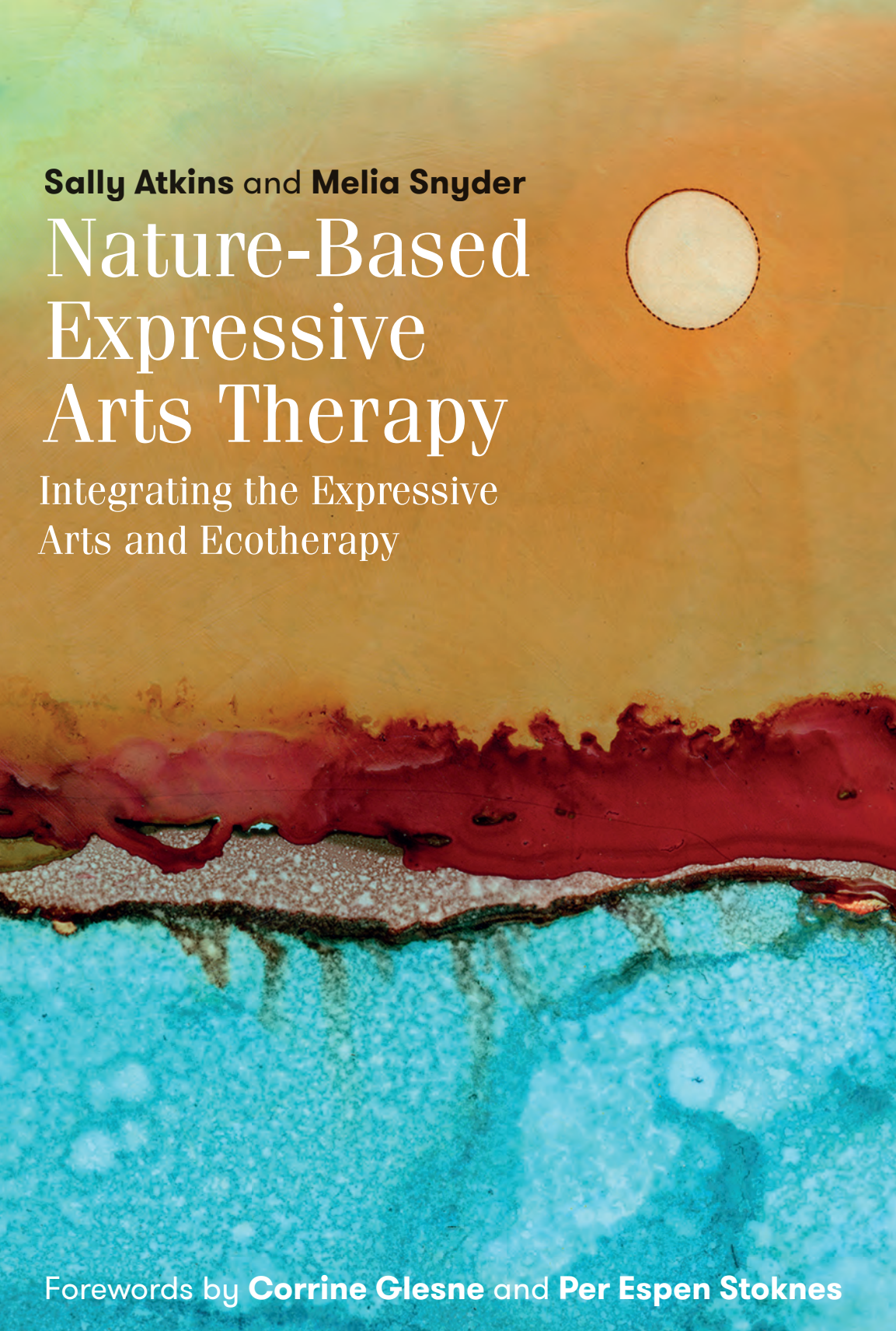
Sally Atkins and **Melia Snyder**

Nature-Based Expressive Arts Therapy

Integrating the Expressive Arts and Ecotherapy



Forewords by **Corrine Glesne** and **Per Espen Stoknes**

Nature-Based Expressive Arts Therapy

of related interest

Presence and Process in Expressive Arts Work
At the Edge of Wonder
Herbert Eberhart and Sally Atkins
ISBN 978 1 84905 957 2
eISBN 978 0 85700 811 4

With Nature in Mind
The Ecotherapy Manual for Mental Health Professionals
Andy McGeeney
Foreword by Lindsay Royan
ISBN 978 1 78592 024 0
eISBN 978 1 78450 270 6

How to Get Kids Offline, Outdoors, and Connecting with Nature
200+ Creative activities to encourage
self-esteem, mindfulness, and wellbeing
Bonnie Thomas
ISBN 978 1 84905 968 8
eISBN 978 0 85700 853 4

Emotional Resiliency in the Era of Climate Change
A Clinician's Guide
Leslie Davenport
Foreword by Lise Van Susteren, MD
ISBN 978 1 78592 719 5
eISBN 978 1 78450 328 4

New Developments in Expressive Arts Therapy
The Play of Poiesis
Edited by Ellen G. Levine and Stephen K. Levine
ISBN 978 1 78592 247 3
eISBN 978 1 78450 532 5

Nature-Based Expressive Arts Therapy

Integrating the Expressive Arts and Ecotherapy

Sally Atkins and Melia Snyder
Forewords by Corrine Glesne and Per Espen Stoknes
Photographs by Linda McCalister

Jessica Kingsley *Publishers*
London and Philadelphia

First published in 2018
by Jessica Kingsley Publishers
73 Collier Street
London N1 9BE, UK
and
400 Market Street, Suite 400
Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA

www.jkp.com

Front cover image source: Linda McCalister.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Names: Atkins, Sally S., author. | Snyder, Melia Ann, author.
Title: Nature-based expressive arts therapy : integrating the expressive arts and ecotherapy / Sally Atkins and Melia Snyder.
Description: London ; Philadelphia : Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017029894 | ISBN 9781785927263 (alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Arts--Therapeutic use. | Nature--Psychological aspects. | Art therapy.
Classification: LCC RC489.A72 A84 2018 | DDC 616.89/1656--dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017029894

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 78592 726 3
eISBN 978 1 78450 380 2

Contents

Foreword

Corrine Glesne

Several years ago, I lived in Oaxaca, Mexico where I began working with a group of young people seeking to address environmental issues in their community. When I met a teacher in a small indigenous village in the Sierra Norte Mountains, I asked him how young people in his village thought about the environment. He paused, then replied, "We don't really talk about the environment, we talk about harmony." Readings had informed me about the importance of the concept of "harmony" to Oaxaca's indigenous communities. I had heard people talk about *susto*, or fright, and its effects on health, about the *nagual*, or animal allies, and about nature spirits of many kinds. Nonetheless, I kept assigning what I was reading and hearing and experiencing to my Western categories of people, animals, spirituality and environment. The teacher's response suddenly illuminated my categories and how some peoples of southern Mexico perceived things in ways that did not segregate humans, nature, animals and spirits as I had been doing. This experience comes to mind as I read *Nature-Based Expressive Arts Therapy*. Throughout the text Sally Atkins and Melia Snyder convey ecological and indigenous wisdom and sensibilities that challenge compartmentalized thinking and encourage engagement as caretakers for each other and the Earth—for living in harmony.

I first met Dr. Sally Atkins at Wildacres, a retreat center nestled in the mountains of North Carolina. We were there for different

workshops, but friend and colleague Kelly Clark/Keefe introduced us and I felt drawn to Sally, wanted to learn from her, and wished I too could enroll in the expressive arts program she created and directed at Appalachian State. Over time, I have been fortunate to get to know Sally and am continually inspired through these connections, including the opportunity to read this book.

Nature-Based Expressive Arts Therapy: Integrating the Expressive Arts and Ecotherapy is about nature and art. It is about integration and interconnections within disciplines, within the cycles of time and among all life forms. And, it is about the transformation of self and society into something grounded, creative and whole. Using poetry, art and text, the authors attend to the essence of what is most alive in their own thinking and ways of being. Through doing so, they show how nature-based expressive arts can offer pathways for healing the individual and the planet. They awaken our senses and leave the reader mindful, hopeful and inspired.

I made my academic living teaching and writing about qualitative inquiry. In the midst of my career, desperate for a greater sense of artistic creativity, I began taking workshops and classes in writing poetry. At one point, I became so immersed in poetic thinking that I wrote up a research project in poetic forms and then wrote an article about the process called *That Rare Feeling: Re-presenting Research through Poetic Transcription.* Connecting qualitative inquiry to poetry embarked me on a journey into representing research through other artistic forms as well, and then, into writing a chapter on arts-based research for my text *Becoming Qualitative Researchers.* I did not know about expressive arts programs then, but I think now about how valuable *Nature-Based Expressive Arts Therapy* would be for use in qualitative research classes, particularly as a resource for students drawn to arts-based research. In addition to contributing to the fields of expressive arts and counseling, this book provides a foundation for understanding theories and philosophical underpinnings for arts-based inquiry.

Walking a wooded trail in the spring in the Appalachian Mountains, I am sometimes fortunate to come upon a pink lady slipper in bloom, an endangered orchid of enticing beauty. Some people try to dig up these rare plants to add to their own gardens, but doing so kills them. This wild little flower depends upon a specific fungus in the soil for its survival. *Nature-Based Expressive Arts Therapy: Integrating the Expressive Arts and Ecotherapy*, like the lady slipper, is a rare kind of text, a work of beauty and a testament to the interconnections among all forms of life. In these times, when fear seems to be a primary motivator, a book like this is an unexpected journey into what is sacred and possible, into how we can move into a spirit of hope and act with courage, beauty and creativity.

Corrine Glesne, author of *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*

Foreword

Per Espen Stoknes

Traveling northward on the Swedish Railway's Midnight Arctic Express train for 24 hours, we cross the Arctic Circle heading north toward Kiruna, a small mining village with a huge mountain of mining debris as its most prominent characteristic. We're a band of climate researchers, entrepreneurs and adventurers, pulled by dogsled deep into the wilderness to Tarfala, the arctic glacier research station where a few researchers painstakingly and patiently clock the slow race of global warming's impact.

Far from any major human infrastructure in these northern reaches of Scandinavia, we see the strongest and most severe impacts of global warming on the rapidly melting glaciers. These glaciers are equivalent to the famous canaries in the coalmines, speaking clearly and early about the dis-ease of these times. Unfortunately, the term *at glacial speed* no longer carries its original meaning. Year by year, decade by decade, they melt relentlessly away. Here, you can daily *see* climate change. People who stayed here just 20 years ago, like one researcher in our band, are shocked by seeing how much they've declined since they first visited.

Our journey combines extreme skiing on glaciers with extreme thinking, exploring the edges of what is possible (but still safe). The vision is to combine cutting edge climate science with eco-entrepreneurial thinking, and to find and renew our commitments for innovative ways of navigating these unprecedented times.

Almost everything we touch upon in our conversations now comes out fresh and clear, like the air we breathe.

We express our gratitude for the abundant gifts of heavenly powder, improvising S-shaped curves in the vast, soft, steep white canvas. This is our human aesthetic response to this unique landscape. We make this art form—not on, nor of, nor from—but fully inside these receding yet magnificent snowy glacier slopes. We ski at their grace, and we must immediately respond to their shapes and forces, including their vast hidden crevasses or sudden avalanches. We are subjected to them. Yet, if *we* respect their rules, their settings, and play safe within *their* rules and boundaries, we can dance with powder, expressing the mind-blowing immense joy of being alive and well in this pure, remote whiteness. Do the glaciers enjoy the aesthetics of our downward parallel S's drawn in their outermost skin after we've crept back into our fragile cabins? I have no idea. The strong winds and nightly snowfall erase our tracks every other day as if we had never been there.

For cultures that live nearby, these ancient mountains are of particular spiritual significance, home to gods and giants who influence daily life. Maybe Western culture is about to wake up to this reality. Maybe they *are* the giants, the physical foundations of the weather gods. With more than human powers that influence our daily climate, glaciers are not "just" spiritually significant, they are an indispensable force for our civilization's survival. Perhaps they are waiting for us to recognize how closely and mutually interwoven humans are with our natural surroundings. What happens to the air impacts the waters, the trees and even far-off glaciers, and what happens to the waters, the air and the trees also impacts our psyche. There is nothing, not even the most remote glacier, that is not connected with our everyday breath and our carbon emissions. Through the arts, we explore and express this intimate interaction.

In the art making process, *our imagination merges with the imagination of the world*, particularly in nature-based expressive arts. Since there is no way we humans can make a glacier or mountain, creek stone

or high arctic snow, old growth tree or delicate flower petal, we receive these shapes—with a deep bow—as gifts from the more than human powers. Only then do we bring the playfulness of nature forward, adding our little piece of inspiration and ingenuity, watered by our emotions. It should not come as a surprise that aligning our imagination with the imagination of the world can bring deep healing to a dis-eased human and that bringing our thanks, offerings and creative genius in a respectful way may bring healing to diseased nature. This is the emerging logic of the twenty-first century, just as it has been the dominant logic in most of humanity's long history.

Nature-based expressive arts—as described in this brilliant book by my dear friends Sally and Melia—aren't just good for our clients. If done in a mutually respectful way, they are ultimately good for the Earth too. Our current environmental crises aren't just out there. They're equally a crisis of mind, emotion and imagination. Our Western cultural neurosis has dominated for a couple of centuries, mostly a short bleep in the deep Earth time. As suggested in this book, by realigning ourselves in a sensitive way to the shapes and expressive forms of more than human nature, we unlearn our destructive dualistic habits. Moreover, we relearn in a practical way to align with the presence and processes of the Earth itself. Through this work both humans and nature may find some healing from our current afflictions.

The only way to play with the powder power on skis is to trust the snow to help in making the bends, to risk losing balance, to risk falling at high speed and to allow the snow to bend, hold and raise us up in time for the next bend. Likewise, Sally and Melia encourage us to trust the materials of nature, wherever and whatever we find, to help shape the curves and movements of a mutually informed dance of expression. When our bodies let go and yield to the unique characteristics of the materials, the heaviness of stones, the stiffness of wood, the softness of snow, we are raised up to meet the challenges of our time. The resistance and counter-balancing that nature's materials offer invite surprise in our work with human and

ecological suffering, often bringing soul-nourishing gifts and deep joy with them.

Do the world and the air take notice or find joy in such co-creation with humans? I don't know in any "objective" way, but my living body answers after days with the snow and the mountains: there is no doubt—the joy is mutual when the deep respect is mutual. Clear tracks of this unique interaction come alive for an instant, then slowly settle back into the larger forces of life. This is all we can do: leave tracks in the wilderness of imagination. This book asks us to critically consider what those tracks will be.

Per Espen Stoknes, author of *What We Think About When We Try Not to Think About Climate Change*

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following people who were instrumental in the birth of this book. First we thank Corrine Glesne and Per Espen Stokes for their inspiring forewords to the book and Linda McCalister for her photographs throughout the book, as well as for the striking cover image. We are grateful to many colleagues who have read and offered feedback on portions of this manuscript, especially Gaetana Friedman, Elizabeth Byerly, Joan Woodworth and Marianne Adams. A deep bow of gratitude goes to Corrine Glesne whose continued feedback and discussions were instrumental in shaping the book. Special thanks go to Dr. Susan Reed and Dr. Sandra Lubarsky for the important ideas and inspirations reflected here. We thank the chairperson of the Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling at Appalachian State University, Lee Baruth, for his unwavering support for our work and for new and innovative ideas. Finally our thinking and practice are always deeply intertwined with our colleagues and students at Appalachian State University, the European Graduate School and especially the members of the Appalachian Expressive Arts Collective.

I (Sally) am grateful for the privilege of working with Melia Snyder, my co-author, colleague and friend. She carries the fire of passion for working and living in ways that nourish her soul and the soul of the world. Working with her is a privilege. I would also like to thank my husband Bill again and again, for, without his support and understanding and good humor, this project would not have been possible.

I (Melia) would first like to thank my teacher, mentor and friend, Sally Atkins who braids the Earth, the arts, and ritual into a way of being that inspires me in my work and life. I would also like to thank Liz Rose, a founding member of the Appalachian Expressive Arts Collective. Walks with Liz on her land and along trails in the Appalachian Mountains have helped me to become intimately acquainted with the names, stories and medicine that surround me. Deep gratitude goes also to my family and friends and my partner, Todd, whose conversation, encouragement and good cooking have fed my body and spirit throughout this project. Finally, I would like to thank my graduate assistants, Darcy Wade and Olivia Sullivan, who provided initial research, ongoing feedback and editorial assistance throughout our process.

Preface

As we launch this book into the world, we do so with a blessing inspired by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (2005):

May you come to know the knots
Of your own making
Your power for reshaping

May you surrender
To the intelligence of Earth
And rise up rooted like trees.

The practice of expressive arts therapy, an integrative and arts-based form of psychotherapy, is emerging in different forms around the world. Two centers for current thinking and practice in expressive arts work are Appalachian State University (Appalachian) in North Carolina and the European Graduate School (EGS) in Switzerland. The environmental settings where these programs flourish have shaped an undeniable awareness of, and appreciation for, the natural world. Since the beginning of expressive arts at Appalachian, the program has been strongly nature-oriented because of the beauty and power of the landscape of the old and gentle mountains of the Blue Ridge. The summer school of EGS is held in the alpine village of Saas Fee, situated in the midst of the strong and commanding presence of the Swiss Alps. Both of the authors teach in the expressive arts programs in both of these schools. This book is born of years of teaching, practice and conversations with each other and with

students and colleagues at Appalachian, EGS and other universities and training institutes.

Sally was the founder of the interdisciplinary expressive arts program at Appalachian, and she is core faculty of the European Graduate School. She has taught for many years in universities and training programs in Europe, Asia, Central and South America, Scandinavia, the British Isles, Canada and the United States. She is the author of scholarly publications related to the practice of expressive arts in therapy and education, organizational development, ecotherapy, arts-based research, indigenous healing practices and therapeutic writing as well as several books of poetry. Her most recent textbook, co-authored with Swiss psychologist Herbert Eberhart, is *Presence and Process in Expressive Arts Work: At the Edge of Wonder* (2014), published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Melia currently directs the expressive arts program at Appalachian, where she teaches core courses in expressive arts including intermodal expressive arts therapy, current issues in expressive arts, ecotherapy and mindfulness in nature. She coordinates the annual summer institute in expressive arts, held at Wildacres Retreat in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Her research interests, in addition to expressive arts and ecotherapy, focus on theories and practice of salutogenesis, the cultivation of health and wellbeing.

For each of us, our experiences teaching and working with the expressive arts and ecotherapy, as well as the landscapes in which we work, shape who we are and how we think about the work that we do. We believe that the landscapes we inhabit also inhabit us. Throughout the book we include poetic forms and visual images, especially when the ideas we are attempting to convey stretch the limits imposed by traditional language structures. With this in mind we have chosen to offer individual prefaces, each beginning with a "Where I Am From" poem, a poetic structure developed by George Ella Lyon, the 2015–2016 poet laureate of Kentucky, to tell our personal stories in metaphoric terms.

Preface

Sally Atkins

Where I Am From

I am from sycamore
from cedar and sage
from walnuts and witch hazel
roots of mountain laurel
gnarly and strong

I'm from shadows
of darkling pines
and eye shine of the mountain lion

I'm from wolf and wild turkey
from black bear and white tailed deer
from raven and red-tail hawk
and the winter call
of the great horned owl

I'm from whitewaters of the Nantahala
from headwaters of the New
rivers flowing clear and cold
in the veins of my blood

I'm from Storyteller Rock
the healing valley
sheltered by the Grandfather

I'm from the tongue of the northwest wind
licking the lingering leaves of beech
weaving her name in the braid of my hair
carving my true name
in the curve of my bones

My roots go deep in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina. In the 1700s my ancestors established their subsistence farm in the foothills of these ancient mountains, migrating from Ireland, England and the highlands of Scotland. The mountains of these highlands were part of the same mountain range of the Appalachians before the separation of the continents. My people have always had an intimate relationship with the land. Our Celtic heritage, as well as the necessities of daily life, taught us that everything comes from the Earth, that the land is sacred and that all living things are to be treated with respect. For me the landscape in which I work, whether the strong Swiss Alps or the old and gentle mountains of Blue Ridge, inhabits the landscape of my soul.

I am a mountain woman. I know where the sun rises over the gap in the eastern ridge in winter, on which side of the trees the moss clings and where the galax still grows green in the forest. I notice the direction of the wind and the phases of the moon. I nourish my special plant of sage, more than 100 years old, transplanted from my grandmother's garden, and I use it not only for cooking but also for ceremonies and offerings. I have inherited deep gratitude for the gifts of the Earth and an attitude that the act of creating in any form is both sacred and communal with other humans and with the all of nature.

Since childhood I have written and studied poetry. I engage in all of the arts, but poetry remains my primary arts practice. My professional education was a combination of behavioral, psychoanalytic and humanistic counseling and psychology, shaped by the scientific worldview that has held dominance in Western culture for more than 200 years. My work has included graduate teaching for 40 years as well as the practice of psychotherapy,

supervision and organizational development. In the 1980s, my colleagues in the Appalachian Expressive Arts Collective and I began to create an interdisciplinary graduate program in expressive arts therapy. Then, in 2000, we discovered that our work, developed independently, was part of a larger international movement in the expressive arts. At that time I also began a 17-year career of teaching at the European Graduate School, the international center for thinking and practice in the field. My years of teaching, research and therapy practice, and my interdisciplinary and cross-cultural work in expressive arts at Appalachian, at EGS and around the world, have expanded my appreciation for the role of language, culture and the arts in understanding our human experience. These opportunities have fueled my continued interest in multicultural, integrative and interdisciplinary work. Still, the grounding of my work remains in my own intimate relationship with the land in which I live.

Preface

Melia Snyder

Where I Am From
I am from milkweed
    from monarchs and muscadine vines
I am from the leaf resting on a fall day
    (red, maple
    it sang of syrup)
I am from the Appalachian Trail,
    the Boone Bowl
    whose hemmed-in hollows hold me
    as if I were her own
I'm from wild ponies and white-tailed deer
    from hoot-owls and cackling crones
I'm from pink lady-slippers dancing to change
    from root and rock
    fed by the light of mica,
    the detritus of earth and bone
Under these stones are stories
    stitched now as contour lines
    into the palm of my soul

My relationship to land and landscape began before my birth, with grandparents and great-grandparents who sought fertile land to farm amidst the Dustbowl and who crossed seas to escape famine.

My ancestors' connection to the land was intimate, a relationship that was raw and real rather than pastoral or idyllic. My own relationship to nature has long been my deepest source of nourishment, providing daily sustenance and medicine in these times of spiritual poverty.

