therapeutic technique. It includes concepts, methods, and skills and is fundamentally a meta-narrative that speaks to the reclamation of relationship--the right to acknowledge and live out of connection, meaning and community. ESH has its modern roots in the environmental psychology and eco-psychology movements of the 1970s and late 1980s (Clinebell, 1996; Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Metzger, 1999; Roszak, Gomes & Kanner, 1995) but, as we've suggested, shares resonance with ancient cultures and healing practices.

It is sometimes referred to in terms such as earth-centered therapy, green therapy, global therapy, green psychology, psycho-ecology, transpersonal ecology, ecotherapy, ecological psychology and other, less formal, vernacular too numerous to catalogue. Our preference for the use of Eco-Spiritual is an acknowledgment that this new revision of

ancient models of helping have two focal elements: ecology and spirituality. We use Helping because as social workers we believe that psychotherapy, psychotherapeutic and psychology have come to have denotative meanings, which have almost exclusively associate them with micro level intervention. Helping, on the other hand, implies a much broader spectrum of interventive strategies aimed at every level of system, from individual change to global transformation. While much recent work in the human services is emerging emphasizing ecology, and/or earth awareness and their relationship to human well-being (Besthorn, 2000b, 2001a, 2002a, 2002b; Coates, In Press); there is less spotlight on the role spirituality plays in the way humans understand and experience their relationship with the natural world.

There is currently a renaissance to the integration of spirituality into practice (Bullis, 1996; Canda & Furman, 1999; Canda & Smith, 2001; Sheridan, 1999; Sheridan & von Hement, 1999) but there have been only very recent efforts to conceptually link spirituality and ecology and then to integrate that construct into the helping enterprise (Besthorn, 2000a; Besthorn, 2001a). ESH builds on the best traditions of past and present models of practice to help create alternative strategies for change. It is, arguably, a part of one of those oft- occurring cultural reassessments, spoken of by Eisler, to revisit or reclaim a long misplaced capacity for connection, relationship and wholeness.

Eco-Spiritual Helping has three primary operational principles. The first is to facilitate healing of individual alienation from the earth by enhancing openness to being

nurtured by nature in a manner that is both intentional and frequent (Clinebell, 1996; Cohen, 1997; Macy & Brown, 1998). This is plainly a micro focus but the center of attention is not simply isolated ego. Rather, the intent is to assist the whole person in developing an ongoing, outward, loving and respectful relationship with the natural world. In the process of helping people to allow nurturing by nature it often becomes necessary to challenge normative assumptions regarding human relationships with the natural world and with other persons. Howard (1997) calls some of these assumptions toxic beliefs or killer thoughts. Table 2 lists some the toxic thoughts comprising current normative assumptions of the dominant world view. Unacknowledged and unchecked they destroy human capacity for compassionate action toward nature and dilute the ability to receive munificent expressions from nature. Ultimately, these toxic thoughts lead to personal deadness toward nature and its ways and to the earth's ultimate biospheric destruction.

Central to the first principle of ESH is the view that it is not the earth which needs saving, but humankind (Devereux, 1996). As Devereux (1996) reminds us, if certain cultures and socio-economic systems make the earth uninhabitable for humankind, the earth will live on and have millennia to heal:

The truth, surely, is that what we may ultimately come to do is to destroy the particular type of planetary environment that sustains us and life as we know it. If that happens, then, of course, our species would die off (alas, taking many other species with it): *in the grim, final analysis, the problem*

would be self-correcting. The Earth can be a stem as well as a bountiful mother, and were we to disappear she would have the ages that belong to her in which to restore herself before giving birth to other orders of life. Earth's song will go on whether or not we are a part of it. (p. 16) (italics in original)