I am thankful to have grown up in a time before cell phones and computers, to have spent long summer days swimming and playing outside until dusk, to have walked with my father through the woods behind our home, to have fallen in love with the Buffalo River in Arkansas on our annual pilgrimage to this wild and scenic waterway. In this landscape, I became a collector of stones and bones. The trees and animals taught me how to pay attention and became the wellspring of my writing, poetry and imagination. The tornadoes, snakes, scorpions and fire of my childhood called for respect and cautioned against romanticizing the Earth. Relationship with the natural world became my first practice of presence and process that is the foundation of expressive arts.

My undergraduate education was in psychology and Spanish—my exploration of the inner landscape of the psyche buttressed by my exploration of the outer landscape of farms, caves and the ancient mountains and rivers where I lived and visited. After graduation, I spent a year teaching writing and poetry in South Louisiana's public schools, and saw firsthand the intersection of poverty, race and environmental abuse collide in the vacant eyes of my students. There was an epidemic of seizure disorders in my classroom, likely from the proximity of offshore oil drilling poisoning their water, food and recreation sources. This was a time of despair and helplessness on my part but also a time of awakening. I saw firsthand how my love of the Earth was intimately connected with the wellbeing of the people whom I also loved. I elected to opt out of the K-12 educational system and to answer the long call of the Appalachian Mountains that had been calling me "home" since early childhood. I spent the next several years living, learning, working and teaching outdoors in summer camps, wilderness therapy schools, outdoor education programs and community mental health programs. Nature became the primary teacher in my work, and I the midwife.

The intrusion and constriction of Western medical and behavioral models into my work with children and families inspired me to return to graduate school in counseling and expressive arts at Appalachian State University. I wanted to bring the old ways of being human into my professional life in a way that could provide an alternative to the broken status quo systems in which I kept finding myself. I saw that the medical model of health care, authoritarian behavioral schemes and evidence-based practice lacked the depth to respond to the needs of the human psyche and soul. Under the mentorship of Dr. Sally Atkins and the Appalachian Expressive Arts Collective, I continued exploring what I already experientially knew—that we are most well when we are connected with the natural world and with our creative selves. Through my doctoral work and in private practice and agency work, I practiced this way of being in my teaching, research and counseling. I continue following this thread today as the director of Appalachian's Expressive Arts Program. Daily my students teach me that this way of being matters. Daily I see them take it into their lives as sustenance and into the world as medicine for our time.

The challenges we currently face as a people and a planet call for our active engagement. As I move forward in this field, I am reminded of the words of Toni Morrison: "This is *precisely* the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear" (2015, para.10). The world needs us alive, awake and well, and so we do our own work, but we don't stop there. We sing and dance and tell stories of what is and what can be. We paint, pinch clay, play and create in collaboration with the stones and bones around us. We use our voice, our bodies, our hands and hearts to draw attention to both beauty and despair. We imagine our way forward, and then we get to work.

PART I

Beginning

In Part I we introduce the book and its contents. We offer a preparation for the exploration of the ideas we present in later chapters. We begin the book, as we always begin our work, with the arts, in a ritual way.

Introduction

We sit in circle silently
returning to breath, our first prayer
Inbreath, outbreath
The literal way we are connected
To air, to each other

Words become our invocation
Be still, listen
We go around, sunwise,
passing our talking stick
Te toca a ti, your turn
Casting the circle
Stitching ourselves in ritual to Earth
Weaving ourselves together
We make a sacred holding space
For work that is beautiful
And not always pretty
We claim languages older than words
The dance of the body/mind
The dance of spirit
What will we create together?

We close with silence
Joining hands to remember
Words of blessing
The candle is extinguished

The circle is open
But unbroken.

Sally Atkins and Melia Snyder

This is a book about nature, art and healing in therapeutic practice. We open this book as we open a class, a workshop or a therapy session, with breath, with poetic words and with a tuning in to ourselves and to each other with intention and presence. Within the holding space of this book we share personal and professional ideas and experiences from our research, teaching and practice.

Purpose of the book

The purpose of this book is to explore the expansion of theory and practice in the field of expressive arts therapy in order to articulate a nature-based approach to the work. In this exploration we ask the following questions: What is the role of a nature-based expressive artist/therapist in this time? How can we envision a practice of therapy that does not separate us from the natural world? How can we envision a sustainable way of living that supports individual and planetary wellbeing? The ideas discussed are relevant to many areas of professional practice. The theoretical stance expressed in this book is informed by work in the expressive arts field as it is being developed around the world and particularly by our own work at Appalachian State University in North Carolina and at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. We draw on our professional experience as well as on our personal heritage of the Southern Appalachian culture in which we live.

This is not a how-to guide. This book is intended as a theoretical grounding for both beginning and experienced professionals who use the expressive arts and nature as means of facilitating learning and promoting personal, organizational and planetary healing. Here we explore therapeutic, artistic, scientific, philosophical and cultural theories that inform our work. In keeping with our artistic perspective, we intentionally choose to refer to these theories as *stories*, rather than the more common academic term of theories.

We choose to use poetic language as well as visual images to convey some of the stories we explore, especially when the ideas we share are difficult to convey within the traditional linear structures of our English language. We hope this book will also serve as a source of inspiration for anyone interested in working with arts and nature in the service of life. We hope to inspire reflection on the attitudes and practices that shape our work and our lives and to explore how it may be possible to live and work with awareness of our intimate relationship with the living Earth.

Academic disciplines speak in different voices within different language domains. Each discipline has its own methods for exploring the questions deemed most important to consider. The discursive landscape of expressive arts involves transdisciplinary and cross-cultural integration, weaving the threads of differing views into its own language domain. In this book we also include ideas from other disciplines and cultures. However, we attempt to speak in a clear and straightforward way in order to be accessible to an international readership of professionals, students and general readers. For clarification we define our use of the following terms.

Nature

Poet and essayist Gary Snyder (1990) elaborates various meanings of the word *nature*. It comes from the Latin *natura* meaning character, course of things and to be born. One meaning is the essence or character of something, as in the nature of a person or thing. A second commonly used meaning is the outdoors, wild nature or wilderness, the world apart from the interventions of humans. The other broader meaning of nature is the creative power operating in the world and all of the phenomena of the world including products of human action. From this perspective nature is everything, thus reframing the bifurcation of nature as opposed to culture. In this book we use the word nature primarily in its broad meaning. However, we also use it at times to mean wild nature, as in instances in which we talk about the natural objects and materials not made by humans. By nature-based expressive arts we mean the practice of expressive arts

with awareness of individual creative process as a part of the creative process of the world.

Expressive

The word *expressive* in expressive arts therapy is somewhat misleading. It privileges one aspect of the creative arts, that of giving external form to ideas, emotions and experiences of the inner world of the individual. Expressive arts work values both expressive and receptive forms of arts experiences. Listening to music, watching artistic performances and observing visual arts are also potential sources of healing. A more accurate term for the field might be *integrative* or *interdisciplinary arts therapy*, signifying the interweaving of the arts together, or *transformative arts*, signifying the possibilities for work in the arts to generate personal and societal change. The term *creative arts therapies* is normally used to refer collectively to the singular modality-oriented arts therapies of music therapy, dance therapy, drama therapy, poetry therapy and visual art therapy.

Arts

In this book, when we speak of the *arts* we include all forms of creative activity. This includes the fine arts of music, dance, drama and poetry as well as the arts of cooking, gardening, childrearing and all of the crafts. This meaning of the arts is a reclaiming of ancient traditions in which all people sang and danced, beat drums, created visual images and participated in ceremonies to celebrate and to mourn the passages of life, to express the intangible and to remind themselves of their relationship to the natural world and to each other.

Therapy

The word *therapy* may suggest a somewhat narrow view of the scope of the book. We define therapy broadly to include any and all of the caring professions that we practice, including counseling, consulting, psychotherapy, education and supervision. For us therapy is not

about pathology, about diagnosing and fixing what is broken. In our view therapy is salutogenic, focusing on health by cultivating and nurturing the innate creative and imaginative processes within each person. As one client put it, traditional psychotherapy looks at what is wrong and tries to fix it while expressive arts therapy looks for the treasure (Atkins and Williams 2007). Artist, poet and philosopher Mary Caroline Richards (1973) tells us that the word *therapy* comes from the same root as throne, and in its deepest sense means to care for and support. Thus therapy is the art of holding one another and holding space for sacred work.

Earth

In this book we are sensitive to the need for language that breathes life back into our human experience within the Earth. We use the word *earth* to mean the element of soil. We use *Earth* to mean the planet Earth, our home.

Soul

James Hillman (1996, 1999) reminds us that *psychology* literally means the study of the soul, from *psyche*, Greek, meaning mind or soul. The word *soul* appears frequently in this book, as it does in many writings in the fields of expressive arts and ecotherapy, and it carries many different connotations. We claim no precise reductive definition for this word. We choose to follow the writings of Hillman, who speaks of the imaginative possibilities of a being, an active intelligence shaping the story of one's life, associated with character, calling and integrity, not a substance, but a perspective (1996). We also use the words *sacred* and *holy* to refer to matters of soul.

Stories: The rootlets of our work

Humans have always turned to stories in order understand the meaning of our lives. In her novel *Ceremony,* Leslie Marmon Silko speaks of the potency of language and the importance of storytelling: "I will

tell you something about stories… They aren't just entertainment… They are all we have… You don't have anything if you don't have the stories." (Silko 1977, p.2). Throughout human history, story, myth and metaphor have shaped the way humans view the world and offered guidance about the big questions of life: Who am I? What is the meaning of life? How are we to live in relationship to each other, to the world and to whatever we believe is bigger than we are? We need the stories of empirical science, sensory experience, myth and imagination to meet personal challenges and the challenges of the world.

As we began work on this book, we realized we wanted to tell stories not only from expressive arts and ecotherapy, but also from different disciplines and cultures that undergird these fields. A nature-based approach to expressive arts includes stories from ecotherapy and also from the historical and cultural contexts of the arts, from contemporary ecological sciences, from ecological philosophies and from the wisdom of indigenous cultures. We first thought of these stories as foundational roots of our thinking. We imagined a tree with roots and a trunk and branches. Then we were captured by the image of a grove of aspen trees. Aspen trees are strikingly beautiful as they grace the Rocky Mountain areas of the western United States and Canada, and they are unique in several ways. Most notably, groves of aspen trees are actually communities. What appears above the surface of the ground as separate trees is actually part of a large lateral branching root system that sends out interwoven rootlets and shoots that grow into future trees. This living community of the aspen grove is highly communicative, sharing water and nutrients and responding to the differing environments it inhabits. This metaphor is appropriate for a nature-based approach to expressive arts.

Theories, or in our case stories, provide webs of interwoven connective tissue to order and relate ideas. Our stories also fit appropriately into the related philosophical metaphor of *rhizomatic relationships*, multiple, intertwining and interpenetrating ideas.

Rhizomes are root-like horizontal underground stem systems that can produce shoots and root systems of new plants. The concept of rhizomatic relationship is widely used in a/r/tographic inquiry, an arts-based research theory and methodology in which the researcher acknowledges and utilizes the multiple perspectives of artist, researcher and teacher (Irwin and deCosson 2004; Springgay *et al.* 2008) to inform the research. Rhizomatic relationship is a philosophical concept (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) describing knowledge as always in the middle of ongoing connections of ideas that are multiple and non-hierarchical. The point is to emphasize that knowledge is acquired not only in vertical and hierarchical ways with one idea building on the foundational roots of another. Instead, knowledge can happen at the intersection of ideas that move laterally with no clear beginning or ending, ideas that intertwine and nourish each other. This concept of knowledge and research fits well with the methods and ideas in this book. We recognize that the rootlets of our thinking are only small glimpses into systems of thought that are deeply grounded in complex and elaborate theories, philosophies and living practices. The process of writing the book and the book itself are examples of arts-based inquiry, using the creative process to gather information and to reflect upon ideas. As Kossack (2012) points out, arts-based inquiry is exactly what we do in expressive arts work. We are aware that we do not stand outside the stories we tell. We are in them.

The stories we are living

As caring professionals, we cannot undertake any professional activity without consideration of the context of the world in which we find ourselves. It is important to situate ourselves and our professional work within the larger issues of the world, particularly with regard to environmental concerns. Many of the stories we are living today are challenging to confront, and we must consider how our individual and collective creative work fits into the contextual reality of the world (Peat 2000). We want to reflect upon how we are participating

in the formative forces of the continual creativity of the world (Richards 1973).

Personal and planetary challenges

The multitude of interconnected challenges of the world today include climate disruption, pollution, corporate control of governments, the erosion of democracy, mass extinction, poverty, increasing wealth disparities and ongoing wars and their aftermath. In the United States we are bombarded with political, environmental, economic and social stories of climate change, war, political extremism and a turn toward social media for connection and information. Physicist and novelist Alan Lightman (2005) says that many have become prisoners of the "wired world" (p.187) in which we live, which includes an overload of information and stimulation, the loss of privacy and silence and obsessions with speed, consumption and material wealth. According to the recent report, "The State of Mental Health in America" (Nguyen *et al.* 2016), 40 million adults (one in five) have a mental health condition in the United States. Likewise, rates of youth depression are increasing significantly. Similar trends are seen in rates of addiction, suicide and incarceration among American adults. Additionally, most Americans lack access to adequate mental health care.

When distanced from our own senses and embodied reality, we are primed to create and enact anthropocentric, human-centered stories that have had catastrophic effects for the Earth and all its inhabitants. In a manic push for economic growth, many societies, particularly in the West, have turned humans into machine-like entities feeding an endless system of production and consumption. It is not unusual that when individuals become tired, anxious or depressed they may try to fix the problem quickly in order to return to business as usual rather than pausing to consider the underlying cause of the dis-ease or the consequences for the living Earth. This is a narrative of falling out of harmony with the interconnected web of life, and it perpetuates stories and histories of power and ego, conquest and domination, exploitation and consumption.

The helping professions, too, have inherited a legacy of anthropocentrism. Largely divorced from body and Earth, most psychotherapy is enacted in a square room in a 50-minute hour within the constraints of a system of managed care. Much of psychotherapeutic practice accepts a medical model that locates and diagnoses pathology within the individual rather than in an unsustainable way of living. Systems of care generally are rooted in positivistic thinking, which prizes reason, logic and empirical ways of knowing. Therapies increasingly become more brief and focused on coping rather than on questioning the fundamental causes of suffering. Many therapeutic approaches are increasingly dependent on medication and "evidence-based" practice to mitigate symptoms of anxiety, depression, sleep problems and addiction.

Writing from a critical theory lens, Hadley (2013) says that therapists must be aware of the impact of dominant narratives of patriarchy, heterosexism, anthropocentrism, capitalism, psychology and medical science on therapeutic practice. Many of these stories share in common the oppression of subjugated groups and the privileging of the dominant group. Hadley suggests that we must deconstruct these narratives, question them and maintain vigilance in our practice in order to promote social justice and to avoid complicity in oppressive practices. Using this lens of critical theory in a nature-based approach, we hope to promote a way of practice that upholds an eco-social justice framework for the field of expressive arts.

Many environmental thinkers today believe that the current state of personal and planetary dis-ease is due not just to collective apathy and ignorance, but to the Western industrialized world's story of human separation from the Earth. Both scientific and religious traditions have taught that humans have dominion over nature and that the Earth exists to provide for our needs and wants. Similarly, Western philosophical traditions largely value thinking and reason as primary ways of knowing above physical experience, intuition and imagination.

Buddhist scholar and deep ecologist Joanna Macy has long been an activist for building the motivation and courage needed to creatively confront the challenges of our times and to courageously deconstruct the stories or myths that create and maintain these challenges. Although perhaps useful for living and fitting in, unquestioned allegiance to dominant narratives can have unintentional consequences for personal wellbeing and for the wellbeing of our communities and the Earth. It is not unusual to feel alarmed in the face of current challenges or to become detached, removed, scared, helpless or hopeless in response to the often politicized linguistic frames of doom, cost and sacrifice thought to be necessary to effect change (Stoknes 2015). Such distancing, says Stoknes, can lead to doubt and dissonance, and denial can become a haven or refuge from the pain of engagement.

In their book *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy*, Macy and Johnstone (2012) identify three possible patterns of responding to the ecological and social crises of our time. Those who subscribe to "The Great Unraveling" are overwhelmed by the magnitude of challenge and may feel disabled by despair or inadequate and powerless to effect change. Those who respond to the challenges of our time from a "Business as Usual" approach may deny the severity or reality of ecological devastation and its consequences and perpetuate an unsustainable status quo. Those who respond with efforts to usher in a "Great Turning" imagine and work for a collective effort to create a life-sustaining civilization and to challenge status quo ways of thinking and behaving that cause harm. This text is written from a spirit of supporting the narrative of the Great Turning.

Paradigm shifts: Recognizing our stories

We live in a time that calls for reexamination of the stories we tell about our relationship with the Earth and with one another, a time of *paradigm shift*. In 1962 physicist and science historian Thomas Kuhn published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2012 [1962]),

proposing shifting paradigms as a description of the evolution of science. The term *paradigm* has achieved widely popular and confusing usage in many arenas today. Kuhn sees a paradigm as a framework or model that for a time provides a way of asking questions and seeking answers within a community of practitioners. The medical model that addresses the diagnosis and treatment of disease is a powerful paradigm that has shaped the course of physical and mental health research and practice for many years. This paradigm has brought amazing breakthroughs in understanding and treating disease, but it fails to address questions of meaning and soul. According to Kuhn, when a paradigm is no longer able to ask questions and seek answers to the most important questions of the time, a paradigm shift occurs and new paradigms emerge. Such a shift is often considered a break *through*, but it begins by breaking *with* stories that no longer serve to address the pressing questions of the time. In the stories that follow we examine existing and emerging paradigms that shape how we see the world and ourselves.

Organization of the book

We recognize that our ideas will continue to be in the middle of intertwining rhizomatic relationships, and we also recognize that the structure of a book requires an organizational framework. This book is organized within a framework of creative process first outlined by the Appalachian Expressive Arts Collective, the interdisciplinary group of faculty members who developed the expressive arts program at Appalachian (Atkins *et al.* 2003).[1] Within this framework, creative process can be conceptualized as moving in the following five stages: (1) beginning, (2) moving in, (3) insearch, (4) finding voice and (5) bringing art into life.

Stage 1, beginning, involves opening the space for creative work, addressing the intention for the work and defining the holding space in which the work will occur. Stage 2, moving in, is a time of

1 S. Atkins, M. Adams, C. McKinney, H. McKinney, E. Rose, J. Wentworth, and J. Woodworth.

entering creative process, trusting and opening to what will emerge. Stage 3, insearch, is the name we have given to the hard-to-define experience of immersion in the depths of the work when often something unexpected emerges. Stage 4, finding voice, is the time of expression, finding forms to share the experiences of stage three. Stage 5, bringing art into life, is the time of integrating our learning into our own lives and sharing the work with others.

In shaping the organizational structure of this book we were surprised to realize that these stages comprise the five parts of this book as demonstrated below. We realize that any attempt to impose linearity and categorization on a process that is circular and complex is necessarily a simplification. However, we have found this framework useful as an organizational structure for this book, as we have in many other situations of designing classes and workshops and for our own personal practices in the arts. This conceptualization of creative process can be particularly useful in offering a metaphoric bridge between inner and outer experience.

Part I: Beginning

INTRODUCTION

In the Introduction, we define the purpose of the book, offer definitions of important terms, present the overall structure of the book and situate our ideas within relevant contexts.

Part II: Moving In

CHAPTER ONE: EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND ECOTHERAPY: SHIFTING PARADIGMS

In this chapter we briefly review the history and development of the professional fields of expressive arts and ecotherapy. We discuss the challenges that both of these fields present to traditional models of personal and social change. We explore how theories in each field call for paradigm change and how practices for each field may

inform and complement each other and serve as a starting point for an integrative theory of nature-based expressive arts.

CHAPTER TWO: STORIES FROM THE ARTS

In this chapter we examine cultural and historical contexts of our contemporary ideas about art and aesthetics. We explore stories about the relationship of beauty, aesthetic response and responsibility and practices of sustainability, and we suggest how these stories can contribute to ways of living that promote personal and planetary wellbeing.

Part III: Insearch

CHAPTER THREE: STORIES FROM ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE

All of life moves within the powerful rhythms of the Earth and the cosmos. In this chapter we discuss the world as process, as systems within systems of dynamic interrelationships. We review stories from contemporary environmental science of systems and patterns of interconnection and we explore the metaphorical understanding of the Earth as a living system.

CHAPTER FOUR: STORIES FROM ECOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

In recent years many environmentally conscious thinkers have written about their concerns for the Earth and for the place of humans within the Earth. In this chapter we review ideas from several contemporary nature-oriented philosophers that inform the theoretical underpinnings of our work. These stories suggest ways of thinking and possible ways of living in the present time with compassion and hope.

CHAPTER FIVE: STORIES FROM INDIGENOUS CULTURES

In this chapter we offer relevant teachings from personal experience with philosophies and living practices of several indigenous cultures in which the arts and nature are integrated into daily life. These

teachings come from scholars of indigenous cultures as well as from personal experience with elders, teachers and artists from the Quechua people of Bolivia and Peru, from the Hopi, Zuni and Navajo people of the American Southwest, and from the Eastern Band of the Cherokee people of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

Part IV: Finding Voice

CHAPTER SIX: NATURE-BASED EXPRESSIVE ARTS: CULTIVATING AN AESTHETIC RESPONSE TO THE WORLD

In the summary section, we review and integrate the major concepts presented and offer discoveries made during the writing of the book that continue to shape our thinking and practice of nature-based expressive arts. We suggest how the ideas discussed may inform our professional practice and our personal lives. We discuss everyday attitudes and practices that embody an awareness of the sacredness of life and an aesthetic response to the natural world. We hope to encourage practitioners to continue to question unconscious assumptions that underlie our destructive behaviors toward the Earth and to reclaim respect for our human interrelationship with nature as an important aspect of all expressive arts work.

Part V: Bringing Art into Life

APPENDICES

The appendices offer examples of application of nature-based expressive arts theory to professional practice. Each of the four appendices offers a suggested structure for a nature-based expressive arts activity. While all activities are intermodal, each focuses on a particular modality of nature-based expressive arts.

PART II

Moving In

Part II includes Chapters One and Two. In Chapter One we offer background information about the professional fields of expressive arts and ecotherapy. We situate the development of these fields within the current contexts of the work and the world, and we suggest how each field embraces shifting paradigms. In Chapter Two we look at background information about the arts and aesthetics and consider the importance of beauty for the wellbeing of humans and the Earth.

CHAPTER ONE

Expressive Arts and Ecotherapy

Shifting Paradigms

What if we painted the rivers red
with fistfuls of clay

Would we know then
That our veins are the same

That everything we do
Changes everything downstream

Would we wake in wonder
Or return to our sleep-dream

Melia Snyder

In my journey with expressive arts, I (Melia) have been most inspired by my students. So many have commented on feeling "at home" in the circles we create. I feel the same. Each time we gather, we are taking part in a ritual and way of being that is older than any field or discipline. I teach my students, as I taught clinical groups before them, how to practice the Way of Council as articulated by Jack Zimmerman and Gigi Coyle (1996). We practice listening deeply from the heart without the need to analyze, agree or disagree, and we practice speaking from the heart spontaneously, attending to the essence of what is most alive. We pass our talking stick, created through community art. Gathered around a central altar, much in

the way that people throughout history have gathered around fire, we come to the circle to warm and wake ourselves, to share stories, to learn and to listen each other into being. Here we practice the presence and process central to the work of expressive arts (Eberhart and Atkins 2014). This is where I learned how to be a counselor and how to be a teacher and, perhaps more importantly, how to be fully human.