A second principle of Eco-Spiritual Helping is to enable clients to become more aware of the spiritual or transpersonal dimension of their experience with the natural world. ESH recognizes that humans share a common spiritual and sensual destiny with the earth (Besthorn, 2000a; Clinebell, 1996; Metzner, 1999; Walsh-Bowers, 2000). Spirituality is inherently ecological and ecology is inherently spiritual. This spirituality acknowledges that humans belong to a constantly emerging cosmic/spiritual process. Humans emerge from, are dependent upon, and shall return to, an underlying energy or divine presence pervading all reality. Nothing exists outside of this relationship cycle. Humans are embedded in a cosmic/spiritual web that is shared with a host of mutually interdependent beings, human and nonhuman. Although, much of the dominant western worldview, both secular and religious, regards human beings as the pinnacle of the created order, Eco-Spiritual Helping assumes the potentiality for individuals and collectives to advance beyond this anthropocentric or human centered orientation to reality.

The third principle of Eco-Spiritual Helping is to assist clients in adopting more earth- caring lifestyle and belief patterns that focus on contributing to an ecologically and

socially just and sustainable society. This macro dimension of ESH implies an interconnected association between awakening people to the ecological, political and economic contributors to their personal or familial pain. ESH assists clients to recognize that social injustices and ecological injustice are interwoven in a dynamic interplay of mutual involvement. Poverty is seen not only as personal anomie in the lives of the poor or in the lack of financial assistance and social support infrastructure but also in polluted water supplies, poisoned air, and unhealthy living quarters. The most vulnerable targets of violence and exploitation are nature as well as children, the poor, women, and the disabled for all are defined as being less desirable and less powerful. Issues of environmental degradation and concerns for ecological/spiritual consciousness cannot be separated from those systemic forces which function to maintain all forms of injustice, whether toward nature or other human beings. The strong social and ecological justice component of ESH is premised upon the deep interrelationship that exists between all phenomena. Struggles against oppressive, systemic forces that denigrate nature are intertwined with struggles against all forces that also oppress humans.

The foregoing principles of Eco-Spiritual Helping act as a framework for assisting clients in deepening their sense of relationship with nature, with themselves and with those around them. ESH may utilize a variety of techniques and skills to facilitate healing and growth in the principle areas just identified. One interventive model which may prove to be particularly suited for ESH is Solution Focused Brief Intervention.

Principles of Solution Focused Brief Intervention

Solution Focused Brief Intervention (SFBI) arose out of an attempt to identify what therapeutic conditions were necessary for client change to occur (Walter & Peller, 1992).

As Walter and Peller (1992) state, a therapist's theoretical framework can be categorized by what meta-question is being asked in the helping relationship. Early psychological theories (for example, Freudian theory) asked the question what is the cause of the problem? Later theories (for example, Minuchin's Structural Model) focus on what maintains the problem? SFBI again changed the focus to a third question, identified by Walter and Peller (1992) as how do we construct solutions?

Those familiar with SFBI recognize that years can be spent searching for a "cause" of the problem, or dissecting the patterns of problem maintenance, neither which may result in movement toward the client beginning to heal the pain being experienced. The clinicians developing SFBI became increasingly aware that effective therapeutic interventions need not be based on an extensive knowledge of and analysis of the presenting problem (de Shazer, 1988). SFBI is a holistic, client-centered, strengths-based approach in that the helper engages the help-seeker with the mindset that within the client system, there exists all that is needed to resolve the presenting problem. Stated differently, within the apparent chaos, there lies infinite potential for growth, change and transformation. The helper's goal is to help the client recognize this reality, gain confidence in harnessing it, and begin

practicing living within this new reality.

SFBI has been extensively discussed and presented in other writings (Berg, 1991; de Shazer, 1988, 1991; Quick, 1996; Walter & Peller, 1992). For purposes of providing context to the illustration presented below, Walter and Peller's (1992) summation of the therapeutic process will be presented for readers not familiar with SFBI. Imbedded within this summation is the intent and direction of the SFBI process: "Very simply: One, define what the client wants rather than what he or she does not; two, look for what is working and do more of it; three, if what the client is doing is not working, then have him or her do something different" (Walter & Peller, 1992, pp. 5-6). In addition, the assumptions of SFBI (Walter & Peller, 1992, pp. 34-35) are entirely consistent with the three primary operational principles of ESH set forth previously in this article. The following composite case example illustrates the application of SFBI within the framework of Eco-Spiritual Helping. It represents one possible scenario that a practitioner might encounter in their efforts to integrate the principles of both ESH and SFBI.