In this chapter we review basic ideas within the emerging fields of expressive arts and ecotherapy, examining how these ideas interweave in the creation of a nature-based approach. We invite a spirit of critical questioning of the status quo, and we open a creative inquiry into how nature-based expressive arts may help to shape sustainable ways of living. Ultimately we hope that our vision will challenge, inspire and activate the energy of those drawn to and currently engaged in this way of being and working in the world.

The field of expressive arts is grounded in arts practice. Ecotherapy emphasizes our human relationship with the Earth. Both fields are dedicated to individual and collective wellbeing, and there are strong resonances between them. Both fields are a part of changing ideas about what constitutes health and wellbeing of humans and the planet. Continued interest in the relationship between these two fields has been reflected in several international professional conferences in recent years. The 2007 conference of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association was entitled "Expressive Arts and the Earth: Ancient Mountains, Whispering Waters, Sacred Stones," held at Appalachian State University in North Carolina. The Expressive Arts 26th International Spring Symposium, held in April, 2014 in Tenerife, Canary Islands was entitled "Expressive Arts Meets Ecotherapy." The 2016 International Spring Symposium held in Ireland carried the theme of "Walking in the Fields of Wonder." The 2017 conference of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association, to be held in Winnepeg, Manitoba in October 2017, is entitled "Indigenous Roots of Expressive Arts Therapy." These

themes suggest an ongoing interest in interweaving expressive arts with ecotherapy.

The field of expressive arts

Expressive arts is a field of professional theory and practice using the arts in an integrative, interdisciplinary way to enhance quality of life (Eberhart and Atkins 2014; Knill, Levine and Levine 2005). Rather than focusing on a particular art form, the expressive arts are intermodal. Any or all of the arts modalities—dance, music, drama, poetry, symbol, imagery, storytelling, visual arts, ritual and other creative forms—are used together. Intermodality is based on the sensory interrelatedness of all of the arts with each other (Knill 1999, 2005; Knill, Barba and Fuchs 2004).

The practice of expressive arts is a return to ancient origins of artistic process as natural medicine for the soul (McNiff 1992). This way of practicing emphasizes the importance of the creative process in whatever form it manifests. In this approach the arts can serve many functions that support wellbeing. The arts offer a way to hold, express and release emotions, and they provide rich possibilities to deepen and expand personal understanding and meaning, to create and nurture community and to sustain life.

Emergence of the field

Beginning in therapeutic work in the mid-1970s (McNiff 2009), the practice of expressive arts has now found its way into counseling, consulting, education, coaching, organizational development, supervision and efforts for social justice and social change in many parts of the world (Eberhart and Atkins 2014; Levine and Levine 2011). The expressive arts are used today with populations ranging from adults and elders to children of all ages, with veterans and refugees in war-torn areas around the world and in schools, clinics, hospitals and organizations of all kinds (Levine and Levine 2011).

The International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA) serves as the professional organization for the field, articulating standards for practice, ethical guidelines and a credentialing process for registration as a registered expressive arts therapist (REAT) or a registered expressive arts consultant/educator (REACE). Additionally, the IEATA website (ieata.org) offers information on regional groups, social action activities, educational resources, an artist gallery, regular newsletters and information on the biennial conference to connect artists, educators, consultants and therapists in the field.

Basic tenets of expressive arts work

THE ARTS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO HUMAN BEINGS

Although the arts have long been woven into the fabric of everyday life among indigenous peoples, the turn toward industrialization and economic growth in modern times has distanced humans from an artful way of being. Expressive arts work reclaims the arts as belonging to everyone and as essential to living and being in the world (Eberhart and Atkins 2014). The arts offer a way to experience our human interconnectedness with the world by means of aesthetic response, our capacity to be touched and moved by beauty (Knill 2005).

THE ARTS ARE A PRIMARY FOCUS AS AGENTS OF HEALING AND CHANGE

Expressive arts work begins with tuning in to the artistic materials. We explore with the senses the textures and colors of the materials, the space for moving and the possibilities of musical instruments available. We invite attitudes of playfulness, curiosity and openness to surprises. We find what attracts us and enlarge this into artistic form. In expressive arts, the arts are central. In contrast to other caring professions within the social sciences, creative expression, art making and witnessing are seen as primary agents of healing rather than subservient to other methodological frameworks or theoretical stances of the social sciences (Eberhart and Atkins 2014). The arts, when viewed in this way, can offer a pathway for healing and a fuller experience of being and becoming in the world today.

IN EXPRESSIVE ARTS WORK THE ARTS BECOME METHODS OF INQUIRY.

The word *poiesis* comes from the Greek, meaning to know by creating. This is a fundamental concept of expressive arts work (Levine 1997, 2005). Levine expands the concept of *poiesis*, suggesting that the process of creating is inherently reciprocal and interdependent—we are both shaping and shaped by the world in which we live. In expressive arts both the process of art making and the works of art created, if approached with attitudes of openness, non-judgment and appreciative curiosity, offer possibilities for surprises and new learning. We ask not what does the art mean but what does it do to us and how does it touch us. Training and practice in expressive arts uphold creative imagination and embodied experience as valid sources of knowing (Eberhart and Atkins 2014; Kossack 2012).

Within expressive arts work, decentering with the arts is a primary method of artistic inquiry. *Decentering* refers to a structured process within the *architecture* or framework of a professional session (Eberhart 2014; Knill 2005). In decentering, the client leaves the presenting issues and enters into a liminal space of art making before returning to the original issues with new possibilities of resources discovered in the art making. The term *liminal space* is used here in the understanding of the anthropologist Victor Turner's (1995 [1969]) discussion of the altered state of consciousness achieved within a ritual process. The decentering method is elaborated in detail in Appendix A in *Presence and Process in Expressive Arts Work* (Eberhart and Atkins 2014).

EXPRESSIVE ARTS WORK IS A RESOURCE-BASED APPROACH

A basic premise in expressive arts work is that each human being is unique, with unique challenges and gifts. Each person experiences problems in living, and each has access to multiple inner resources, including imagination, courage and integrity, as well as to resources in the environment such as colleagues, information or nature. The role of the professional is not to diagnose and fix problems but to

assist the client in accessing both inner and outer resources. Many problems in living are related to an inability to imagine different and more satisfying ways of being. The imagination can be an especially important resource for envisioning new ways of being, so activation and nurturing of imaginative capacities are important priorities (Eberhart and Atkins 2014).

RELATIONAL PRESENCE IS BASIC TO WORKING WITH EXPRESSIVE ARTS

The concept of presence involves both a quality of invitational personal presence within the caring relationship and a way of being in the world. Presence requires attention, appreciative curiosity, multileveled awareness, trust and openness to the senses and to the imagination (Atkins 2014). Presence is also an interactive process having to do with our innate capacity as human beings to respond to the world as it presents itself to us. It is our aesthetic responsibility to be open to the world, to let ourselves be touched by both the beauty and the ugliness of the world around us.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS WORK IS BASED ON A PROCESS ORIENTATION TO WORK AND LIFE

A process orientation in expressive arts work is a basic attitude toward the creative process and toward life itself (Eberhart 2014). This is a systems orientation to life, a way of seeing the world as based ultimately on processes rather that fixed substances. From this perspective, everything, even the things we name as things, such as a tree or our body, is actually a system of layers within layers of interrelating processes. This view, now widely discussed in postmodern science and philosophy, echoes some of the lessons of indigenous cultures. This systems view of life also carries with it both attitudes and methodological considerations for professional work. Shaun McNiff's (1998) admonition to trust the process is both an instruction about an expressive arts way to work with the arts and a way of approaching life.

The field of ecotherapy

In this book ecotherapy is defined as the application of ecopsychology to psychotherapeutic practice. However, defining ecotherapy is confusing because the term is also used in a much broader way to include a variety of related activities involving nature such as wilderness adventures, outdoor therapy, horticulture therapy and animal assisted therapy (Buzzell and Chalquist 2009; McGeeney 2016). From our theoretical perspective, ecotherapy necessarily involves questioning assumptions about how we think about the practice of therapy and how we live in the world.

Emergence of the field

The term *ecotherapy* was first used in 1996 by Howard Clinebell in his pioneering work *Ecotherapy: Healing Ourselves, Healing the Earth* in which he explores ecologically oriented ideas of personality, spirituality and education. In 2009 Linda Buzzell and Craig Chalquist published *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind*, an edited work involving major leaders in the field, exploring the interrelationship of ecotherapy with spiritual development and building community. Buzzell also founded the International Association for Ecotherapy.

Two recent works in the field of ecotherapy are *With Nature in Mind: The Ecotherapy Manual for Mental Health Professionals* (McGeeney 2016) and the edited volume *Ecotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice* (Jordan and Hinds 2016). McGeeney defines ecotherapy broadly and includes a practical guide for numerous nature-based activities for psychological wellbeing. This is a detailed guidebook for facilitating nature-based sessions with a particular emphasis on mindfulness. Jordan and Hinds present theoretical foundations for ecotherapy, research on ecotherapy practices and multiple perspectives on ecotherapy as psychotherapy.

Ecopsychology

The theoretical grounding of ecotherapy is in ecopsychology. Ecopsychology reclaims our "vast self" which extends beyond our skin into the living body of the Earth (Rust 2009, p.45). Ecotherapy and ecopsychology both embrace the idea that humans are inseparable from the rest of nature and are nurtured by healthy interaction with the Earth. Historian Theodore Roszak (2001 [1992]) first introduced the field of ecopsychology in *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology*. Roszak asserts that the health of humans is related to the health of the planet, defining sanity as an awareness of the connection between the environment and the human soul. He proposes that environmental problems such as toxic waste, polluted air and water and the greenhouse effect are the psychopathology of everyday life. Ecopsychologists see the field not just as a subset of traditional psychology but as a radical shift from the objectivist, mechanistic worldview of Western psychology toward a worldview of systems and interrelationships.

In *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind* (Roszak, Gomes and Kanner 1995) Roszak and his colleagues further explore how the psychological health of humanity, individually and collectively, is inextricably linked to the health of the Earth. This book includes, among other noted environmental writers, a foreword by archetypal psychologist James Hillman. Hillman's earlier essay "The Thought of the Heart and the Soul of the World" (1992) foreshadowed the emergence of the field of ecopsychology with his statement that he could no longer distinguish between neurosis of the self and neurosis of the world. Hillman states that to place psychopathology solely in personal reality is a delusional repression of actual experience. He suggests that being in a "bad place" personally is not just an individual condition of anxiety or depression. Such conditions may also be related to being in a bad place literally—in a jammed freeway, a sealed up office building or the suburban home. Hillman calls for returning psychology to the root meaning of *psyche* as soul, a living responsive reality.

Basic tenets of ecotherapy

The practice of ecotherapy draws from the theoretical ground of ecopsychology and receives inspiration from numerous other environmentally conscious historians, philosophers, poets and writers such as David Abram (1996, 2010), Per Espen Stoknes (2015), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2013), Thomas Berry (1988, 1999, 2009), Joanna Macy (1991), Arne Næss (1973), Mary Oliver (1992, 2005), Wendell Berry (1983), Gary Snyder (1990), Terry Tempest Williams (2001, 2008) and many others. From their work we emphasize three main tenants of ecotherapy: reframing pathology, reciprocity and resilience.

REFRAMING PATHOLOGY

A rich body of interdisciplinary literature supports Hillman's premise that pathology is not only individual but also ecological (see e.g., Roszak 2001; Stoknes 2015). This literature challenges the premise that psychotherapy exists to serve the individual, couple or family in a private setting through introspection and intrapsychic processes. Ecotherapy recognizes that our dis-ease as humans often stems from living a life that is disconnected and out of harmony with the natural rhythms instinctive to us as human animals. The Hopis call our way of life *koyaanisqatsi*, crazy life, life out of balance (Hill, Malotki and Black 1998). The bifurcation of mental health from our larger ecological system is evident in our ways of diagnosing pathology. Of the nearly 300 diagnoses listed in the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association 2013), only seasonal affective disorder acknowledges any influence from the environment. Yet we know that many sleep, anxiety and depressive disorders that pathologize the individual actually have their roots in a way of thinking and living that is ultimately not sustainable.

Many studies now attest to the therapeutic benefits of spending even small amounts of time in nature. Improvements in self-esteem and physical health and decreases in depression, stress and fatigue were observed among participants in a study who had access to, and

utilized, green spaces (Mind 2007). Beyond the obvious awareness that spending time in nature can be healing, ecotherapy calls for a redefinition of the concept of mental health within an environmental context, acknowledging humans as part of the intricate web of nature. The practice of ecotherapy expands the definition of mental health from an emphasis on individual autonomy to include the capacity for experiencing mutually enhancing relationships and reciprocity with nature.

Buzzell (2009) notes that while humans can survive the split from the natural world, many attempt to fill the void in unhealthy ways. "Like caged zoo animals," she states, "we become anxious, nervous, and depressed in restrictive, artificial habitats" (p.51). Soaring rates of mental illness, substance addiction and destructive behaviors, she suggests, are natural extensions of increasing time in unnatural environments and of treating ourselves like machines whose value comes from achieving, producing and consuming. Louv (2005, 2011) cites increasing rates of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, obesity, mood disorders and fear among children who are disconnected from nature. Children are now often reared in a mechanistic fashion that precludes time in nature in favor of classroom instruction focused on end-of-grade test performance. At home tired parents often substitute screen time for time outside. Despite these realities, it is important not to blame or scapegoat but rather to see clearly that many of our ways of living and thinking are causing harm to ourselves and to the environment and ultimately are not sustainable.

RECIPROCITY

Reciprocity refers to mutual interdependence between humans and the Earth. Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss (1973) was an important writer within the environmental movement of the late twentieth century and offered inspiration for both ecopsychology and ecotherapy. His writings emphasize the importance of biological diversity and the understanding of the mutual interdependency of each living creature, including humans, on the existence of

other creatures. In 1973, he introduced the concept of *deep ecology* to the environmental movement. Deep ecology is based on a respect for nature, the inherent worth of other non-human beings and experiencing ourselves as humans as a part of the living Earth.

Extending Næss's ideas into the social sciences, poststructuralist philosopher and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari (1996) articulates an interdependent and interconnected circular relationship between environmental, mental, and social ecology. He suggests that these systems naturally and necessarily influence one another, creating complex rhizomatic relationships that cannot be separated and must be considered as an interconnected whole to ensure the health of the world. He advocates for an "ecosophy" (p.264) that would link environmental, social and mental ecology.

RESILIENCE

Resilience is the capacity of an ecosystem to respond to change or disturbance in a way that resists damage and promotes recovery. Disturbances may be from the natural environment or anthropogenic in origin. The Earth teaches us that, when threatened, it has the innate capacity to restore equilibrium, reorganize and adapt to change. In ecotherapy we recognize that humans have access to the processes of renewal and resilience of the natural world. Working and living close to the Earth reminds us that we are subject to the same rhythms of birth, growth, decay and death found in the cycles of nature. Witnessing the renewal and resilience of nature connects us to our own storehouses of strength to navigate threat, stress and change.

Toward a nature-based expressive arts

In a larger sense, all expressive arts work is nature-based. All the materials of artistic making, whether clay, skin, stone, paint, instruments of music or the body itself, come from the Earth. All creative expression begins with our presence with the sensory experience of the body. We see nature as the inspiration and the model for our understanding of creative process, and we view creative

expression and responding as participatory processes embedded in the ongoing creative processes of the world. We acknowledge that the world is alive and that, in the words of author and artist Paulus Berensohn (2001), "Whatever we touch is touching us" (p.1).

In nature-based expressive arts we combine the intermodal use of the arts together with the natural world, honoring our art materials as gifts from the Earth and recognizing that we are inherently connected with, influenced by and impacting the larger ecological web of life in which we exist. By reclaiming the arts as a birthright of being human and reincorporating them into daily life, we naturally turn toward the patterns and rhythms of nature and the reciprocity between the human and more-than-human world. In doing so, we animate and vitalize our existence and our humanity. As we remember and sink into who we are and what we love, we are more able to live in harmony with the world and bear our gifts to meet the challenges of our time. "It is the role of artists," says Paulus Berensohn, to "sing up the Earth" (Lawrence 2013).

Traditional psychotherapy and nature-based expressive arts therapy

As nature-based expressive arts therapists, we challenge the status quo. On this path we can learn from others who have challenged tradition and opened the way for new perspectives. One such model can be found in *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse* (Hillman and Ventura 1993). The authors challenge fundamental values, premises, goals and tools of psychotherapy in the hopes of breaking with convention and instigating change. Our hope is that by bringing together the fields of expressive arts and ecotherapy, we will begin to shape a nature-based way of professional work that honors our humanity and our membership in the web of life. Table 1.1 is offered as a beginning point in this dialogue.

TABLE 1.1 COMPARING THERAPEUTIC PARADIGMS

	Traditional psychotherapy	**Nature-based expressive arts (NBEA) therapy**
Cause of psychological suffering	• Problems of thinking • Chemical imbalances in the brain • Heredity • Stress and trauma • Adverse childhood experiences	Yes, and: • Disconnection from the web of life • A natural stress/grief response to alarms of our time • Attempting to maintain an unsustainable lifestyle • Alienation from supportive internal and environmental resources
Language	• Pathological • Anthropocentric • Anesthetic	• Resource-based • Arts-informed • Ecocentric • Aesthetic
Location of problem	• In the individual or human system	Perhaps…and: • In the broken relationship between the human and more-than-human world
Theoretical characteristics	• Anthropocentric • Based in Western European philosophy and psychology • Rooted in positivist thought	• Biocentric (extending inherent value to all living things) • Informed by indigenous perspectives and deep ecology • Intermodality

	Traditional psychotherapy	**Nature-based expressive arts (NBEA) therapy**
Goal of work	• To alleviate symptoms of psychological disorder in individuals and groups • To feel better mentally and emotionally	• To create a life worth living that contributes to both human and ecological wellbeing • To understand and transform symptoms into energy for meaningful action
Praxis	• Talk therapy • Psychoeducation • Coping skills training • Medication	Could incorporate traditional elements but also: • Nature-informed conceptualization, assessment, and intervention • Questioning stories that could be perpetuating an unsustainable life • Decentering in nature and reconnection to nature-based resources for wellbeing • Aesthetic response to nature-based experiences • Linking to elders, stories, rites, and rituals • Developing an NBEA daily practice • Visioning a life worth living that cares for the Earth

The following clinical case example illustrates the application of some of the core tenets of nature-based expressive arts therapy.

A clinical story in nature-based expressive arts therapy

Rachel was a 35-year-old Caucasian female and a single mother of two children with special needs. She was referred to me (Melia) in an integrated care setting by her primary care physician due to her rigid thinking that was impairing medical treatment, and problems with anger and aggression, including lashing out at her service providers. As I came to know Rachel, I learned that her primary feeling was one of being overwhelmed and disconnected. Her drawings of this feeling illustrated a series of intersecting lines and colors, which she titled "Mess" and described as chaotic and overwhelming. She shared that her house was in disarray, her finances out of control and her interpersonal relationships volatile and disruptive.

When I asked Rachel about exceptions to this narrative of overwhelm and disconnection, that is times when she felt peace, competence and belonging, her affect changed from one of desperation to one of calm and alive remembering. She told me about taking her children camping in Glacier National Park, of seeing deer drinking at dawn from the lake. She shared her photography and described feeling calm, content and in control of her day-to-day existence while being flexible and open to surprises. She told of making fire and cooking food. She saw these as pleasures rather than obligations. As she described her sense of aliveness in the woods of Montana, she became more animated and present in our session. Over the course of our work together, she came to see the discrepancy between what fed her and kept her well and how she was currently living. She began to make small changes that allowed her to live more simply and congruently with her values. Her drawings and photography prompted the creation of a vision board to provide a visual touchstone for what mattered most moving forward in her life.

Nature-based expressive arts as a story of belonging

Rejecting the dominant narrative of separation, a nature-based orientation to expressive arts returns us to our imagination, our intuition, our physical bodies and the body of the Earth. We recall the story of belonging attributed to Chief Seattle, patriarch of the Duwamish and Squamish tribes of Puget Sound, in his 1855 letter to US president Franklin Pierce:

> This we know: the earth does not belong to man: man belongs to the earth… Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life: he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.[1]

Embedded in nature-based expressive arts is a respect for our membership in the "family of things" (Oliver 1986). We recall a time when singing and dancing were done not in the consulting room but in concert with the rhythms of planting and harvest. When we work with clay and paint, we remember our connection to the Earth and its gifts. We bring ceremony and ritual into our work, recalling ancient practices of honoring the cardinal directions and the elements and giving thanks to the ancestors, to the future beings and to the Earth and its many teachers. When we hold a flute, we know that it is a gift from the tree. We know that the skin of our drums is a gift from the animal kingdom. From this perspective we see our connection and remember our belonging. This awareness of interdependence informs our art. We are touched by, and moved to respond to, this web of interconnection.

Summary

In this chapter, we have reviewed the basic tenets of expressive arts and ecotherapy and resonances between the two fields. We have introduced nature-based expressive arts work, compared this approach to traditional therapy and offered a clinical story as an

1 The full letter can be read at www.barefootsworld.net/seattle.html.

example of nature-based expressive arts. In presenting a nature-based approach to expressive arts as a story of belonging to the Earth, we propose a way of working that harnesses our creative capacity as human beings to contribute to personal and planetary wellbeing.

CHAPTER TWO

Stories from the Arts

I asked myself, what is beauty.
I asked myself, what is love.
I asked myself, what is reality
And how shall I live?

The wave on my retina
Tells me the tree is green.
An encounter of skin
Becomes a dialogue of story.

Sometimes the beautiful work
Arrives in the morning
With the sun spilling red
Over the high mountains.

Sometimes the beautiful work
Arrives in a handshake,
In the dancelike silence
Held in the sensitive

And sustaining
Presence of another
The one who stays,
The one who cares.

Sometimes the beautiful work
Arrives in the quiet assurance

Of the teacher who calls us
To honour the teacher who arrives
In ourselves.

Today I find shelter
In this nest woven of words
And I name this place Beauty.

Sally Atkins (2012, p.232)

When I (Sally) have the opportunity, I like to walk in the forest with my four-year-old granddaughter, Laurel. Laurel and her family live in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, a much different and equally beautiful mountain landscape. When she visits her Papa and her Neena Longhair, as she has named me, in North Carolina, we share a ritual of offering "gifts to the fairies" in the forest. We leave a few tiny beads in small acorn cups in the shelter of stones, under leaves or at the base of trees. In doing so, we notice the trees and the stones and the small plants around them. We touch the bark of trees, rough or smooth or old and peeling. We look up to see the sky through the branches of the tall trees and listen to birdsong in high branches. Laurel sometimes likes to collect leaves of different colors to use in subsequent art projects. When we take leaves or sticks or stones, we ask permission, offering back a bit of our garden herbs or a bead as a symbolic gesture of gifting back to the Earth, a practice I have learned from native friends. And we say thank you, acknowledging in a small way how much the Earth gives to us. Laurel likes to learn the names of trees, and she is especially delighted to find the mountain laurel, the shrub that shares her name. Since the land where I live holds remnants of Earth's oldest forests, there is a rich variety of flora and sometimes animals to observe in every season. Besides the delight of our imaginative possibility of the lives of the fairies and how they might decorate their dresses or wings or make necklaces from our little gifts, we also pay attention to our surroundings, to the sounds of the stream and the smell of the Earth. I am happy to cultivate and participate in our joint sensory and imaginative experiences. On our

most recent excursion Laurel often exclaimed at each discovery, "Neena, it is SO beautiful!" or "We are really in the woods now!" Ironically, just as she said those last words, we were walking on a portion of the North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail on a narrow band of forest that is bounded by roadway on either side. I am reminded of Alice Walker's words, "anything we love can be saved" (Walker 1997, p.29), and I hope that it is possible to preserve the rich natural beauty of this land and to pass on our love for it to future generations.

In this chapter we define art and aesthetics from a nature-based expressive arts perspective, examining their cultural, historical and contemporary contexts. We explore concepts of beauty as a fundamental aspect of human existence and the relationship between beauty and sustainability. Finally, we explore expressive arts concepts of aesthetic response and responsibility, imagining living life as an aesthetic response to the world. We suggest how these ideas can shape everyday attitudes and practices that embody an awareness of, and appreciation for, beauty that can enrich both personal and professional lives and contribute to personal and planetary wellbeing.

A nature-oriented approach to expressive arts, like all expressive arts work, is grounded in the arts. By the arts we mean not only the so-called fine arts, but also the handcrafts and all of the creative acts of ordinary life: cooking, gardening and caring for others. The ancient Greeks had no word for art (Shiner 2001). Among all of the languages of the American Indians there is no word for art (Highwater 1981). In these cultures the arts were an integral part of life. Many contemporary artists, art critics and art historians have in recent years called for a reevaluation of how we think about the place of the arts in our lives today (e.g., Gablick 1991; Neal 2015; Shiner 2001).

The long story of the arts

From the beginning of human history people have sung and danced, played drums and rattles and created images on caves and canyon

walls. The images were symbols of nature: animals, plants, people and cosmic events. All around the world people have made shrines in the land at sacred sources of water and hauled stones to create centers of ceremonial practice. In nature-based expressive arts we remember and reclaim this history. We are not trying to emulate its trappings, but to touch the source that has always inspired this pouring forth of creativity and to celebrate our reciprocity with the landscape we inhabit and the cosmos that birthed us.

Aesthetics in Western culture is usually associated with the area of philosophy devoted to the question of what is beautiful. The word *aesthetics* comes from the Greek *aistesis*, having to do with the senses, in contrast to the word *anesthetic*, that which deadens and numbs us. So aesthetics in expressive arts has to do with beauty that enlivens us and intensifies our awareness of experience. Such beauty is not always pretty. In expressive arts the concept of aesthetics is related not to the traditional idea of cultural norms or formal rules of what is considered beautiful, but to our human sensitivity and appreciation of beauty and to our capacity to respond to whatever touches us.

Art as behavior

Anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake (1995, 2002, 2012) says that human societies throughout history have always displayed some form of art-making behavior. This behavior fulfills a basic human biological need and is an integral part of daily communal social life. Idealizing aesthetic experience as the province of only certain functions, objects and peoples denies its biological and evolutionary significance. Dissanayake defines art not as an elitist activity but as the act of *making special*. In this sense everyone is an artist. The gardener who arranges his plants with an eye to color and compatibility, the hostess who puts fresh flowers on the table, the mother who puts a small encouraging card in her child's lunch—all of these are artists, making experience special. Dissanayake feels that art has been falsely set apart from life, thus diminishing its communal importance. In conversation with Susie Gablik (1995), she adds that in modern

times people are so busy getting on to the next thing that they don't have time to reflect upon their experience, to care about it and to mark it as special. To make an experience special is to make art.

Dissanayake emphasizes that art is not just the production of saleable objects but an innate behavior, essential to being human. Humans universally display a propensity for aesthetic behavior. Until the Enlightenment there was no art world of critics, dealers, curators, museums and gallery owners. In ancient societies and in traditional societies today the role is art for life's sake not art for art's sake. The human behavior of art is deeper than the work of the individual ego, exhibition or specialist commerce commodity. Art as a behavior is universal, and creative responding is a biological propensity of human nature and essential for survival. From Dissanayake's ethnobiological perspective, we can't go on living in a way that denies our inherent art making and responding behaviors. Art as a living process, centered around daily life and important human issues, has been the case for most of human history.

Is the behavior of art unique to humans? Professor of philosophy and music, David Rothenberg (2011), says that animals (including humans) have an innate appreciation for beauty and display amazing arrays of art-making behavior. Rothenberg makes music with birds, whales and cicadas and chronicles his experiences in books and recordings. Rothenberg's work opens us to an even wider sense of the behavior of art, and to wonder at the world. Many species sing songs and do dances for more than satisfaction of biological needs. Rothenberg cites the behavior of the Australian bowerbird as evidence of the creative process existing millions of years before the ancient cave paintings of Lascaux. The male bowerbird creates a bower, an artwork he builds with the hopes of attracting a female. He always decorates it with something blue: flowers, shells, feathers. Sometimes he paints parts of it with blue pigment ground up from fruity pulp. The bowerbird reminds us that creativity is not the sole province of human beings.

Separation of the arts

Art historian Larry Shiner (2001) points out that art as we understand it in Western culture is a European invention, a part of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, believed to be universal. The separation of art from craft and aesthetic from utilitarian has become institutionalized. Now, for example, in Chicago, objects of fine art, things for aesthetic looking, generally reside in the Art Institute of Chicago, while artifacts, objects of utilitarian or ritual use, reside in the Field Museum of Natural History. Shiner calls for a reuniting of art with craft and art with life. While there have been many efforts to heal the bifurcation of art and craft, such as art movements of the 1960s, performance installations and land art, Shiner feels that we remain in the eighteenth-century view of art. He calls for an older, broader understanding of art that would include grace, imagination, invention and skill, and would combine meaning and use.

Like Shiner, poet, educator, potter and philosopher, Mary Caroline Richards (1973, 1989, 1996), emphasizes that handcraft is not separate from the so-called fine arts. She says, "All the arts we practice are apprenticeship. The big art is our life" (1989, p.41). She sees writing and all of the handcrafts as expressions of care, caring that comes from our bodies and their sensations and also from the heart and the spirit. The arts, including all of the handcrafts, are a matter of awakening to the materials and to soul. Handcrafts, she says, bear witness to the soul qualities that flow through the artist and are manifested in the physical materials. Richards was a longtime member of the faculty at Black Mountain College, the experimental liberal arts college that existed from 1933 to 1956 in western North Carolina. Today Black Mountain College is considered to be one of the most innovative experiments in the history of education and the arts. At Black Mountain College the arts were considered to be central to the education of a whole person.

Contemporary art critic Suzi Gablick (1991) also looks at the relationship of art and life. She questions the roots of the aesthetic structures of a modernist, elitist view of art, especially the passive,

spectatorial orientation and the critical discourse that go along with Western concepts of art and aesthetics. She questions the individualist ontology that underlies this discourse. She challenges art to be more interactive and dialectical, noting how art has been deprived of its amazing capacity to build community through empathy. Calling for the reenchantment of art and for aesthetics based in active involvement with the world, Gablik emphasizes the need for a socially and environmentally engaged artistic practice. There are many examples now of artists claiming an important role in rethinking the future, reclaiming the traditional role for artists as community activists and giving voice to new stories of resilience (Neal 2015).

Beauty

The concept of beauty is curiously controversial in today's world. If we search online for the word *beauty*, the main information that appears is related to products for hair and nails and facial makeup designed to improve physical attractiveness. Actually the word *beauty* is related to the Latin root, *bellus*, connoting not just physical attractiveness, but also goodness. *Bellus* is also related to *bene*, meaning well, and *beatus*, meaning to bless.

The instinctual love for beauty

According to Denis Dutton (2009), philosopher at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, our love for beauty is instinctual, an innate response to the natural environment, to attractors that grab our attention, excite the senses and the intellect and stir emotions. Artist, teacher and writer, Ruth Gendler (2007), in *Notes on the Need for Beauty*, invites us to reclaim beauty as one of the most essential and profound forces in our lives. Beauty, she says, is not simply a reflection of surface, but a pathway to coherence, integrity and ultimately to love. Beauty builds bridges between the senses and the soul, between reflection and expression and between ourselves and the world.

Beauty as soul nourishment

In the expressive arts field beauty is seen as soul nourishment (Knill *et al.* 2004). British artist, author and educator John Lane (2003) also speaks of beauty as nourishment for the soul. Lane says the origins of beauty are mysterious and often unexpected, an impulse, an image, a phrase, and cannot be explained or even adequately described. He suggests that beauty is an impulse of natural systems toward self-organization as evidenced in the mathematical harmonies of design seen in nature such as in snail shells and pine cones. This concept of beauty echoes that of other writers. American psychologist Rollo May (1985) says that beauty offers feelings both of serenity and exhilaration at the same time. Beauty gives us a sense of mystery and intensifies our experience of being alive.

In *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace* the Irish poet and philosopher John O'Donohue (2005) says that we are hungry for beauty. He believes that in some sense the crises we face in the world today are crises about the nature of beauty. When we awaken our hearts and minds to the call of beauty, we become aware of the mystery of the world, and we see ourselves as creators. "At its deepest heart, creativity is meant to serve and evoke beauty" (p.7). In the experience of beauty we both awaken and surrender. The wonder of beauty is its capacity to surprise us.

Beauty and sustainability

Philosopher and professor Sandra Lubarsky (2012) says that beauty is essential to being fully alive and living well. There are parallels between beauty and life and between ugliness and the diminishment of life. When we look at the scars of a strip-mined mountain or the grey sludge of a coal ash-polluted river we must admit that they are not only unsustainable, they are ugly. Lubarsky and her colleagues note that beauty is inadequately discussed in the discourses of ecology and sustainability although it is integral to both (Kovacs *et al.* 2006). They point out that conversations about sustainability often focus on diversity of life and the wellbeing of social systems in relation

to ecological systems, but rarely on beauty. They emphasize that sustainability requires more than discussion of biological processes, ecosystem relations and policy development. Our culture's reluctance to speak of beauty and its relationship to sustainability keeps us locked in the materialistic paradigm that is largely responsible for the deterioration of the planet.

Beauty observed in nature is often described as a harmony of parts, complexity, integration, patterns, clarity or unity in diversity. Lubarsky (2012) asks us to reconsider the role of beauty as an important value and as a marker of vitality. She suggests that we call to mind memories of beauty such as standing at the edge of the ocean under a full moon or seeing a sunset, and imagine what it would mean if that beauty were no longer to exist. She suggests the decline of beauty in the modern world and the decline of nature are directly linked, both victims of a mechanistic view of reality. This worldview is not wrong, but the metaphor of mechanism is not adequate to describe fully our experience of the world, and the side effects of this view are costly.

Beauty as hozho

In our visits to the Navajo Nation, medicine woman Annie Kahn taught us about the word *hozho*. In the Navajo language the word *hohzo* is most often translated as beauty. The importance of beauty is reflected in many songs and chants of the Navajo people. Annie Kahn explained to us that hozho actually means beauty in a much larger sense than ideas of attractiveness or culturally determined ideals. When the Navajo speak of walking in beauty, with beauty before, behind, beneath, above and within, as in the Navajo Night Chant, they mean to live in a way that is in balance and harmony with all other living things, recognizing and honoring the interconnectedness of everything. We understand that even these words in English are inadequate to fully capture the richness of this Navajo word. Gary Witherspoon (1977) in *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* makes the important point that, for the Navajo, beauty is not an abstract

quality of things but the normal pattern of nature and the most desirable form of experience. Art is a way of living for the Navajo. They experience beauty as an essential condition of life. Beauty is not in things, but in the dynamic relationship among things. Navajo sand paintings are an example of the idea of creating beauty, harmony and health by the process of art making. The Navajo create beautiful sand paintings within the context of ritual practice. These paintings are then destroyed. The aesthetic value is found in the creation of the sand painting, not in its preservation.

Aesthetic response and responsibility

Our innate aesthetic response to the beauty of the world is fundamental to a nature-based expressive arts approach. Within the field of expressive arts we place particular emphasis upon our human capacity to respond to beauty. Beauty awakens us, inspires us and takes our breath away. Beauty in expressive arts is about integrity and includes all aspects of life, the dark and the light. Beauty offers us soul nourishment (Knill *et al.* 2004), and this nourishment is particularly needed in the times in which we are living.

Aesthetic response

In the field of expressive arts work, Paolo Knill *et al.* (2004) speaks of aesthetic response as our human capacity to be touched and moved by beauty. This is a response of bodily origin happening in occurrence with the imagination. It is sensual, imaginal and often surprising, whether pleasurable or painful. The aesthetic response can be profound, soul stirring and breathtaking. Aesthetic responses, says Knill, are deep responses that have the capacity to open doors to the soul.

Archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1989, 1992, 1999) calls for an aesthetic response to the world. Our capacity to respond to the world is an ability of the heart, closely linked to our imagination. He stresses both the importance of the imaginative response of the heart

and the bodily response of the senses in engaging the *anima mundi*, the world soul or the world ensouled: "Sensing the world and imagining the world are not divided in the aesthetic response of the heart… " (1992, p.107). The imagining heart enables us to experience depth, beauty, love and soul in ways that go beyond words.

According to Hillman, images are an interpenetration of our individual consciousness with the consciousness of the world. Aesthetic responding to the world involves responding to the sounds and smells, the shapes and gestures, and the languages of all of the things of the world. For Hillman, living what he calls an aesthetic life, living with a vital aesthetic sensibility, is particularly important in this time. Through aesthetic sensibility the soul experiences intimacy with the world and understands the world as more than objects to satisfy our consumer appetites or simply categories of scientific classifications. He says that, without awareness of beauty and without imagination, the soul shrivels. The primary aesthetic response of breathing in, taking in and taking to heart is our aesthetic response to the world.

Aesthetic responsibility

Closely related to concepts of beauty, aesthetics and aesthetic response is the expressive arts concept of aesthetic responsibility. The ability to respond to the world is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be a human being (Knill *et al.* 2004). Thus it is our aesthetic responsibility, an ethical call, to respond to what is beautiful and to care for the beauty of life. Our calling to create is our response to our sensory and imaginative experience of the world. Danish artist Majken Jacoby (1999) says that beauty binds us to the world. Giving form to our experience of the world is an act of care for the life we are given. The urge to create, to feel our belonging in the world is innate.

After

We have cracked the categories
Analyzed the knowing
Decentered, deconstructed The world
Art and beauty
Ourselves
And knowing itself,

Can we stay in that place of unknowing,
The uncertain, quivering,
Strange, mysterious
Dark and also beautiful
Place where the story
breaks down,

The space between paradigms?

And what does the artist say to us?
She says There is more, open the door
Something calls The art
The other person
The tiny blue flower
In its green grass bed
Beside the path,

And what does it mean to be human?
To respond to that call?
To say Yes, I am here,

And to stay there
Not knowing
Yes, I am still here.

Sally Atkins

Summary

In this chapter we have situated nature-based expressive arts in its relationship to the long story of the arts, examining art as a fundamental behavior of human beings since the beginning of human history and exploring the ways in which cultural and historical contexts shape the way we view art and aesthetics today. We have examined the concept of beauty within a nature-based expressive arts framework and the relationship between beauty and sustainability. We have reviewed expressive arts ideas of aesthetic response and responsibility as a way of being with the living world.

PART III

Insearch

In Part III we explore stories that have shaped our understanding of our human place in the living world. First we explore stories from ecological science and stories from ecological philosophy. Then we turn to the old knowledge of indigenous cultures. This wisdom is our taproot, our anchor in nature-based expressive arts. We discuss how the rhizomatic relationships among these stories inform a nature-based approach to expressive arts work.

CHAPTER THREE

Stories from Ecological Sciences

It is winter as I (Sally) write this. Snow is blanketing the mountains, and outside my window a yearling deer is nibbling on the few green leaves protruding from the thorny hedges at the edge of the yard. We are nearing the time of the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year in the northern hemisphere. On that night I will keep a candle burning, remembering the ancient peoples who kept fires and offered prayers for the returning of the light at stone monuments such as Stonehenge and the Sun Dagger at Chaco Canyon. Like my Celtic ancestors, I honor the solstices, the equinoxes and the cross quarter days in between. I pay attention to the turning of the seasons.

In the Appalachian Mountains the changing of the seasons is dramatically apparent. Winter brings cold, and snow clings to the branches of the pines and hemlocks, the mountain laurel and the rhododendron. The days become shorter and the nights lengthen as the cycle of the seasons turns toward the Winter Solstice. As the days lengthen, spring brings infinite shades of greening, leafing and budding and the delicate early flowers such as lady slippers, violets, anemones, trilliums and spring beauties.

> Especially in spring
> the world resists
> our best designs
>
> what is alive
> blooms in white stars
> on a green carpet

what is alive
dissolves the flatness
of our language

what is alive
wants to crawl out
of the little boxes
we have made
with words

Sally Atkins (2010)

Summer offers its abundance of warmth, sun and rain, wild cherries and blackberries and generous harvests of fruits and vegetables. In autumn the mountainsides of the Appalachians wear their spectacular displays of reds, oranges and yellows of oaks, hickories, poplars, beeches, sassafras, sycamores, buckeyes and black walnuts. Then, as the trees let go their leaves, the forest floor is covered with a soft brown carpet. This turning of the seasons reminds us daily that we are embedded in the ongoing changing processes of the natural world, in systems of continual change and communication.

> To feel ourselves part of this living, interactive process, all we need do is to tune into our own living body. Immediately we know that what we call the "self" is an open system.
>
> Our "self," like all living things, expands and contracts: the heart opens and closes, the lungs and abdomen rise and fall, the earth itself as it moves through space expands and contracts through the seasons—winter, spring, summer, fall, winter. When we cease to move in this way we die. (Muller 1996, p.7)

Ecology refers to the study of the relationships among living things. The word *ecology* is derived from the Greek *oikos*, meaning house or dwelling place. Ecology is the study of our home, the Earth. In our time some of the most powerful and elegant stories of our world have come from the sciences, from theories and research findings from biology, chemistry, physics, geology and all of the transdisciplinary

fields of study emerging at this time. In this chapter we explore stories from contemporary ecological science that represent how we think about the world and our human place in it. Contemporary science questions many of the assumptions of classical scientific paradigms that assume that we can stand apart from the world and observe, analyze and categorize the components of the world in order to explain and control it. This is the mechanistic or objectivistic model of the universe, the world as a machine. Even though newer scientific theories question mechanistic and objectivist thinking, it is still ensconced in many of the disciplines of higher education and health care. This way of thinking also influences how we view our own bodies as something separate from mind or soul. Metaphors from mechanistic science remain deeply embedded in our Western thinking and language.

The ecology of relationship

Systems in biology

In the 1950s the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy outlined his idea of General System Theory. This theory was an effort to understand the complexity and relational reality of living systems, which reductionist perspectives of traditional science had not been able to account for (Bertalanffy 1968). Conventional physics had traditionally dealt with closed systems, those separated from their environment, while living organisms are open to the environment. Systems approaches differ from more reductionist approaches by emphasizing the interconnectedness and interaction both within a system and with its environment. Systems theories and related theories of self-organization, cybernetics and complexity studies look at the structure of systems as well as how they interact and communicate.

Since the time of von Bertanlanffy, in addition to biology, systems concepts have been applied widely in physics, mathematics, sociology, philosophy, organizational development, ecology, and especially to family therapy. Rather than reducing an entity or an organization of

phenomena (such as a family, an organization, the human body or an ecosystem) to its component parts, systems theories focus on the relationship and interaction among the parts.

Human systems

The British anthropologist Gregory Bateson, considered the father of contemporary family therapy, helped to found the science of cybernetics and thus to extend concepts of systems theories to the social and behavioral sciences, focusing especially on how complex systems interact and communicate. Bateson (1972) calls for fuller awareness of the contexts in which all aspects of experience, including thinking, are embedded. He questions the dominant human-centered epistemology of the West, including the view of the world as a collection of objects, the understanding of intelligence as individual and the myths of linear time and linear progress. He connects our Western epistemology, especially the unexamined, often unconscious aspects of our belief systems, to the existence of widely held values that privilege abstract thinking and rationality, capitalism and individualism and accompanying behaviors that lead to the destruction of the planet.

Bateson points out that largely taken-for-granted cultural assumptions influence what will be seen, noticed and categorized and thus considered to be reality. This selective awareness and interpretation that dominates Western thinking fails to recognize that the natural environment is not reducible to matter. He sees the emphasis on things or persons as separate entities, a perspective reinforced by our Western language systems that favor nouns and pronouns over verbs, as a major epistemological error of Western thought. Bateson says that things cannot be understood in isolation from their context, separate from the ecology of relationships in which they participate and communicate. He believes that the most important task of our time is to learn to think in new ways, to embrace the epistemological shift from seeing the world as things to seeing the world as interdependent, self-renewing and

multilayered relationships, to see the wholeness of the universe, "the pattern that connects" (Bateson 1972, p.462). Furthermore, because our very structures of thinking have relied heavily on metaphors of mechanism, we must find new metaphors of relationship in order to extricate ourselves from the ecological crisis we face today. (Bateson and Bateson 1987).

Embracing process orientation

If we look at a tree, let us say an old, spreading oak tree located within a forest, we know that the tree is not just a thing, though our English language names it such. If we understand the functioning of the oak tree, we know from science that it is a multi-celled, active, creative, changing system. The tree takes in nutrients from the sun, soil and water and metabolizes them for its use. The tree breathes. It takes in carbon dioxide and other elements from the air and gives off oxygen. The tree is actually a self-organizing system of processes, fulfilling the potential of the acorn from which it emerged in interaction with the environment of the forest. It also hosts other living systems in its roots, trunk, branches and leaves. Perhaps molds grow on its roots, moss on its trunk and lichen on its branches. We also see that the tree interacts with everything else in the forest.

German psychologist Jurgen Kriz (2006) points out that a process-oriented understanding emphasizes reality as continually changing complex systems of processes. The understanding of reality as process offers a view of the world as an ongoing becoming. Kriz points out that this view is based on awareness that the world is an incredibly complex process, one in which we are intimately involved and to which we contribute. This orientation is consistent with systems theories that emphasize the complexity and relational nature of reality.