Integration and Application

Jack, a thirty-five year old man is referred by his physician for therapy. Jack has been working the last four months with his physician on his "depression," trying a couple of different medications to address the problem. Jack asked for the referral after becoming dissatisfied with "the way the medications make me feel," reporting that the lows are not as

low, but being on the medication has also taken away some of the joys or highs he would have expected to experience.

Helper: Hello Jack. What brings you here today?

Jack: Well, the doctor calls it depression, but I would say I've lost the joy in life. Nothing seems to get me excited about living like it used to.

H: Tell me more about what it was like before and what is different now.

J: Well, when I was younger, I was all excited about what life would bring and how I would work to make myself successful. I'm 35 now, and for the most part, feel like I have achieved most of the goals I set for myself and was so excited about. I have a beautiful wife, two great kids, a moderately successful career as a banker, and am comfortable financially. So I'm supposed to be happy, right? I mean, I've achieved success as I defined it. (Pause) It just feels like my life is mundane - like I go through the motions and the juice is sucked out of it. And I guess I feel guilty about feeling that way. I have a loving family, my friends look at me as a success, I have all the toys and possessions I want, and I still want more out of life.

H: Are there times when you don't have the feeling like the juice is sucked out? Eco-

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J: Not lately.

H: How about in the past? When in the past five years have you felt the joy of life, as you call it?

J: (Thinks for a few moments) Oh, yeah! I guess there is at least one situation when I've felt on top of the world.

H: Good. Tell me about that situation.

J: Well, one is when I go hiking in the woods or on a beach. It's something I love to do and I used to do it all the time before I met my wife and became a family man.

H: Okay. When was the last time you did this? Describe how you felt.

J: About six months ago, I got a chance to go for a walk in the woods. Both the kids were over at friends' houses for an overnight, and Laura had gone to visit her mother. I had just dropped the kids off and thought, "what the hell?" it's a beautiful day, nothing to do and no one to report to for a couple of hours, so I drove to the national forest access area 45 minutes from here and laced up my hiking boots and took off. As I started, I felt, well, guilty, I guess. The farther I went, it was like the cares and responsibilities I carry started to peel off, and they were replaced with a sense of peace.

H: Tell me more about the feelings of peace.

J: It is hard to explain. I get this sense that I am not alone. Not like someone is following me, but more like I'm part of something bigger. It's like knowing there's more to life than everything everyone is always chasing and encouraging me to chase. I don't know how to say it. I've never been very religious, but I imagine it is like the feeling some people get in church, although I never had that feeling in church. It's like the stuff I focus on and stress over on a daily basis becomes insignificant in the presence of something bigger.

H: Sounds like a great feeling! What would it be like to do that on a regular basis - to even schedule that kind of time into your day?

J: Well, I guess I could do it, but I would have trouble explaining it to people.

H: Who would need to know?

J: Laura for sure. In fact, she has suggested something like that a couple of times when I've been down.

H: Anyone else need to know at this point?

J: No, not really. The kids would probably understand and no one else needs to know how I spend my free time. Most Saturday mornings, I get up before everyone else. In fact, now that I think about it, I often have 3 or 4 hours to myself before anyone else wakes up or needs something from me. I'll try that this week and see how it goes.

As illustrated by this composite example, Eco-Spiritual Helping can use SFBI to encourage clients to do more of "what works." In this case, Jack had all the outward markers for success in Western culture, and, although he didn't have words for it, felt disconnected from the greater whole. Our bodies and minds will tell us a lot about what we need to heal us if we simply pay attention to them. Over time, Jack built in this reconnecting and recharging time into his schedule. His family described him as more "alive" and available, and his need for antidepressants abated. Over time, he became better able to articulate what he was experiencing, referring his walks in the woods as "going to church."