Systems theory as applied to expressive arts work suggests that life is a balance between process and ordering (Eberhart 2014). Eberhart refers to a process orientation perspective on life as an adventure into the unknown. He points out that all living beings, including

humans, have at some level the capability of ordering. Our ways of ordering our lives help us to survive and to make meaning of life, and they also can constrict understanding and limit the recognition of alternative possibilities. Culture plays an important role in ordering to provide meaning in a given phenomenon. In other words, we act in accordance with how we perceive and frame or define a situation.

Language systems are a primary ordering system for human beings (Eberhart 2014) and are usually elaborated with stories. Language has a special potency of reducing complexity by categorizing experience so that we can meet and experience the world. However, language also can limit understanding. Western languages impose a linear causality in thinking because they order thought in a linear way. Artistic forms do not have this limitation of linearity and thus can convey experience in nonlinear ways. Forms in nature also display a variety of circular and branching patterns.

Metaphors of wholeness: The story of Gaia

Native Americans refer to Mother Earth. The indigenous peoples of South America speak of Pachamama. In the late 1960s British scientist James Lovelock (1995, 2000, 2001, 2009) studied the chemical balances of our atmosphere and discovered that they are maintained within the narrow limits necessary for life by self-regulating processes. The entire planet is a self-regulating, synergistic and complex system. These are the hallmarks of a living system. Lovelock developed what he called the Gaia hypothesis, and later the Gaia Theory, proposing that the Earth's biosphere interacts with the atmosphere, lithosphere and hydrosphere to create planetary conditions that support life.

It is interesting that Lovelock did not call this hypothesis the "hypothesis of self-regulative processes of the biosphere," which might have made it more respectable to his fellow scientists. Instead, on the advice of his friend, novelist William Golding, he called his theory *Gaia* for the early Greek goddess of the Earth, thus catching people's poetic imagination and offering a new metaphor for

understanding our planet. Like the Apollo photo of Earth from space, this image of Earth as a whole living being has transformed the way many now think of our planet. Earth takes on a presence in our consciousness, not unlike the presence of gods and goddesses in the lives of our early ancestors. The Gaia Theory supports the ancient image of the *anima mundi*, James Hillman's idea of the living Earth or world soul (1992).

Many scientists criticize this theory; however, many of the mechanisms of self-regulation of the Earth have been identified in research inspired by this theory. Gaia Theory is now a part of studies in biogeochemistry, geophysiology and systems ecology. Studies inspired by the Gaia Theory include examination of the regulation of oxygen in the atmosphere, the regulation of the salinity in the oceans, regulation of global surface temperature, the participation of living organisms in the carbon cycles and the role of biodiversity in the stability of ecosystems. The theory is increasingly used in studies of climate change.

As temperatures are warming, sea levels rise and storm surge becomes a huge danger in places like Florida and along many of the coasts of North America and elsewhere. Now an amazing thing is happening. The mangroves are spreading along many coasts, including Florida. These mangroves are trapping sediment and building up soil, which is what they do. The amazing thing is that, so far, they are keeping up with sea level rise.

Summary

We see in these examples from contemporary ecological sciences how significant changes are occurring in our scientific understanding of ourselves in the world. Seeing human life embedded in the systems and cycles of the living Earth and viewing reality as process are foundational ideas for nature-based expressive arts. Understanding the world and ourselves in it as interacting complex processes, shaping and shaped by the self-organizing forces of nature, can offer us the possibility, not only in art making, but also in life, to "trust

the process" (McNiff 1998, p.4), to trust in the possibilities of natural resilience in nature and in ourselves. Trusting in process, in our individual creative process as well as in the larger creative processes of the world, is an important way to work with the arts and nature and a meaningful way to live in the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

Stories from Ecological Philosophy

Today we pass through haze and snow dust
Blown along the 45th parallel, halfway
Between the north pole and the equator

It is eight degrees in this high desert stretched
Between Idaho and Oregon
Outside, in the cold sun, cows and crows

Paint sumi ink streaks against Earth and sky
Their fleeting calligraphy, a call
To claim the brushstroke of our brief lives

Melia Snyder

The publication of conservationist Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (2002 [1962]) exposed environmental problems caused by synthetic pesticides. Her book inspired a paradigm shift, a turn of thinking, reflected in science and philosophy, questioning the singular authority of science and the benevolence of corporations. Recognition of the increasing severity of social, personal and environmental destruction has prompted ecologically oriented thinkers to offer new epistemologies, that is new theories of knowledge and ways of knowing, that inform nature-based expressive arts. In this chapter we examine the thinking of several ecological philosophers who offer insights into Western perspectives and suggest other ways of thinking

about ourselves and the Earth. We discuss the story of the unfolding of the universe and present three alternative epistemologies that we have named as an epistemology of the sacred, an epistemology of the senses and an epistemology of intimacy. We also explore implications of these stories for possible ways of taking action to address the challenges of our time and for finding sustainable ways of being in the world.

The universe story

The class is seated in a circle around a large open space. The student presenter takes a long rope and lays it out on the floor in the shape of a spiral. At the center she places a sign for the Big Bang, the primordial flaring forth of our cosmos an estimated 15 billion years ago. At intervals she places candles and other signs: Galaxies and Supernovas: 10–14 billion years ago; The Solar System: 5.0 billion years ago; The Living Earth: 4.0 billion years ago; The Proterozoic Era: 2.0 billion years ago; The Paleozoic Era: 550 million years ago; The Mesozoic Era: 235 million years ago; The Cenozoic Era: 67 million years ago; The Paleolithic Era: 2.6 million years ago; The First Humans (*Homo sapiens*) 200,000 years ago. She reads a summary of each period she has named and then invites the class to walk the spiral in silence, considering each era and the place of humans in the spiral.

This is an enactment of the universe story (Swimme and Berry 1992), the unfolding of the cosmos. Later in class we discuss what we have experienced in this ritual. We speak especially about our human presence on the planet in the context of the 13.5 billion years of the universe story and the 4.5 billion years of Earth's story. We are acutely aware that *Homo sapiens*, from which contemporary humans descend, emerged only about 200,000 years ago. The ritual presentation of this story has a profound impact on the class, seeing how short a time we humans have been on Earth and yet the impact we have had on the Earth's ecosystems in that time.

Swimme and Berry (1992) warn that we are coming to the end of the Cenozoic Era of Earth's geological timescale, the past 60–65 million years of the evolution of life forms on our planet, the era that brought forth flowers, trees, songbirds and mammals, including humans. They propose that the next era be called the Ecozoic Era, suggesting a new orientation recognizing the necessity of integral participation by all members of the planetary community. They note that the next phase of the story of the universe will require extensive change to our sense of reality and to the language we use to convey this sense.

Ecoepistemologies

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge. In this section we explore ways of knowing related to ecology and the environment. These "ecoepistemologies" are vital for shaping how we think about and relate to the world around us. Diverging from traditional anthropocentric ways of knowing, which separate us from the Earth, ecologically informed philosophy supports our contact and relationship with the human and more-than-human world.

An epistemology of the sacred

The phrase *epistemology of the sacred* was first introduced as part of the subtitle of the book *Angels Fear* by Gregory and Mary Caroline Bateson (1987). This phrase fits well as a description of the focus of the life and work of Thomas Berry (1988, 1999, 2009). Berry was a cultural historian, ecophilosopher, ecotheologian and one of the leading scholars involved in exploring the fundamental issue of our human relationship with the Earth. Berry says that humans have developed what he calls "an autism towards the world," listening and speaking only with themselves rather than to the rest of the world. We have lost what Berry (1988) calls "the great conversation" with the moon, with trees, rivers, mountains and animals, with the more

than human world. We have lost the understanding of ourselves as integral participants in the world, and we have stopped believing that plants and stones have something to teach us. Berry believes that this silencing of our capacity to participate in the great conversion is what allows us to poison rivers and oceans, to cut down rainforests and to deplete the Earth's resources.

Berry (2009) believes we must awaken to a consciousness of the sacred dimension of the Earth during this transition out of the Cenozoic Era. He calls us to abandon our mistaken ideas of human superiority and dominion over the Earth and to see the universe as a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects. He calls us to what he considers the "Great Work" of our time (1999), to usher in an Ecozoic Era, a time when humans will live in a mutually enhancing way with the community of Earth.

An epistemology of the senses

Ecologist and philosopher David Abram (1996, 2010) shares how his experiences in rural Indonesia and Nepal have shown him that it is possible to experience the world of nature with much more intensity than is common in the West. He says that our current commodification of nature is related to how we think and especially to our linguistic structures that privilege objectivity, rationality and materialism. Abram reminds us that perception is actually a reciprocal interaction of our living body and the animate world that we inhabit. Our most immediate experience of the world is one of reciprocal encounter.

Abram calls into question assumptions that the world is mechanistic and determined and that only humans have intelligent souls. He invites us instead into what French philosopher Merleau-Ponty (2013) calls participation with the flesh of the world. This is the experience that each of us, in relation to the other, is both subject and object. When we enter a forest we both see and are seen by the trees and plants and animals around us. This is our ancestral experience of reciprocity with the animate Earth, our "age-old reciprocity with

the many-voiced landscape" (Abram 1996, p.ix). Abram calls us to remember "a wisdom older than our thinking minds" (p.21). He shakes us free from our mental constructions and calls us home to ourselves, to the sensuous and sentient life of the body and to the directly experienced life of the living landscape.

An epistemology of intimacy

Norwegian economist, psychologist, expressive arts therapist and ecophilosopher, Per Espen Stoknes (2015), describes ecophilosophy as representing the turn from an anthropocentric (human-centered) worldview to an ecocentric (nature-centered) worldview. In an ecocentric worldview each being has sentience, inherent value and meaningful existence. Stoknes enlarges the concept of *poiesis* to include the more-than-human world. As a striking example of *ecopoiesis*, he discusses the *poiesis* of the air. The living air is actively involved in being and becoming, and our own psyche, our life breath, is always participatory. He points out how Western humans have long understood themselves as separate from air, land and sea. He asks those of us conditioned in such thought to think about where the self ends. If we consider the air we breathe in and out, the air in our lungs, the oxygen in our blood, the water in our cells, we see that the air is not an object out there, not just the background of our lives. The air is continuously creating the worlds in which our bodies live. Our breathing is connecting us to others, to the quintillions of molecules of oxygen from the trees nearby and the forests of the Amazon to the phytoplankton in the oceans and to each other. What we think of as the self is actually a web of interrelationships.

Citing the work of McNeley (1997), Stoknes (2015) offers the Navajo worldview in which the Holy Wind holds central importance. This is one example of many native cultures in which wind, air and heavens are considered sacred before these understandings were displaced by the chemical and physical definitions of modernity's view of air. From the Navajo perspective our own life breath is a

small wind that is a part of the large wind that surrounds us. Stoknes calls us to reawaken to the active creative process, the *poiesis* of the air, in the shifting clouds, the endless changing colors of sunrise and sunset, the everyday magic of fog and rainbows. This is not the magic of supernatural power but the "magic of the real" (p.214). He invites us to "walk into a vibrant forest and reimagine the exchange and fine-tuned communication everywhere around you, the complex interaction of birdcalls, of pollen and pheromones, dense patterns of light, sound, smell, and more all hosted and held and mixed by the air" (pp.215–216).

Stoknes echoes the earlier ideas of archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1995) who asserts that our individual symptoms of depression and anxiety are not just personal pathology but a normal reaction to the world in which we live. For both Hillman and Stoknes, symptoms reflect what the soul is trying to tell us, not just problems to be fixed. We must ask what story the symptoms of climate change are telling us about the state of the Earth and about the state of our own minds and souls. We must make an epistemological shift from simply explaining our personal and ecological pathologies to understanding the messages of these symptoms as a call for a shift in values and worldviews. Stoknes believes the symptoms of climate change will not be addressed by a dualistic fight between good and evil, but by a call to tell better stories about who we are and to act from the deepest integrity of our souls. Stoknes spells out what is happening with the challenges we face with climate change. He suggests reasons for our inability to confront climate challenges, and he offers suggestions of ways to move from denial to solutions by using social networks and by reframing the challenges as conversations about ethics and values and opportunities for wellbeing.

Walking more gracefully in the world

Shifting paradigms is not easy. The physical, social and spiritual realities of the world we live in are painful to see and experience. New ways of thinking call for awareness, courage and action.

Ecophilosophers suggest ways to think differently as well as ways to embrace paradigm change and to open ourselves to an experience of reconnection with the world, with each other and with our own souls. These are ways of compassion and hope. These ways of reconnecting are overlapping and interwoven, and they embrace the courage needed to practice nature-based expressive arts.

The way of compassion

As we walk silently by the Vietnam Memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC, the presence of Thich Nhat Hanh is palpable. Thich Nhat Hanh, activist, poet, artist and Buddhist monk, has just spoken about his work confronting the atrocities and human suffering during the Vietnam War. Born in 1926 and ordained in the Zen Buddhist tradition by age 22, his gentle being and presence have served as a model for nonviolent compassionate action for over 60 years (Hanh 1992, 1993, 1999, 2002, 2007). He was exiled from Vietnam in 1965 for his opposition to the war and remained in exile until 2005. Despite dislocation from his homeland, Thay, as his students call him, continues his work of engaged Buddhism leading to the creation of monasteries, schools and practice communities. His teaching and writing continue to inspire many today. Through mindfulness training and practice, Thay teaches that transformation of the world around us must begin with our own inner transformation. By attending to the present moment with compassion and without attachment, we have the possibility to know and change our inner landscapes in a way that allows us to bring peace and wellbeing to ourselves and to the world around us.

Now in his 80s, Thay continues his work through his Order of Interbeing, a monastic community guided by the ethics of mindfulness precepts that teach us to find our own liberation through compassionate action for all sentient beings. The word *interbeing* suggests the essential interconnectedness of the universe and challenges contemporary dualistic thinking and a sense of separate self.

> If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper… So we can say that the cloud and the paper *inter–are*… Looking even more deeply, we can see ourselves in this sheet of paper too. (Hanh 1992, p.95)

As we face challenges of great social and environmental magnitude, Thay inspires us to become informed and involved, to meet the world with an open heart, to sow seeds of compassion and to work through nonviolent social action to see and unearth the lotus in the mud, the beauty within the ugliness of the world.

The way of active hope

Buddhist scholar, ecophilosopher and activist Joanna Macy (1991; Macy and Brown 1998; Macy and Johnstone 2012) agrees with Thomas Berry that the greatest danger of our time is the deadening of mind and heart. In her work she combines theory with action. She draws on systems theory, deep ecology and ancient teachings to suggest how we can face the consequences of the repression of our conscious and unconscious pain for the world. Macy has pioneered the Great Turning Initiative that deals with the turn away from a society based on industrial growth toward a sustainable world (Macy and Brown 1998). This initiative involves three aspects. The first is holding action to defend life on Earth now. The second is an analysis of the institutional and structural causes of our current state. The third is a spiritual and cognitive shift in our perception of reality.

In support of the Great Turning Initiative, Macy has developed and teaches a program called the Work that Reconnects for groups to engage in personal and social change to work for peace, justice and deep ecology. The idea of reconnection with ourselves, with each other and with the world comes in part from one of her teachers, Gregory Bateson, whose phrase, *the pattern that connects*, and ideas were discussed in Chapter Three. There are six theoretical foundations for the Work that Reconnects (Macy and Brown 1998):

1. The world is alive. The Earth is our larger body, not our supply house and sewer.
2. As human beings we are more than the separate self as defined by habit and society. We are an intrinsic part of the living world, a part of the flows of matter/energy and mind. The world can now know itself through us, through our self-reflexive consciousness.
3. Our experience of pain for the world is not an individual pathology. When we deny or repress our pain we also diminish our power for healing our world. Our pain and our power to act spring from our inter-connectedness with all beings.
4. When we can experience our pain for the world we can free ourselves from our fears and experience on a visceral level our belonging to the web of life.
5. When we experience our interconnectedness with the community of Earth by willingly enduring our pain for it, we can expand our identity and engage with new paradigmatic thinking.
6. When we feel ourselves a part of the Earth community we are inspired to take action on behalf of it and participate in the Great Turning with insight, compassion and courage.

THE TRUTH MANDALA

At the center of the studio the student presenter lays out a circle with four quadrants. In each quadrant she places an object: a stone, dead leaves, a thick stick and an empty bowl. Standing in each quadrant, she explains the symbolic meaning of the objects. The stone is for our fear to speak the truth of what we know in our hearts. The leaves are for grief for what is happening in the world. The stick is for anger at destruction and injustice. The empty bowl represents our hunger for what is missing in our society today. She dedicates this truth mandala (Macy and Brown 1998, p.101) to the wellbeing of all beings and

to the healing of the world. She explains that this is a place of holy truth-telling. She invites us to step into the mandala one at a time, to take a symbol in our hands and to speak aloud the truth of our own experience. Afterwards she explains that the ground of the mandala is hope, that this ritual honors truth-telling as a way out of our confusion and numbness. Then she speaks of the flip side of each quadrant. She holds the stone and explains that courage to speak about fear is evidence of trust. She holds the leaves and tells the group that speaking of grief is evidence of love because we mourn what we care deeply for. She raises the stick in her hand as she says that anger springs from passion for justice. Gently holding the empty bowl, she says that to be empty means there is openness for the new. Macy developed this and other ritual exercises to offer a structure for owning our pain for the world and for owning the authority to act from it. People now perform this ritual around the world.

Summary

Stories from the field of ecophilosophy tell us that we live within a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects and that we as humans interact with every living being including the air. We recognize that we live within a long and ancient story of the Earth and the cosmos, a story in which we are only a recent part. Our climate symptoms tell us not only about the state of the Earth, but also about the status of our own souls. If we pay attention, we realize our current way of life in the industrial growth society of the West is not sustainable and that grief and unease are a normal response to an unsustainable way of living. Stories of ecophilosophy suggest epistemologies of intimacy grounded in the senses and the sacred. These stories call us to awaken from denial and disconnection and to transform grief and anger into action. This is a call for an ethic of care and character to embrace attitudes of wildness and wonder.

CHAPTER FIVE

Stories from Indigenous Cultures

We close our insearch with a return to the wisdom of ancient and indigenous traditions of living. These traditions are the taproot of our work. Taproots are anchor roots from which lateral roots spring. The central taproot descends deep into the earth providing stability and allowing smaller feeder roots to gain nutrients from the topsoil. The intertwining rootlets of nature-based expressive arts draw from the taproot of old ways of knowing.

In this chapter we share stories from indigenous cultures about the Earth and our place within it. We offer a definition of the term *indigenous* and review some general commonalities among indigenous cultures, along with cautions about making generalizations about these many diverse cultures. We (the authors) have been privileged to learn firsthand from several indigenous teachers. In this chapter we review our own personal experiences with the Quecha people in Bolivia and Peru, with the Pueblo and Navajo people in the American Southwest and with the Cherokee people of the Qualla Boundary in North Carolina.

Our intention is not to undertake an analysis of particular indigenous cultures, but to share personal experiences and related research that have a significant impact on our own thinking. We believe these stories offer some important lessons that inspire us and resonate with our ideas about a nature-based approach to expressive arts practice. We elaborate how beliefs and practices witnessed in

our personal experience with these cultures have helped to shape our thinking about nature-based expressive arts practice that honors the Earth.

Thomas Berry (1988) says that native peoples have some of the most integral traditions of the intimate relationship of humans with the Earth and its many beings. Such traditions, he says, are heightened rather than diminished by the disintegrating times through which they have passed in the aftermath of colonialism. Berry suggests that even a small amount of contact with native peoples can help us to once again become capable of experiencing the immediacy of life. Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013), professor of environmental biology and member of the Potawatomi Nation, says that to be indigenous means to live as if our material and spiritual lives and those of our children depend on how we live in relationship to the land we inhabit.

Indigenous peoples

The word *indigenous* derives from Latin *indigena*, born in a country, native and, originally, to spring from the land. Indigenous refers to any species existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place. Many indigenous people also refer to themselves as Native People or First Nations People. According to Cultural Survival (www.culturalsurvival.org), a non-profit group that advocates for the rights of indigenous peoples, approximately 370 million people in the world are considered indigenous, belonging to at least 5000 different groups with some 4000 distinct languages and cultural traditions that are still practiced today. This huge diversity is important to note in order to emphasize the fact that any generalizations made about indigenous people are necessarily reductions.

In the Americas the indigenous peoples are considered to be the pre-Columbian peoples, those living in the Americas before the arrival of Europeans. In the United States, Native Americans are those people whose pre-Columbian ancestors were living in the land. It is important to remember that these indigenous peoples of the Americas, as is true worldwide, are composed of numerous distinct

groups, each with unique and individual histories, cultures and languages (Brown 1992).

In indigenous cultures, the arts belong to the entire community and are experienced together to celebrate and mourn the passages of human life as well as to honor the seasons and cycles of nature and the movement of celestial bodies in the sky. In these cultures singing, dancing, drumming, ritual, enactment and all of the activities of creative making are part of a cosmology that honors the human relationship with each other and with the more-than-human world. Artistic making is integral to their scientific, spiritual and philosophical understanding of human experience, embracing an epistemology that includes many ways of knowing and forms of knowledge (Brown 1992). Among all of the languages of the Native Americans there is no word for art (Highwater 1981). Indigenous cultures worldwide have no word for art because art is an integral aspect of life itself (Shiner 2001).

The authors wish to emphasize that to speak of any indigenous culture requires, first of all, a great sense of humility in the face of the diversity, richness and complexity of these many cultures. Attempting to understand concepts from a culture that is different from our own is inevitably fraught with challenges. Language differences, in particular, frequently lead to distortion and misunderstandings. Despite our best and most sincere intentions to comprehend cultural differences, we are always looking through the lens of our own cultural worldview. Although we have had the privilege over many years of spending time with a number of indigenous elders, healers, artists and teachers, we realize how little we really understand about the complex worldviews that underlie their sophisticated beliefs and practices related to the arts and healing and to the very nature of reality.

Misunderstanding and exploitation

Misunderstanding, denigration and exploitation of indigenous peoples has been a common experience (Calderon 2014; Deloria

2003). Centuries of broken treaties and exploitation of Native Americans have characterized the encounter of Western European culture with almost every group of Native Americans. Native Americans have been the victims of both cultural and geographical exploitation and denigration since the arrival of Europeans on the American continent, and it continues today. Even as we have been writing this book, protests continue to be carried out over the land and water rights at Standing Rock, North Dakota with regard to the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline. The outcome remains to be seen.

In the United States a further complication has been the tendency of many people in recent years to romanticize and to expropriate many of the practices of Native Americans. Perhaps due to a longing for meaningful ritual, ceremony and a sense of belonging, many non-native people today participate in and conduct rituals such as sweat lodge ceremonies and vision quests without fully understanding the depth and complexity of the worldviews from which these practices emerge. With this in mind, we are careful to discuss only our own experiences and information that has been given to us explicitly to share or information from scholarly publications. In this book we are dedicated to presenting only what we have been encouraged to share by our native teachers and our personal experiences with them. We believe the teachers, artists and healers whom we have met personally offer some important lessons that inspire us and resonate with our work.

The tendency for exploitation and expropriation has been pointed out by many scholars, none more eloquently that the late Native American scholar, Vine Deloria Jr. Deloria (2003), who critiques the exploitation of native practices by non-native people and also discusses what has been lost in many of the contemporary practices of Native Americans today by the cultural genocide of native people. Meeting Deloria firsthand, and receiving his generosity in sharing his philosophies, were a strong encouragement to continue to learn from native teachers. This openness and generosity have characterized each of our personal encounters with indigenous peoples.

Personal encounters with indigenous cultures

Ideas gained from our encounters with indigenous peoples that later informed our theories and practice of expressive arts began in mountains and deserts, by rivers and lakes, in hogans, kivas, plazas and around kitchen tables in conversations with teachers, elders and artists from these cultures. Although at the time we began these encounters we were not consciously studying the field of expressive arts, we feel that our first education in expressive arts actually began there. Our encounters have been far more than just tourist travel or interesting adventures. We share some of them here in order to offer small glimpses into these rich and complex cultures. Each encounter has planted seeds for our current ways of thinking about nature-based expressive arts. Our experiences exemplify, most of all, Lewis Hyde's (1983) concept of art as a gift, something given to us, bestowed upon us, but a gift that must move, and we have attempted to keep the gifts moving by giving back in the ways that we can, offering the resources that we have.

The Quechua people

For many years the authors have taught graduate classes in crossing cultures, involving trips to the South American countries of Bolivia and Peru. The Quechua people are the largest group of indigenous people in both countries. Each of these countries has a rich cultural heritage as well as a long history of political and economic struggles. We have explored the rich culture of the Quechua as evidenced in their history, geography, spirituality, music, dance and visual art. Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in South America, and it has the largest percentage of indigenous people. Our study and work in Bolivia have included a number of service and educational projects with the expressive arts, including lectures at the Universidad de San Simon and working with staff members of organizations that offer services to street children, young mothers and orphans. We have undertaken these projects not just to share our own professional expertise but, more importantly, to provide learning experiences for our students

and for ourselves. We have shared many reciprocal gifts of art making, story sharing and cross-cultural communication, especially glimpsing the power of the arts within the Quechua culture.

The most thorough exploration of the encounter between the Quechua culture and expressive arts is elaborated by Jose Miguel Calderon (2014) in his doctoral dissertation "'Tinkuy': The Encounter between the Peruvian Imaginary and the Expressive Arts." Calderon discusses the relationship between expressive arts practice in Peru and the "Peruvian imaginary," the geography, history, mythology, traditions, arts and worldviews of the Quechua, using the Quechua word *tinkuy*. *Tinkuy* is the word for an encounter between two different positions that may foster the creation of a third way, something new. In his examination of the *tinkuy* he seeks to keep expressive arts true to the spirit of the land of Peru and its "imaginary." Keeping nature-based expressive arts true to the spirit of the land and its imaginary is exactly what we are intending in our elaboration of nature-based expressive arts.

The Pueblo people

The Pueblo people of the American Southwest are among the oldest cultures in the United States, tracing their history back some 7000 years (Pritzker 2000). The name *pueblo* is from Spanish, meaning "town." Each of the 21 pueblos is a sovereign nation. Pueblo people have preserved much of their identity and culture despite multiple efforts of colonialization. Throughout the year Pueblo people participate in traditional ceremonies to celebrate their spiritual beliefs. As a part of our graduate classes in intercultural encounter we have visited teachers, artists and elders in many of the pueblos. Two of the pueblos in which we were privileged to develop long-term relationships with the people were the pueblos of the Hopi in Arizona and Zuni in New Mexico.

THE HOPI PEOPLE

The Hopi people live atop three high desert mesas called simply First Mesa, Second Mesa and Third Mesa, completely surrounded by the Navajo Nation. They are also considered to have one of the most preserved native cultures of the Southwest, most likely because of their intentional caution in sharing their most sacred beliefs and practices and because of their remote and isolated geographical location. Terry Tempest Williams (2001) describes the Hopis as a timeless civilization, a people who understand how to live in harmony with the natural world. She says that they will survive our Western civilization and we have much to learn from them. The Hopi are known for their elaborate and sophisticated seasonal ceremonial life, marking and celebrating the seasons of the year, the seasons of human life and the Gifts of the Earth. Prominent in each of the Hopi pueblos are the tall ladders reaching down into their underground kivas, their sacred ceremonial centers. For many years the Hopi, even more than some of the other pueblo groups, have intentionally kept much of their knowledge secret in order to preserve its integrity. Among their arts practices, the Hopi are known especially for their carved kachina dolls and a particular design of silver jewelry.

THE ZUNI PEOPLE

The smell of pinyon burning dominates the first sensory experience of the Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico. Like the Hopi, the Zuni people participate in elaborate ceremonial practices related to each season of the year. Artist Alex Seowtewa, along with his sons, has spent his life creating images on the walls of the 400-year-old Catholic Mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The images are of the sacred kachinas, the spirits represented by the masked dancers of Zuni ceremonial practices within the landscapes of the seasons. On the south wall are images and landscapes of spring, summer and autumn. On the north wall are the sacred images of the ceremonial dancers of the Shalako, the annual celebration of the Winter Solstice. A remarkable demonstration of cultural sharing, these murals have been

preserved despite the occasional disapproval of the Catholic bishop at the time or the reluctance of the tribal elders to have their sacred images portrayed on the walls of a Catholic mission. In the arts, the Zuni are noted carvers of fetishes, small representations of animals and spiritual figures, and for a unique form of silver and turquoise jewelry called pettipoint.

The Dine (Navajo) people

The Navajo are the largest group of native people in the United States (Pritzker 2000). They are artisans in many media including carving, beadwork, silversmithing and especially weaving. At the historic Hubbell Trading Post we watched a weaver sitting on her blanket on the ground, weaving a wool rug, on her frame loom hung from a tree. She explained that she intentionally creates a so-called mistake, a *spirit line* within the rug so that spirits will not be trapped within it but able to move freely as they wish.

The traditional home of the Navajo is the hogan, a round or multi-sided dwelling with an opening facing to the east. Today, among Navajo who live in more modern dwellings, a hogan will still be maintained for ceremonial purposes. At the Navajo College in Tsaile, our students and faculty were fed and housed in their hogan-shaped dormitories and offered participation in classes and ceremonies to help us to begin to learn about the Navajo ways. In our visits with Navajo people we were also fortunate to develop ongoing friendships with the medicine woman, Annie Khan "the flower who speaks in a pollen way" (Perrone, Stockel and Krueger 1989, p.29) and with Navajo guide, Andrew Henry. Andrew is also a silversmith, and his wife is a bead worker. Each year we studied with Annie, and each year Andrew led us into the sacred land of Canyon de Chelly, to his tiny hogan, where we camped. As we hiked in the canyon we passed Spider Rock, the mythical dwelling place of Spider Woman, one of the most sacred Navajo female deities.

The Cherokee people

The Cherokee people are a traditionally Earth-based culture whose members understand and respect the importance of living in harmony with the environment (Pritzker 2000). The Cherokee people were one of the Native American tribes forcibly removed from their homelands in the eastern United States to land west of the Mississippi River, in what is now Oklahoma, during the first half of the nineteenth century. During the Cherokee Removal, known as "The Trail of Tears," an estimated 4000 to 8000 Cherokee people perished (Rozema 2003, p.40). The Trail of Tears has become a symbol of the broken treaties and oppression typically experienced by Native Americans in the aftermath of invasion by Europeans (Anderson 1991).

During the time of the Trail of Tears, an estimated 1000 Cherokee hid in the mountains in western North Carolina in order to escape removal. The descendants of these Cherokee now reside in the Qualla Boundary. Despite the legacy of trauma and many years of cultural genocide, the people of the Qualla Boundary are reclaiming their heritage. In recent years we have had the opportunity to have Cherokee speakers in our classes at Appalachian and to visit with elders and artists in the Qualla Boundary. One of our faculty colleagues of many years also shares a Cherokee heritage.

Indigenous beliefs and practices and nature-based expressive arts

Many of the ideas and practices of the indigenous people we have encountered have shaped our understanding of the theories and practices of nature-based expressive arts. To try to summarize and lay out in a linear fashion ideas from other cultures and languages that are characterized by a sophisticated and interwoven circularity cannot do full service to the indigenous epistemologies we have encountered. Even so, in our experience there are striking parallels between native

practices and beliefs and our thinking about the theories and practices of a nature-oriented approach to expressive arts.

The lessons we have learned from our experiences with indigenous cultures are not meant to generalize to all native people, nor are they meant in any way to minimize the intergenerational trauma and real issues of poverty and other social ills present in many indigenous cultures today in the aftermath of colonialization and cultural degradation. Ideas that have emerged as important contributions to our understanding of a nature-based approach to expressive arts include: (1) the belief that the world is alive and interrelated, (2) the importance of community, (3) the importance of story and imagination, (4) the idea that human creative process is a part of the creativity of the natural world and (5) the belief that the arts belong to everyone in the service of life as enacted in ritual and ceremony.

1. Everything is alive and interrelated

The sun was lighting up the red walls of the canyon as we entered the east-facing doorway of Annie Khan's hogan near Lukachukai, Arizona. She called her home *nizhoni*, "it is beautiful." Annie advised us to get up before the sun in order to pray the sun up. We understood this teaching as a paradigm shift from our mechanistic Western perspective. We understood her meaning, that every day it is important to find our place in relationship to all the forces of the world that are larger than our little selves. "Each time you trust," she said, "a strand comes over on your side. At first you may have only a few, but later you will have enough to weave a strong braid of those strands. And then what are you going to do with your braid of power?" she asked us, her dark eyes meeting ours.

In his seminal work *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian* (1992), Joseph Epes Brown says that a fundamental and characteristic belief among all Native American tribes of North America is that everything is alive and that all of life is sacred and interrelated. He terms this "a special quality and intensity of interrelationship with the forms and forces of the natural environment" (p.4). The phrase

mitakuye oyasin, from the Lakota language, translated variously as "all my relatives," "all my relations," or "we are all related," is a metaphor reminding the native person that community includes all beings and the responsibility to respect and care for all of life (Brown 2001; Cajete 2015). This phrase, often used as an opening invocation and a closing benediction for many ceremonies, describes the epistemology of the Indian worldview. Everything is alive and making choices. Every being shares responsibility for impacting the rest of the world. These ideas are consistent with contemporary theories in philosophy and in the physical and social sciences.

2. The importance of community

A story was once told to Belisario Betancur, a former president of Colombia, about a tiny Indian village near Lake Titicaca in Bolivia (Weisman 1998). A bank president had gone with a team of engineers to do a feasibility study for a proposed hydroelectric dam. After the team finished its work, there was leftover funding. Seeing that the village was in need of almost everything and grateful for their hospitality, the bank officials offered to fund a development project for the village. After meeting together, the elders of the village replied that what they most needed were new musical instruments for their band. The bank's spokesman asked if they wouldn't like to have an engineering project such as running water or a sewer system. The elders explained that in their village everyone played a musical instrument. On Sundays after mass everyone gathered for a concert. Only after making music together did they speak of any problems in the community and how to solve them. They explained that their instruments were old and falling apart and that without their musical instruments the community would also fall apart (Weisman 1998, pp.5–6).

According to Gregory Cajete (2015), "Relationship is the cornerstone of Indigenous community, and community is the place where we learn what it is to be related" (p.23). Thus the Lakota phrase *mitakuye oyasin*, "all my relations," encompasses the common

view of indigenous communities. This is community as inclusive of all persons as well of the entire cosmos. Indigenous epistemologies are built around ecological sustainability so that each person's sense of identity is interwoven with others and with living well in a specific place. The survival of the individual is synonymous with that of the family, clan and tribe. Family includes everything.

3. Imagination and story

> I don't know how old I am. I'm really old. I don't remember that time when I was born, but I remember long time ago when I was just a little girl. The rain came in the night, and my grandfather said, "You should not be lying down. Get up." He said it like that to me. Then we made a fire and we sat talking about how we were blessed until the rain had passed. "New plants will grow now," my grandfather said. Then he told me that I should know all the plant people and learn to call them by their name. "The plant people go wherever they want," he said. "If they want to move, they will. If they want to stay, they will. It's up to them. Now," he said, "you must tell me a story. It's the Navajo way." So I told him my best story, one I'd never told anyone. "My best time," I said, "is when the sunflower people come. They cover Mother Earth with that yellow flower. I like her in her yellow dress." I said it that way to him. Then he told me that flowers come in many different colors, just like people are made in many different colors. We all come from Mother Earth, and we will all return to her one day, because we are her. The next morning, when I awoke, right there by my cheek was this bag that my grandfather had made for me in the night while I was sleeping. It was filled with sunflower seeds. (Atkins 1996, p. 402)

Sharon French and her daughter Julie Birch are of mixed Navajo, White and Paiute descent. We usually stopped to visit with them at Burch's Trading Post on the way to camping in Chaco Canyon. Once when we were stranded by a snow storm, they took us into their home, prepared food, sang and told stories from Sharon French's

outdoor drama, *The Anasazi*. The story of the sunflower seeds was told to us that evening. This story illustrates many aspects of Navajo philosophy, showing the belief that all beings and the Earth herself are alive. We were encouraged to write it down and to share it with others.

In the stories we have heard in our experiences with the indigenous cultures, all emphasize the importance of the imagination and storytelling. All of these practices involve a restoration of the sense of belonging to the greater story of the world. Tribal people seek, by means of ceremony and story, to bring the individual into harmony with the living whole of being and to remember the mystery and majesty of all things (Allen 1986). Sharon French's story of the sunflower seeds and Annie Khan's instruction to get up early and "pray the sun up" are illustrative of this point.

4. Nature, art and creative process

The people of the indigenous cultures we have encountered see all beings as part of the creative forces of the natural world. Humans are participatory in these ongoing creative forces. Related to this view is the belief and practice that art making in all of its forms is a holy act. Whether offering prayers and gifts of tobacco when gathering grasses for baskets or painting sacred symbols on clay pots, all creative acts take on a dimension of the sacred. This includes a recognition that humans are a part of forces, seen and unseen, larger than the individual self. This larger-than-individual self, called by contemporary writers such as Stoknes (2015) an ecological self, is seen in all aspects of creative making. The kachina dolls of the Hopi, the fetishes of the Zuni, the weavings of the Navajo and the basketry of the Cherokee, as well as the jewelry and adornments of the all of the groups we met, are examples of creative making done in sacred ways, with the materials collected and treated with great care and reverence. In all creative making the tribal person is finding his or her place within an ongoing dynamic, creative and interactive process of life (Brown 1992).

5. Ritual and ceremony

Ceremony is an integral part of daily and yearly life in the indigenous cultures we encountered. It is a means of keeping the society whole and a means to celebrate peoples' relationships with the spirits and energies of the landscape. Ceremony connects the mundane to the sacred (Kimmerer 2013). Here we share three specific experiences with ceremonial practices: the first in Cochabamba, Bolivia; the second in the Zuni pueblo in New Mexico; and the third in the teaching of daily practice from a Cherokee wisdom keeper.

CEREMONY IN COCHABAMBA

In Cochabamba, Bolivia, for many years we were invited to take part in the c'oa, a Quechua ceremony. Here the Quechua shaman conducted his ceremonies in the surprising venue of a local nightspot. Late at night, after the other customers had left the bar, we were invited to participate in this regular ritual for healing and balance in life. There were many prayers, words spoken in the Quechua language. We did not understand the language, but we understood the sincerity and sacred intention of the words and actions. We all smoked cigarettes, sending our prayers skyward with the smoke. Then the shaman carefully laid out his materials, folding small papers and filling them with various herbs. He invited each of us to take a small rectangle made of sugar, each inscribed with a symbol. Mine (Sally) this time was the figure of Santiago with his staff drawn, riding a horse. I was struck by the image as a symbol of Spanish Catholicism and remembered how much of Bolivian culture is a mix of indigenous practices and the beliefs and practices that are the inheritance of Spanish colonialism. I was told later that Santiago is a symbol of lightning, the connection between heaven and earth. At the appropriate time, we were invited, one at a time, to add our symbols to one of the papers. The shaman poured alcohol on each paper, and all of them were added to a fire burning in the courtyard. This was nothing like we imagined a shaman's ceremony to be. Nonetheless, somehow each of us was touched by the sincerity, simplicity and reverence of this ritual.

CEREMONY IN ZUNI

At Zuni: The Guard of the First Kiva
What are you doing here?
The voice is stern and strong
Like the heavy smoke
Of pinyon burning
Sound of drums
And dancers' feet,
My own heart
Pounding in the darkness
As the hand before us
Bars our way
There are other dark faces
Behind him
Cold like the air
We are the Other

Here
I
Am
Afraid
To enter
We must speak the
The longing
That we cannot name
The words are not mine,
They swim like bottom fish
Through a dark river
The words are our medicine
Bundles, our amulets
They say who we are
How we found our way here
The words shape themselves
To the sound of the drum

To the sound of bare feet
Coming near
The words touch the place
Where the dark eyes soften
You are welcome here
He said
Come to the front
Where you can see well
This is sacred
Not a curiosity for tourists.

Sally Atkins (2005)

DAILY RITUAL

Amy Walker is an elder and wisdom keeper of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee. As a speaker in our classes, Amy often reminded us of the importance of creating meaningful personal rituals in our own lives. A simple daily ritual that she suggested was to splash cold water on our faces four times in order to remind ourselves that we are part of the larger world. We are always located within the four cardinal directions of east, south, west and north, and we are made of the associated elements of air, water, fire and earth. As with Annie Kahn, Amy's message was to find our place again and again within the larger context of the world. For many years Amy led the women's sweat lodge ceremony in Cherokee each week. The sweat lodge was not originally part of the Cherokee practices, but many native tribes share practices and traditions freely with one another as well as with outsiders. In a discussion after the ceremony one of the students asked her how she could lead a sweat lodge and at the same time serve as an elder in the local Lutheran Church. She responded simply that when you are a spiritual person, the form doesn't matter. She paused, and then continued, "You can get to a place where you can just love."

Summary

Stories from indigenous cultures tell us that the arts belong to everyone in the service of life and healing and that we belong to the Earth. These premises of nature-based expressive arts work are nowhere more present than in the lives of the native people we have encountered. In tribal settings everyone has a part in the rituals of daily life, and these rituals involve gratitude for the gifts of the Earth and acknowledgment that everything is alive and sacred. Ceremonies mark the turning of the days, the seasons and human lives. Drum, song and dance call for rain and a bountiful harvest. Sacred symbols mark objects for daily and ceremonial use. Made in conversation with nature, these objects have agency, creations that can speak back to us about our lives. As in native cultures, in nature-based expressive arts everyone participates in the shaping of creative forms. Ritual activities mark the time and space and the objects of creation as special.

PART IV

Finding Voice

In this part we offer a final chapter, interweaving ideas from the previous chapters to give voice to a nature-based approach to expressive arts. We suggest how a nature-based approach to expressive arts work is not only a professional practice but also a way of living in the world today.

CHAPTER SIX

Nature-Based Expressive Arts

Cultivating an Aesthetic Response to the World

Homecoming
In the saddle of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains
mother moon rose golden
over desert sand

We were there for the quiet
preserved in public land
and pre-dawn light

We were there for the sacraments
Chop wood. Carry water.
Stack stone. Make fire.

With the silent smoke of sage and cedar
we blessed our noise weary bones
at last, coming home.

Melia Snyder

In this summary chapter we integrate the ideas and experiences discussed in the previous chapters and reflect upon the intertwining lateral rootlets and rhizomatic relationships among the stories we have shared. We discuss the themes that have emerged in our research and the application of these themes to professional work and to life. Like the horizontal root systems of the aspen grove, the

personal and theoretical stories we have explored have overlapping and intertwining themes. All reflect the recognition that both art and nature offer medicine for the soul.

Theoretical integration

The field of expressive arts is already an integrative field, drawing concepts from differing disciplines and shaping its own philosophy and methodologies of practice (Knill *et al.* 2005). Theoretical integration is seldom straightforward, especially within the contexts of changing paradigms. As we reflect upon the stories we have explored, we realize that each story, each theoretical stance, offers a valuable perspective on conceptualizing nature-based expressive arts. Furthermore, we recognize that we do not stand apart from the stories we tell. We are in them.

While it is convenient to define the theoretical foundation and borders of a professional field, such conventions can limit what moves across the borders and as a consequence weaken the possibilities for emerging new ideas within the field. A nature-based approach to expressive arts recognizes that the boundaries of the field of expressive arts are permeable and always in the middle of an ongoing evolution of thinking. Movement toward theoretical integration in psychotherapy has grown since the 1980s (Brooks-Harris 2008). This movement reflects the realization that no single theory, no single story, is adequate to explain the complexities of the human experience or to address the challenges we face in the world today.

Nature-based expressive arts: Basic concepts

A nature-based approach includes the basic concepts of expressive arts work and expands them to include and emphasize the human relationship within the more-than-human world. Three healing dynamics are at work in nature-based expressive arts: the therapeutic relationship, the art making process and the creative process of the Earth. Foundational to nature-based expressive arts therapy

are the following basic concepts: a worldview of interrelationship, ecological presence, ecopoiesis and the arts in service of life.

A worldview of interrelationship

Nature-based expressive arts therapy embraces a systems view of life, the belief that the world consists of layers within layers of interrelationship. As Alice Walker expresses it in *The Color Purple*, "it come to me: that feeling of being part of everything, not separate at all. I knew that if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed" (1992, pp.195–196). From this perspective the idea of a skin-encapsulated individual self expands to become part of earth, air, fire, water and all of the other living beings of the world. The world then is experienced as a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects (Berry 1988). The word communion suggests that our interrelationship with the world is both intimate and sacred.

Ecological presence

The concept of presence, both as a personal quality of attention and as a relational process, is a basic concept in expressive arts work. Ecological presence involves bringing the relational process and quality of multi-leveled attention into our relationship with the Earth, being in the world with sensory awareness and with the storied awareness of the imagination. We are called, in the words of Mary Oliver, "to pay attention, this is our endless and proper work" (2003, p.27). In nature-based expressive arts the concept of presence is expanded to include a respect for the deep intelligence woven into all living beings. As Gary Snyder puts it:

> The world is watching: one cannot walk through a meadow or forest without a ripple of report spreading out from one's passage. The thrush darts back, the jay squalls, a beetle scuttles under the grasses, and the signal is passed along. Every creature knows when a hawk is cruising or a human strolling. The information passed through the system is intelligence. (1990, p.19)

Individual human consciousness exists in concert with the intelligence of the world and its vast creative processes. Another way to put this comes from a Native American elder's advice about what to do when you are lost in the forest: stand still, recognize that the forest knows where you are, and let it find you (Whyte 1994).