Conclusion

Janet Abramovitz (2000) makes the persuasive argument in her insightful essay *Valuing Nature's Services* that the natural world's so-called free resources and free services form a kind of natural economy that if not valued and nurtured will one day fail us. For our entire lives, we have expected the oceans and lakes to provide us fish, the insects to pollinate our crops, the birds to sing and keep pesky mosquitoes in check and the rivers to provide us with clean water to drink. We have grown accustomed to expect that when timber is needed it may be harvested, when waste is created it will disappear and when the wind blows it will bring clean air to refresh our lungs and restore our imaginative capacities.

Yet, our modern cultural ethos unwittingly and intentionally provides unceasing justifications and incentives to misuse and destroy the very bounty that insures our survival as a species. And, Chris Bright (2001) points out, we may one day be very surprised at the rapidity at which these life sustaining resources can collapse and threaten the very existence of life itself. The intricate balancing act that protects ecosystem health is vulnerable to a plethora of overlapping and interacting discontinuities and synergisms that make our ability to predict potential disintegration tenuous at best. In reality, ecosystems can and do decline with a speed that surprises even the most optimistic observers. For example, even a small increase in the atmospheric level of nitrogen (an element essential to life) coupled with other climatic changes will trigger a kind of nitrogen poisoning that will profoundly limit the

growth of forests, stunt plant growth cycles, increase global warming, reduce cloud cover and differentially change both the frequency and intensity of rain events. And, these are just a few of the known consequences. Thousands of other looming disasters may exist but remain hidden because of the unfathomable complexity involved in predicting the synergistic impact of compounding environmental problems. We have become complacent in our expectation that environmental decline is gradual and predictable and that there will always be time for us or our children to muster a technological fix. While this may be a soothing cliché for those who prefer to maintain their heads buried firmly in the sand, it masks the very real possibility that nature may have some very nasty surprises awaiting us.

We have made a strong case that everyone is involved in the life and rhythms of the natural world — whether or not they want to be or even recognize that they are. Every species, every human, every institution has a role in and an obligation to the global nest that protects and nurtures us. Mental health professionals have a unique opportunity to help transform consciousness concerning the crises of the earth even while they work to alleviate individual alienation and collective marginalization. Our efforts have focused on creating an initial platform to both understand and launch these efforts. Much work and research remains to be done, but integrating Eco-Spiritual Helping and Solution Focused Brief Intervention provides an initial framework to enliven earth consciousness and heal estrangement that exists in us, between us and within the earth community.

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Table 1

Hunter-Gatherer Ideas of Wild Nature

- Nature was home, irrespective of specific place or location.
- Nature possessed feminine qualities.
- Nature was sentient, alive, possessed of being.
- All of nature - land, animals, plants - was sacred and worshipped in ritual.
- Divinity resided in nature, moved through nature and could take natural form.
- Metaphor was the mode of divine access.
- Time was synchronous, nested into an eternal and mythical present.
- Ritual was essential to maintaining the natural and cyclical order of life and death.
- Nature was beneficent, but was to be respected, honored and negotiated.

Table 2

Toxic Thoughts of Current Dominant World View

- Consumption will produce happiness and consumption is necessary for societies to function properly.
- Individual human beings competitively maximize their existence even at the expense of other humans. Competition rather than cooperation is the essential character of human beingness.
- The future is steeply discounted. The present is all that matters. Future generations shall be responsible for themselves.
- Present consumption is preferred to investment in preservation or conservation for the

future.

- Growth and progress are always good; an undeveloped resource is a wasted resource.
- Free-market capitalism is the best system. Indeed, the post—communist, neo-liberal paean has been TINE (there is nothing else). Greed is good.
- Paying less is always better than paying more.
- If it isn't broke-don't fix it. No need to act in the face of unproven projections. Global warming is not an unequivocal fact so there is no need to reduce green house gases. Unless science can prove harm without doubt there is no need for society to act.
- Technological innovations can solve ecological problems and overcome the limits of the bio-system.