Ecopoiesis

Poiesis, to know by creating, is a primary concept within the field of expressive arts. This idea recognizes art making as a form of inquiry, with both the creative process and the art works created as sources of new learning and surprise. A nature-based approach to expressive arts expands the concept of poiesis to one of *ecopoiesis,* viewing human creative process as a part of, and embedded within, the ongoing creative process of the living Earth and the universe. The Earth is creating all the time, and our individual birthright of creativity is a part of this ongoing creative process. Recognizing the ecopoiesis of the Earth restores to the world a sense of mystery and awe beyond the explanatory capacities of our language. Even as we write, under the greening cover of the forest the wild iris and the buttercup are pushing their way up through the soil. We offer thanks for the gold and violet beauty of their blessings. This is the magic of the real.

The arts in the service of life

Whether it is the creativity of the air, the Australian bowerbird, the mangroves or humans, creative process serves to nurture and maintain life. In this sense all creativity is sacred. In nature-based expressive arts, artistic creating becomes a form of alchemy, an agency of transformation and a holy act, one that is happening all around us every day. Terry Tempest Williams (2001) reminds us that the world is holy and that all of life is holy.

The arts are not frills but sacraments. After the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001, hundreds

of poems flooded the internet. People sang in the streets. The New York Philharmonic played Brahms's Requiem at the Lincoln Center. When Thich Nhat Hanh and his colleagues collected the bodies of dead children in Vietnam, they sang. The arts are an affirmation that life can go on despite unbearable horror.

In nature-based expressive arts we expand the idea of arts in service of life to include the life of all beings and the Earth. This *I–thou* relationship (Buber 1958) serves to maintain the awareness of belonging to the community of Earth. Particularly when used within contexts of ritual and ceremony, the arts become a way to experience *communitas*, the common bond of humans with each other in which each person is respected and honored. Nature-based ceremony includes the Earth in this communal bond and celebrates the sacredness of all life and nourishes the souls of persons and the soul of the world. Viewed in this way, arts in the service of all life serve as the bedrock of our resilience, which we explore in the following section.

Stories of resilience

Ann Masten (2014) defines resilience as the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the functioning, viability or development of systems. This capacity is not extraordinary, but normal "ordinary magic," the title of her book. This health promotion orientation aligns with Antonovsky's (1979) theory of salutogenesis, a coherent theoretical framework concerned with identifying the origins of health rather than disease and in promoting optimal wellbeing rather than remediating pathology (Becker, Glascoff and Felts 2010). Intrigued by a subset of thriving Holocaust survivors in a population he was studying, Antonovsky (1979) discovered that the survivors shared the common view that life is meaningful, manageable and comprehensible; what he referred to as a strong sense of coherence. Antonovsky's theory of salutogenesis was supported by the lived experience of Victor Frankl (1959),

who survived life in a concentration camp by finding meaning and purpose despite heinous conditions and unimaginable loss.

As nature-based expressive artists, we have the capacity to facilitate "ordinary magic" (Masten 2014) by promoting meaning, manageability and understanding in our own lives and in the lives of those with whom we work. A study by the second author of this text, for example, revealed that pregnant and parenting women in treatment for substance use disorders demonstrated statistically significant gains in the strength of their sense of coherence after an eight-week expressive arts group therapy intervention (Snyder 2014). The inherent properties and metaphors of the arts and of nature mirror back our own resources and resilience. They help us remember that we belong, that we matter and that we can manage the storms of life, creating, shaping and reshaping our way forward. The following personal, clinical and ecological stories animate the power of a nature-based expressive arts approach for modeling and promoting resilience.

An ecological story

Appalachian professor Dr. Liz Rose shared the following story of eco-renewal and resilience in an expressive arts retreat. Rose, a lover of plants native to the Southern Appalachian mountains, was concerned about the viability of the pink lady slipper, a flower that visually embodies its name, due to the sickness and death of many hemlock trees in the area where the flower makes its home. The wooly adelgid, a small aphid-like insect, has threatened the health and sustainability of hemlocks in our mountains for about a decade. On a walk during the retreat Rose looked for the pink lady slipper under the hemlocks. They were not there. Her concern and grief transformed into a sense or wonder and praise, however, when she noticed that the flower had danced its way to the shade of a nearby rhododendron. This delicate, rare and endangered flower was adapting to change in its environment, finding a new home when the old one was no longer able to sustain life.

In the therapy field, we often speak of vicarious trauma, but we also know that when we hear stories of clients' strength, perseverance, and growth through adversity we experience a sense of vicarious resilience (Hernandez, Gangsei and Engstrom 2007). Similarly, when we hear stories of species threat and loss and environmental degradation, we may experience vicarious eco-trauma. Through stories like those of the pink lady slipper, however, we experience vicarious eco-resilience, a connection with our own abilities to navigate change, loss and threat. The following personal story is one such example.

A personal story

During my separation and divorce, I (Melia) survived by reclaiming an overgrown and neglected garden space at the cabin I rented during my doctoral studies. I set boundaries, putting up tall fencing, and constructed new containers to hold life, creating raised beds. These beds I filled with fertile soil and seeds that would feed me—greens and radishes, tomatoes and peppers, squash and eggplant, potatoes and beans. Between the boxes, I laid brick and painted a bench that would become my place of meditation in my growing garden. Daily, I visited the garden, tending to the chores of weeding and watering. I asked for and accepted help when I couldn't do the work alone. Everything grew, and this neglected place, which had been percolating with metal and trash, now fed me. I shared the harvest with my neighbors and fed myself well with fresh whole foods. Often, I was visited by a deer who had lost a leg after being hit by a vehicle. That spring, against all odds, she had a baby. In the wildlife preserve where we lived, we both found sanctuary and a hidden wholeness that emerged amidst loss. The growth and resilience I saw in my garden and in the deer weaved their way into my poetry and became a touchstone of strength as I moved into the unknown, informing my personal journey as well as my clinical work, as illustrated in the following story.

A clinical story

Mary (not her real name) was a ten-year-old child with whom I (Melia) had worked since she was five. She had been removed from her biological mother's custody due to severe neglect, sexual abuse, parental drug abuse and domestic violence. She had been living in a therapeutic foster home for five years, but her older foster parents could not adopt her and wanted her to have a loving permanent home that would last beyond their years. Instead, they would become her forever grandparents. Upon becoming legally cleared for adoption, Mary began visiting potential adoptive parents. The stress of this experience led to her becoming violent and controlling, effectively scaring off all potential adoptive parents. On walks outdoors she became obsessive about saving earthworms that were drying out in the heat. Even at a theme park she ignored the rides in favor of saving worms. Carefully, she would pick each one up and throw it into the moist, shaded grass. Her art had likewise become more violent in content and expressed a lack of control. Soon, on walks, she was visited by many dragonflies who would hover around her and land on her head and shoulders. I shared with her the medicine of the dragonfly from *Animal Speak* (Andrews 2002 [1993]) and this helped to create a shift. Dragonfly medicine acknowledges the burden of early emotional trauma but is recognized as a bringer of hope and light among many cultures. In a ceremony with her foster parents and the Department of Social Services worker, we grieved the impending change and its inevitable challenge and gifted Mary with a dragonfly totem necklace to symbolize transformation and hope for the future. In the coming weeks, Mary began putting energy toward what she wanted: a home and a place to belong. We invited her to become a full participant rather than a powerless victim of the process. She soon became eligible for a family funding grant and eventually was adopted by her second cousin, who respected her need to go slowly and build trust over time. This year she is graduating from high school with plans to become a medical doctor.

Stories of active hope in therapy

These stories of resilience are living examples of tending the Earth and the human soul through our lives and work, a practice of active hope. According to Brené Brown (2010) hope is not an emotion, but rather a cognitive process that can be learned. Hope involves the setting of realistic goals, the tenacity and perseverance to meet them through achievable and flexible means, and belief in ourselves. Hope engenders power, that is the ability to effect change in our lives and world. Hope is a primary ingredient of resilience and an antidote for fear, doubt and powerlessness.

William Coperthwaite and John Saltmarsh (2007), in their book *A Handmade Life*, suggest that work is most valuable when it is visible, when we enjoy and believe in it, when it takes us actively and deeply into the world and what we care for, and when it is in service to something beyond ourselves. Specifically, Coperthwaite and Saltmarsh challenge our culture's attitude toward work as drudgery, as obligation, and as something that removes or separates us from living. In order to be whole and healthy people, we need work that awakens our creativity and keeps us connected with the idea of "bread labor" (p.34), that is, basic work necessary for living. When we work in the garden, tend our children and engage in the many ways of daily making, we feed ourselves and our souls.

As a wilderness therapist, the young boys I (Melia) worked with were responsible for chopping wood and making fire to keep our cabin warm. If they neglected their duties, we were all cold. If they did not clean the dishes properly, we were sick. This direct relationship between person and environment was not idyllic but real—a counter narrative to the mixed messages and complicated family dynamics to which they were accustomed. Although the directness of nature's feedback was often abrupt and undesired, in the long run it fostered trust, resiliency and a sense of interdependence. Initially their "bread labor" seemed a chore and was met with complaining, making excuses and creating drama to avoid responsibility. Over time, however, the boys began telling stories and singing as they worked in the garden,

built fences, stacked wood or made fire. As they engaged with the elements to meet basic needs, they began to develop self-respect and to move from labeling themselves as the problem to seeing themselves as a vital and essential part of the community. The community and environment were the primary counselors and teachers and, as the therapists, my coworkers and I became the midwives, helping to make sense of the experience, integrate the lessons and translate them to life.

Teaching stories

Teaching and learning involve cultivating presence and openness, bringing the body/mind/soul into the work with courage and integrity (Palmer 1998). More than simply acquiring information, the goal is to awaken and nurture an aesthetic sensitivity to self, to each other and to the world. Our teaching is an extension of who we are, as illustrated in the following stories.

Teaching as ceremony

The class sits on cushions arranged in a circle. The windows of the studio open to a view of the mountains. The leader stands, carefully unfolds the deerskin she carries and places it in the center. She places four stones on the skin, explaining that each one is for one of the four cardinal directions: yellow for the east, red for the south, black for the west and white for the north. In the east she places a pottery cup filled with sage. In the south she puts a candle. She places a shell filled with water in the west and a wooden bowl of soil in the north. "This is to find our place in relationship to the landscape, to everything bigger than our little selves," she says.

Then she explains that in many traditions the directions are associated with stones, colors, the time of day, the season of the year and the characteristics of animals. "For example, this is the time of autumn, associated with sunset in the west, and the element of water. This is a time of introspection and transformation. It is the teaching of the black bear in our area." She lights the candle and the sage and

passes the sage around the circle inviting the group to pass the smoke over their bodies. "This herb is from my garden. I use it for cooking and for ceremonies. The smoke of sage often is used for cleansing the heart and mind in preparation for important work."

She invites the students to stand:

> We open class in this ritual way to mark that this is a time and space set apart from ordinary life. Here we make a space together to share who we are, to create and to learn. This is a sacred space. We begin with the breath. First just breathe and pay attention to the rhythm of your own breathing. Notice how the breath goes on, even without your conscious intention. This is the literal way we are connected to each other through the living air.
>
> Now as you inhale, fully open your arms wide, then stretch them high above your head. As you exhale let them drop. Do it again. Notice how this movement deepens your breathing and opens your chest, your heart space. Do it again. This time as you exhale bring your thumbs together, and as you lower your arms touch your head chakra and your heart chakra. We do this to set an intention to create a heart/mind space for learning, where we can think with our hearts and feel with our minds.
>
> Bring your hands to your heart. Now breathe out. Open your arms. Open your heart to the world. Breathe in. Bring your hands back to your heart. Take the world into your heart. Breathe out. Open your hearts to each other. Look around. Breathe in. Take each other into your hearts. And again.

Then she speaks a poem. This morning it is from Rumi: "The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you…don't go back to sleep…people are moving back and forth across the doorsill where the two worlds touch. The door is round and open…" (Rumi 1995, p.36)

> Now we will cast the circle. Let's be seated. We sit in a circle to recognize that everyone holds an equal place, and it is important to hear each person's voice. Tell who you are, what brought you here and what you are really hoping for in this class today.

The description of the opening of this class embodies many of the tenets of nature-based expressive arts work: creating ritual space, remembering the teachings of the natural world, connecting to body and breath and sharing intentions. The leader's teaching is an extension of her personal practice, an example of weaving ritual into work and life. Later, each student will become the leader of the class opening, sharing from his or her own daily practice. From this point the class will move to discussions of the topics of the day, to art making and to personal and professional dialogue.

Cultivating active hope in the classroom

In the opening circle of my (Melia) Current Issues in Expressive Arts class we begin by passing around a clay vessel shaped by the hands in the circle and filled with personal symbols of resilience. The pinch pot serves as a tactile reminder that we hold each other in our circle and in our lives. Due to the particularly challenging times we live in, I implemented an addendum to our practice of presence during our normal check-in. I asked students to pay attention to examples of active hope in the week between our meetings. *Notice images, words, actions and interactions that counter the dominant narrative of fear, greed, violence and ecological devastation. What have you witnessed or done that reconnects you to love, generosity, benevolence and sustainability?* I couldn't have imagined the profound impact that these stories have had on me, my students or our class culture. The following are short poems I wrote in response to our opening circle of active hope.

For Carol
She cleans our floors and empties our trash
posting love notes as she sweeps
spreading a "Love Feast" of hot cider and soup

for the souls of all students
the morning after our state again
institutionalized discrimination.

We all agree,
she who is paid least
is the gold our souls most need.

Melia Snyder

An Aesthetic Response to Circles of Active Hope
Weekly we bring stories
of resilience and generosity--
the crippled man picking up trash
an art sanctuary for inner city kids

We pass our clay vessel
feeding ourselves on
small acts of social justice
radical acts of kindness

This is our bowl of active hope
brave people speak up
an elder embraces her gray
a tumor fades with each brushstroke

We feast on the humanity
of a homeless man,
grateful for pause and presence
he offers prayers not of help but of praise

We see ourselves in the stained glass
the piecing together of a life interrupted
the shaping of some new self
made of shards, broken and beautiful

We remember the angels who come
bringing the medicine
of making, the cure of color
we begin to look for the gold

The news of our political circus fades
becoming an absurd background

against which we remember the real
against which we weave ordinary magic

Melia Snyder

Nature-based expressive arts in life

Resilience and hope are cultivated through both attention to our inner life and intention and investment in our own growth and development as human beings. In nature-based expressive arts, our approach is an aesthetic one. Aesthetic responding is a way of showing or telling how we are touched by the beauty we see in ourselves, each other and the living world around us. Rachel Carson tells us that we have a true instinct for what is beautiful and awe inspiring in the presence of the wonders and mysteries of the Earth (1956). Cultivating our innate aesthetic response to the world involves letting ourselves be touched and inspired by the mystery and wonder of the Earth and the universe. This way of being becomes a sacred practice, transforming not only our individual selves but also the world around us.

Inner alchemy

Historically, alchemy was the medieval practice of transforming base metals into precious ones. Although the process involved a series of chemical changes, the presence of the alchemist and the practices of prayer and art making were considered essential to the transformation. In modern times, alchemy is generally considered not a literal change in matter, but a psycho-spiritual process of converting our own lead into gold. This transformation requires the courage to look inward, to recognize our own shadow and to hold our darkness in our arms without numbing or running away. While awareness is the first step, we must do our own work. The following excerpt from Paolo Coelho's *The Alchemist* (1988) captures the spirit of alchemy as we translate it for the practice of nature based expressive arts:

> "This is why alchemy exists," the boy said. "So that everyone will search for his treasure, find it, and then want to be better

> than he was in his former life. Lead will play its role until the world has no further need for lead; and then lead will have to turn itself into gold. That's what alchemists do. They show that, when we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better, too." (pp.150–151)

In an age of theism and secularism, we often either outsource our liberation to an external savior or we reject the sacred altogether. Nature-based expressive arts is a non-theistic practice, but it requires a sacred outlook. The word *sacred* comes from Latin *sacer,* that connotes something holy that should not be trampled (Trungpa 2013). *Holy* refers to that which is whole or wholesome. When we create sanctuary in our lives, in our practice or in the environment, we hold space for what is sacred or holy. Often we lack the spaciousness in our lives for tending the sacred. We are busy and overextended. We are tired and distracted. Inner alchemy, however, requires space for tending the lead and inviting the gold. Through the cultivation of sacred practice, we catalyze change from within.

Sacred practice

Helpful attitudes for nurturing our capacity to live and work aesthetically include courage, compassion, curiosity, openness, integrity, trust, hope and reverence. Without practices that cultivate these attitudes, they can become empty, naïve and meaningless. In nature-based expressive arts we emphasize the importance of cultivating sacred practice not only to help us center and ground in a state of mindful awareness, but also to nurture what is holy and wholesome.

Sacred practice occurs in conversation with the Earth and may include writing or painting, body-based practices such as meditation, mindful exercise or finding a "sit spot" in nature that one returns to over time. Bill Plotkin (2010) suggests that we need modern practices for "coming home," that is, connecting on a regular basis with our true nature as human beings situated within an alive world.

When asked about his simple practice of making his pinch pots and returning them to the Earth, Paulus Berensohn (Lawrence 2013) said that the arts are not a way of making a living but a way of making a life. Through his doodles, his sewing, his pottery, his letter making, his journal making and his dancing, Paulus expressed the pain of his psyche and found peace in the midst of a disabling depression. Such ways of being help us to embrace the seemingly paradoxical abilities of letting go, allowing life to unfold and taking courageous action when appropriate to address issues of ethics and justice. Through sacred practice, our purpose is "to pay attention, this is our endless and proper work" (Oliver 2003, p.27). Marianne Adams's poem "Daily Practice" is a helpful reminder:

> **Daily Practice**
> We never get it right
> It's life work
> It has to do with being
> Comfortably alone
>
> Honoring our interior lives
> And finding our place in the larger world
>
> *Marianne Adams (2003)*

Our inner alchemy is supported by the commitment to a daily sacred practice. By transforming our psychological and spiritual lead into gold, we are better able to promote sanity and sustainability in the world around us. This is the work of outer alchemy. By tending our inner lives, we are able to be present and engaged with both the beauty and ugliness we face.

Cultivating an ethic of care

OPENING OUR HEARTS TO THE EARTH: AN ACT OF VULNERABILITY

The ways that we teach, practice and live matter because we are shaping the world with our values, attitudes and actions. We are not

just visitors passing through, but co-creators in the making of things. When we open our hearts to the Earth without numbing, distracting or distancing, we lift the veil of separation. We make contact and are no longer strangers. We care, and "care is the hallmark of being human, the ground of holiness" (O'Donohue 2005, p.77) and an entry into creating wholeness in a fragmented world. We can begin by learning the names of things around us and the stories they tell that weave our lives together.

On a recent walk in the Southern Appalachian Highlands, we met the spring beauties, feathery white flowers that signal to local farmers the time has come for walking their cows up from the valleys along the gravel back roads to the high bald pastures where they'll summer. Our walk also led us to an old Wolf River apple tree, hollowed inside but still blooming. We later learned that neighbors come together each year to gather the organic fruit of this tree, making apple butter, pie and juice to enjoy throughout the year. Throughout our time along this woodland trail, we kept noticing a small and delicate nodding yellow flower with two leaves marked by oblong brown spots. We learned that this was the trout lily, an edible and medicinal native plant used both as a contraceptive and as a diuretic and named for its trout-like brown spots. Our walk was one of making contact, of naming, of forming a relationship, of learning and ultimately of falling in love with the land around us. We are reminded again that anything we love can be saved.

If we are truly open, we embrace the vulnerability suggested by Rilke (2005), letting everything happen to us, both beauty and terror. We see not only beauty, but also the ugliness inherent in environmental degradation, disrespect and exploitation. We cannot fail to notice or be affected by the decomposing cars, trash-filled yards, mountainsides stripped bare for mining and trails littered with trash. Our vulnerability, according to Brown (2012), is the birthplace of love, belonging, accountability and authenticity and the wellspring for creating a purposeful and meaningful life. Vulnerability is also the source of creativity, innovation and change needed to confront

the challenges of our time. This way of being in the world takes us from being sideline spectators in a disconnected drama to full participants in the arena itself, creating and enacting an ethic of care for the human and more-than-human world.

BRINGING THE EARTH INTO OUR HEARTS: AN ACT OF RESPONSE/ABILITY

Nature-based expressive arts calls on our capacity as sentient beings to open our hearts to the Earth, that is to see, feel, hear, experience, and know what we know. By extending our openness and taking the Earth into our hearts, we allow ourselves to be moved and touched by the world around us. Our human capacity to transform our sensory and emotional experience into conscious action is our greatest response/ability as nature-based expressive artists. We don't sit idly by waiting for someone else to do the work, but instead harness our ability to respond courageously, constructively and creatively to effect positive change in and around us. Our anger and grief and our praise and awe become the raw elements of our alchemy.

Lily Yeh, whose life and work is the subject of the film *The Barefoot Artist* (Holsten and Traub 2014), illustrates the creative alchemy of honoring darkness and despair in a way that brings beauty and new life. Yeh works in places of pervasive trauma, fragmentation, neglect and pollution. An abandoned urban lot in Philadelphia, the Genocide Survivor's village in Rwanda and a vast garbage dump in Kenya become her canvas. Through the power of community, imagination and art she empowers transformation of place and person by honoring the resilient spirit of the people, Earth and cultures where she works. Collectively imagined and co-created community gardens, murals, mosaic curving walls, dance and ceremony, and sanctuary for bones to rest "make special" (Dissanayake 1995) the land and lived experience of those who call on this "barefoot artist." Through her work with others, Yeh reflects that it is her own darkness and the pain brought by generations before her that she is healing and repairing.

Her healing becomes the healing of the Earth and of the people of the Earth.

To harness the power of our response/ability, our ability to respond, we must fully enter into the story of our own lives and the stories that shape our reality and world. By making friends with these stories and holding both their beauty and darkness in our arms, we can leave behind unsustainable scripts that perpetuate the status quo and further environmental and social unraveling. When we cultivate an ethic of care, we actively participate in the Great Turning (Macy and Johnstone 2012), the Great Conversation (Berry 1999) and the magic of the real (Stoknes 2015).

We become authors of new and more beautiful and sustainable stories that honor the life and dignity of our vast self, embedded in the body of the Earth. We who practice the arts, who honor the gifts of nature and the magic of the real, we are all the storytellers. May we do so, honoring both art and nature as medicine for the soul. May we do so with an ethic of care and courage and attitude of wildness and wonder.

Tell Me, She Said
Tell me, she said:
What is the story you are telling?
What wild song is singing itself through you?

Listen:
In the silence between there is music,
In the spaces between there is story.

It is the song you are living now.
It is the story of the place where you are.
It contains the shapes of these old mountains,
The green of the rhododendron leaves.

It is happening right now in your breath
In your heartbeat still
Drumming the deeper rhythm
Beneath your cracking words.

It matters what you did this morning
and last Saturday night
And last year,

Not because you are important
But because you are in it
And it is still moving.
We are all in this story together.

Listen:
In the silence between there is music
In the spaces between there is story.

Pay attention.
We are listening each other into being.

Sally Atkins (2005)

An elder once asked a young person he was working with, "Are you a medicine woman?" She hesitated, afraid of making too much of herself. He challenged her saying, "This is not about you. The ancestors and the future beings are waiting for you to show up and tend your inheritance." This is our call and our response/ability as nature-based expressive artists—to claim and use the medicine of the arts and the Earth in the service of all life.

Summary

The stories of ecotherapy, the arts, ecological sciences and philosophies and the wisdom of indigenous cultures create the warp and weft of nature-based expressive arts. These stories are our *teoria*, or theory, teaching us that we are held in and belong to the larger fabric of the universe. Daily we are engaged in an ongoing co-creative conversation that shapes and impacts the world around us. Awareness and presence are required to build a relationship with the Earth and its beings that is in the service of all life. As therapists and caring professionals, the practice of nature-based expressive arts takes us further into the world, calling us to engage with the fundamental

and most challenging questions of living, working, and being. We begin with ourselves, doing our own inner alchemy, the work of transforming our lead into gold. We cultivate a sacred practice that helps us cultivate our own sanity and re-member ourselves as cells in the body of the Earth. We allow ourselves to be moved by what we experience, engaging directly with the world around us in a way that furthers beauty, sustainability and wellbeing for all life. Our work and way of living become our active hope, our response/ability and our aesthetic response to the world.

PART V

Bringing Art into Life

Appendices

In the appendices we offer examples of the application of nature-based expressive arts theory to professional practice. Each of the four appendices offers a suggested structure for a nature-based expressive arts activity. While all activities are intermodal, each one focuses on a particular aspect of the application of nature-based expressive arts:

Appendix A: The Nature of the Body by Lauren E. Atkins

Appendix B: The Pen and the Path by Melia Snyder

Appendix C: Cherokee Drumstick Ritual by Keith M. Davis

Appendix D: Fire by Friction, Humility and Attunement by Justin S. Cantalini and Erin Rice Cantalini

APPENDIX A

The Nature of the Body

Lauren E. Atkins, MA, MFA

Purpose and goals of the activity

The purpose of this activity is to help establish a connection with kinesthetic experiences of the body in relationship to the natural world. This activity can also help to enhance somatic self-awareness and somatic empathy, to practice moving and being witnessed in response to art making and to build group cohesiveness.

Materials needed

- Open floor space large enough to accommodate the number of participants, cushion for sitting on floors or chairs around the perimeter if participants are not comfortable sitting on the floor.
- Easy access to the outdoors, to elements of the natural world (e.g., sticks, stones, leaves, flowers, etc.). If there is no immediate access to the outdoors, a large variety of natural materials could be gathered ahead of time and placed in the center of the room.

Time and space requirements

Approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes (time requirements will vary depending upon the age of participants). Young children typically are natural movers and need less verbal processing. Adults may need more time for verbal processing.

Appropriate clientele

This is a simple but powerful structure to help clients experience a sensory connection with the body and with natural elements. This exercise offers the opportunity to practice moving and being witnessed within the expressive arts framework of aesthetic responding. This is a structure that can be adapted to clients of any age. Language should be adjusted appropriately if working with children in order to be developmentally accessible.

Appropriate timing

This body-centered activity could be adapted for use at any stage of group process. It could provide an initial introductory experience for the participants with each other near the beginning of a group. However, this activity could be most effective after a group has already had a brief introduction to movement and/or expressive arts processing. For participants for whom movement is a new modality, body issues, fears and resistance are not unusual. The non-judgmental presence and modeling of the leader are important aspects.

Step-by-step description of the activity

1. The leader begins the group experience by inviting participants to join a standing circle and inviting each participant to share his or her name and a movement reflecting the participant's feeling in the moment. The leader should demonstrate to begin. For example, the leader might say: "My name is… Today I feel…excited…scared…tired…," and demonstrate a

brief movement. This opening provides a sense of the status of the group, the individual and collective energy of the group and the willingness of group members to engage in open-ended improvisational movement and sharing. This opening go-around can simply be a visual witnessing experience. However, it is most effective as a kinesthetic witnessing experience in which participants physically embody and mirror the name and the movement of each participant during the circle, thus beginning a practice of somatic empathy.

2. The leader invites participants to move outdoors and to gather materials from nature (five to nine items that attract them). The number of collected items is not as important as encouraging a felt connection to the collected items. The leader should encourage participants to take time to touch and smell each piece as they gather items. The leader should keep the time.

3. The leader calls participants indoors (perhaps with a bell or drum) and invites them to arrange the items they have gathered into an individual installation piece. Participants can place their installation anywhere in the room. The leader encourages participants to take time in creating their piece, to try out different arrangements and to find an arrangement that is satisfying to them.

4. When pieces are complete, the leader guides the participants through an individual movement response to the installation. Providing a time framework of two minutes, the leader keeps the time in order to provide a container for the movement exploration. The leader invites the participants to move without stopping for two minutes, to explore in movement the lines, shapes and felt sense of their creation, and to not worry about interpreting or making sense of their movement response. With a group that is new to movement, it may be helpful for the leader to demonstrate a movement response

to a visual installation. Sometimes a suggestion of responding through feeling versus thinking can be helpful.

5. The leader asks participants to repeat this two-minute movement exploration again, this time in partners. The movement may change in this second round. One partner will take the role of witness and one the mover. Then the roles are reversed so that each partner has participated in both roles. This is done in silence. After each person has experienced both roles, the leader calls for five to ten minutes of verbal processing of the experience in the pair. This may include more detailed verbal sharing of the installation piece as well. During this time the leader can visit processing pairs, encouraging non-judgmental witnessing of the process and the artistic products. Often surprises and new learning come in the sharing and witnessing of the artistic creations, particularly in working with elements of nature.

6. The leader invites the group to a silent "gallery walk" through the room. This is a time for everyone to see each other's creations and to appreciate the beauty and diversity of each person's creation.

7. The leader invites participants to gather together in a closing circle. In the final group sharing the leader invites participants to reflect on the process of gathering their materials, creating their installation, moving in response to their installation and being witnessed in their movement. One at a time, each participant shares a movement with the whole group that expresses a reflection of the entire experience. In a final go-around, each person shares a one-word summary of his or her experience of the activity.

Processing suggestions

This structure is a basic outline that can be changed and adapted to fit the age level, purpose and needs of the situation and clientele. It is also possible to add a written component to the exercise by having participants write brief poems in response to their installations. Adjusting and fine-tuning the language used in this basic activity can make it applicable for dealing with a specific issue or group focus.

Personal commentary

Children are natural movers but, of all of the artistic modalities, movement can be the most intimidating for adults. Creating a climate of playfulness, curiosity and non-judgment is important for any movement activities in expressive arts.

APPENDIX B

The Pen and the Path

Melia Snyder, PhD, LPC, NCC, REAT

Purpose and goals of the activity

To connect with nature as a way of knowing and as a source of wisdom for moving through challenges that arise in personal and professional life.

Materials needed

- Journal
- Writing instrument
- Access to the outdoors
- Printed writing prompts and poetic structure

Time and space requirements

This session can be completed within 1.5 hours but may be expanded or contracted as desired.

Appropriate clientele

This activity requires abstract thinking and therefore is not developmentally appropriate for young children. It may be used in therapeutic settings with adolescents or adults in individual, group

or couples work. It would also be appropriate to use for the purposes of professional or organizational development.

Appropriate timing

This activity is appropriate to support clients during any challenge but is especially potent in times of conflict, ambiguity, stagnation, transition or change.

Step-by-step description of the activity

The following process is referred to as the GRACE model (Snyder 2014), and has been successfully utilized in expressive arts work in both therapeutic and organizational settings. Modify as needed to accommodate differences in ability.

- Grounding (5 min.)
    - Beginning inside, support clients in making connections between their physical being and the natural world.
    - Example:
        - Welcome and brief orientation (introductions if needed).
        - Ring a chime or singing bowl.
        - Opening poem: *When I Am Among the Trees* by Mary Oliver.
        - Grounding breath and embodiment: "Like the trees, imagine taking in nutrients from the earth beneath you through the soles of your feet. With each inhale, scoop these resources up your body with your hands, extending your arms overhead. Imagine these resources filling you from your toes, through your feet and ankles, up your calves and thighs, your hips and stomach, your chest, neck, and head, your arms and finger tips extended above you now like the branches of a tree. With each exhale,

imagine that the wind comes and takes away what is no longer needed." (Continue breathing, movement and visualization for the remainder of the five minutes.) Encourage participants to add their own silent language in the form of an affirmation (e.g., "I have everything I need," "I am rooted but flexible").

- Reflection (15 min.)
  - (3 min.) Instruct participants to find a comfortable place to sit with their journal and writing instruments.
  - (10 min.) Provide the following prompt: "For the next ten minutes, I invite you to write continuously about the challenge that is most present in your life. Use rich, descriptive language to describe the challenge, its context and its impact on your whole being and the world around you. No one will see your writing. Be as honest as possible. All thoughts and feelings are welcome on the canvas of your journal. When you hear the bell, bring your writing to a close, and I will provide your next prompt."
  - (2 min.) After ten minutes of writing is up, ring the chime, bell or bowl and remind participants to bring their writing to a close. Then, provide the following prompt: "Ask a question, that if answered, would help you to navigate your challenge in the way that you wish."
- Art and nature immersion (25 min.)
  - (5 min.) Transition from inside to outside, providing the following prompt: "Now we will go for a walk with our questions. As we move from inside to outside, carry your journal in a different way than you normally would. Go slowly and pay attention to both your physical being and to the environment. We will gather at (name a close-by place/landmark—e.g., the big oak tree)."

- (20 min.) Once participants are gathered, provide the following instructions: "For the next 20 minutes, I invite you to continue walking slowly in nature. Pay attention to the phenomenal world around you. Just be present and if, in the spirit of Mary Oliver, you wish to 'stay awhile' in one place or with a certain nature being you encounter, please do so. When you hear the drum (or other way of calling the group back), please return to this tree. You may leave your journals here while you go on your walk or take them with you, but this is a time for walking and paying attention, not for writing."

- Connection (15 min.)
  - After all participants have returned to the meeting place, instruct them to find a comfortable place within hearing distance of you to write for the next 10–15 minutes.
  - Provide the following prompts one by one (or have typed and give to participants). Allow about two minutes per prompt:
    - "What stood out most to you on your walk? Describe this using rich descriptive sensory-based language."
    - "What surprised you on your walk?"
    - "What challenges, obstacles or choices did you face on your walk? How did you navigate them?"
    - "Who or what did you meet on your walk that felt like a resource or an ally?"
    - "How was this walk different from your normal walk?"
    - "What does your walk and experience on the path have to say to your initial challenge or question?"

- Expression (30 min.)

- (15 min) Poetic response: Instruct participants that the next 15 minutes will be used for giving expression to their experience through poetry.
- Example poetry prompt:
  - "Underline words or phrases in your poetry that are most meaningful for you."
  - "Using your own language from your walk, create a poem of your own structure or use the following 'I am' format" (have pre-printed for participants).
    - Line 1: I am… Include a color.
      - Example: "I am the blue sky behind the clouds."
    - Line 2: I am… Include a texture.
      - Example: "I am the bark of the sturdy oak."
    - Line 3: I am… Include a sound.
      - Example: "I am the leaves crunching underfoot."
    - Line 4: I am… Include a smell.
      - Example: "I am the smell of sweet grass and coming spring."
    - Line 5: Connect back to challenge.
      - Example: "I am here through the ravaging storm of my loss."
    - Line 6: Refer back to question.
      - "You ask how to walk now, through crippling grief."
    - Line 5: Bring in resource or ally.
      - "I am the caterpillar whom you saw only when you allowed yourself to crawl."

- Line 7: Bring in surprise.
  - "You gasped when we met, knowing that wings wait inside me."

- (15 min.) Sharing: Invite participants to share their poem with you or with the group and the action they wish to take moving forward.

Processing suggestions

As time allows, invite participants into a discussion of the process outlined above. What did they learn about themselves and how they have been approaching their challenge? What, if anything, do they wish to do differently? What help, support or resource do they need for making this shift?

Personal commentary

Often in response to life's challenges we bring our logical minds and our strong efforts to overcome them. When our attempts fail, we can feel weary, demoralized and at a loss as to how to move forward. This activity acknowledges and contextualizes our challenges, but, in the spirit of decentering, moves us into a new space where we contact the phenomenal world around us through our senses and by moving through space in a way different from how we usually do. Through this process, we shift our attention from our internal problem-centered world and stagnated thinking to the natural environment, a living example of creativity. In doing so, we may be returned to knowing and mobilizing our own resources for navigating the challenges we face.

APPENDIX C:

Cherokee Drumstick Ritual

Helping Children Find Their Beat on Mother Earth

Keith M. Davis, PhD, NCC

Purpose and goals of the activity

This activity helps children create and use drumsticks made from natural materials; drumsticks can serve as conduits for connecting children's beats with those of nature. Children can identify emotions by connecting with the rhythm of the natural world and thus develop an appreciation for the relationship between humans and nature.

Materials needed

- Small limbs, branches and/or sticks from various trees or shrubs (ranging in sizes 12–18 inches in length and approximately ½–¾ inch in diameter)
- Loose leaf sage and/or cedar shavings
- Pre-cut leather circles approximately 5 inches in diameter
- Pre-cut pressed wool or felt fabric strips approximately 4 x 5 inches
- Spool of leather string
- Spool of artificial sinew
- Variety of small wooden beads

- Sandpaper
- Scissors
- Hacksaw
- Small electric drill
- Variety of drums (frame drums, tom-toms, bongos, pow-wow, etc.)

Time and space requirements

This activity benefits from access to outdoor areas where there are a variety of trees and shrubs. For an inside environment, pick a workspace suitable for interacting with children creatively. If working in a school with children, the activity can be split into three to four sessions, each 50 minutes in length. If working at a daycare center, after-school program, camp or therapeutic center, this can be done within a three-hour block of time.

Appropriate clientele

Children have a natural curiosity for the outdoors and for how the environment works. A preferred group size may be five to seven children, ages six to ten years old.

Appropriate timing

(Consider group development, stage of individual change.)

Having elementary school-aged children creatively interact alongside the natural environment helps their personal, social, emotional and moral development. Children often act on their emotions, and tapping into these emotions can offer opportunities to teach emotional identification and regulation. Additionally, nature-based expressive arts work with elementary age children helps to develop a sense of purpose, confidence in tackling new tasks and decision-making skills. Moral development progresses during this age

as there is an emphasis on an "ethic of care" in everyday interactions and activities.

Step-by-step description of the activity

Depending on whether this activity is conducted in a single three-hour block of time or over the course of shorter sessions, the facilitator will need to make appropriate adjustments.

The facilitator should begin with a brief explanation of the purpose of the group, group rules and the introduction of each child. The facilitator then invites the children outdoors to experience nature's wonders. There should be ample access to a wooded area with a variety of trees and shrubs, such as beech, birch, oak, maple, dogwood and rhododendron. The facilitator introduces each species of tree and shrub to the children, giving them brief explanations of how certain elements of each were used by indigenous peoples, such as the sap of a birch tree being used to alleviate pain. Children are invited to touch the elements of the trees, being made aware that poison oak, ivy and sumac may be growing up and around the trees.

After allowing the children time to interact with the foliage, the facilitator guides them in choosing sticks or limbs for making a drumstick, looking for fallen sticks and limbs around the area. At this time, the facilitator should give all children a small handful of sage or cedar chips to spread around the area where the sticks were removed. The facilitator should explain the importance of how the sage and cedar represent giving thanks to the trees and earth for sharing their gifts with us. Thus, the children learn the cycle of giving thanks and the importance of reciprocity in nature; one should never take something from nature without giving something back. This demonstrates the interconnectedness of humans to the natural world; each is dependent upon the other for living in harmony and balance.

After collecting sticks, the facilitator guides the children to a work area with all of the materials in order to begin crafting the individual drumsticks. The facilitator is also participating equally in

the activity by making a drumstick; this helps model the necessary steps in completing the activity.

To make the drumstick

1. Begin by using sandpaper to sand the bark on the stick down to the wood; sand two-thirds of the stick down, so that there is handle with bark for gripping during drumming.
2. Begin crafting the drumstick head by taking a piece of the pre-cut wool or fabric, wrapping it tightly around the top part of the stick, and tying it off with sinew. It may resemble a lollipop. The facilitator may need to help the children with this step.
3. Take a pre-cut leather circle, wrap it tightly around the wool/fabric drumstick head, and tie it off tightly at the bottom around the stick with sinew.
4. To decorate the drumstick, the facilitator begins by drilling a small hole in the bottom part of the stick handle. The children can then use the leather string and wooden beads, stringing them through the hole and tying them off in a loop.
5. Once all the sticks are made, the facilitator introduces the children to the drums. The facilitator explains how people and their emotions are similar to nature; each has a rhythm. The drumstick beat can then be used to connect people's emotions to nature, using different beats depending on unique emotions. Parallels can be made to the varying expressions of nature—a gentle breeze or a violent storm, for instance.

Processing suggestions

This activity can be metaphorical in multiple ways; therefore, although there are at least four components of processing, options are left to the facilitator's purpose and expertise.

First, it is important to gain the children's perspective on their interaction with the natural elements. Some specific questions might include: "What did you learn about trees and shrubs that you did not know before?" "Why is it important to offer something back to nature if you take something from it?" Other processing questions might include how trees and shrubs offer protection and safety to animals and people from the sun, wind and rain. Follow-up questions in this circumstance might include: "Where do you go for protection and safety?," "Who are the protectors and safe people in your life?"

The second part of processing is focused on the children's thoughts and feelings while creating their drumsticks, using such questions as: "How did you feel while you were creating your drumstick?" "How are you and your drumstick the same/different?"

The third part of processing involves the children sharing the different types of emotions they experience in their lives, as well as when and under what circumstances these emotions might be expressed. Processing can continue by identifying how nature also expresses its emotions under a variety of circumstances, such as with hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes and sunny days.

The fourth part helps children gain a sense of how their emotions can be expressed outward and how this expression affects others. For example, the facilitator might ask students to drum multiple emotions, one after another. The facilitator can then ask, "How did it feel to drum that emotion?" and "How do you think other people might feel hearing that emotion from you?" Metaphors can be processed on how nature's emotions are expressed and how that expression impacts on relationship with others.

APPENDIX D

Fire by Friction, Humility and Attunement

Justin S. Cantalini, MA, LPC, NCC and
Erin Rice Cantalini, MA, LPC, NCC

Purpose

The historical purpose of the hand-drill has been for basic survival. The primal nature of this skill brings us towards our essence as a human being. We have a fundamental and intimate relationship with this skill; though it has become lost in so many contemporary societies leaving us a feeling of ancestral and evolutionary grief. When performed solo or in tandem with a partner, this skill helps build non-verbal communication, connection and attunement. The amount of finesse and perseverance required to learn the skill gives the opportunity to build present-minded awareness, deepen our sensual experience and increase self-regulation skills.

Materials

The hand-drill spindle

- An arm's length plant stalk (hardwood is too dense) that is straight and dry
- The spindle should be between ¼ and ½ inches in diameter (⅜ inch preferred)

- Acceptable stalks: yucca, mullein, cattail (if these stalks are not available, you can experiment with any long straight plant stalk in your area)

The fire-board

- Approximate dimensions: 1–2 inches wide, 6–8 inches long, and ¼–½ inches thick
- The board should be about as thick as the spindle diameter (⅜ inch preferred)
- Acceptable wood: basswood, tuliptree, white/soft cedar, pine (if you can't find these woods, experiment with other soft woods)

Fire materials

- Tinder nest: tuliptree or basswood inner bark, dry grass, cedar bark
- Kindling: pine straw, aged evergreen branches such as thin hemlock sticks, or wood shavings
- Small pencil-sized sticks to build up the fire

Tools

- Pocket knife or multi-tool with a small fine tooth wood saw
- With softer woods, a sharp flint rock will work well also

Time and space requirements

This skill can take a lot of practice to develop enough comfort to teach others. The authors practiced for months to become proficient, though general competency can be developed after a week or two of

practice (4–6 hours total). Once you are comfortable with the skill, building the hand-drill set and teaching someone else the basics may take between one and two hours. You want a dry outdoor location to build the set and a pre-established fire pit.

Appropriate clientele

This activity can be adapted for most ages so long as they can show physical competency with the materials. For younger clients, this is a great way to simply strengthen self-efficacy, somatic awareness, executive functioning development and a sense of awe and wonder. For older clients and more abstract thinkers, many metaphors can be woven in to integrate one's mind–body processes and interpersonal awareness (our relationship with the materials and process may often be a reflection of our interpersonal relationships). This can be a great tool for couples or family work.

Step-by-step instructions

Preparation

- Lay out your materials in a dry area, if the ground is not dry it may be helpful to use a foam camping pad, yoga mat or blanket to lay down first.
- Use the knife or rock to smooth out any knots or branch nubs on the spindle.
- Taper a point (like a pencil) into the fatter end of the spindle. The fat end should be the base of the spindle.
- Carve a small dimple with your knife point (so the that pencil point can fit into the dimple) into the fire board near one of the edges so that the spindle will end up having at least ¼ inch of space in between the spindle edge and any board edge.

- Place the spindle into the dimple and clamp your flat palms on either side of the top of the spindle. (It's best to sit on the ground cross-legged with one foot holding the board still.)
- Keeping your palms flat begin to spin the spindle back and forth between your hands while pushing down.
- You will notice that your hands move to the base of the spindle; as you approach the bottom, reposition your hands (one at a time) back at the top. Repeat this process until you begin to see smoke and burn a deeper hole into the board.
- Once you have burned a hole deep and wide enough to completely cradle the entire tip of the spindle you may stop.
- Use your knife or fine tooth saw to cut into the side of the board a wedge-shaped notch (like a pie piece), but *not* all the way to the center (see illustration).
- Set these materials aside and prepare your fire materials:
    - Take your dried grass or tree tinder bark and rough them up until they look like a fine hairball. Form these materials into a bird nest shape that doesn't fall apart easily.
    - Arrange your pine straw or kindling and small sticks to be easily accessible.

Building the fire

- Once all of your materials are ready and organized you are ready for the actual fire.
- The notch you made is to help collect the charred dust that forms from the friction and this is the material that will form into an ember when the right temperature is achieved.
- It is helpful to place a thick leaf underneath the notch so you can easily pick up the ember once complete to transfer to the tinder nest.
- Begin by going through the same motions as before when you began the hole. Keep the repetitive motion going until you can sustain a thick smoke. You will be getting very tired at this point so breathe steady and go as long as you can. Go slow at first and build up your speed as you go.
- You'll know you have an ember if the notch gets full of the charred dust and you see smoke rising from the dust and not just the board. You may even see the glow of the ember.
- Once you stop, take your time lifting the board so as to not scatter the dust. You can give the board a slight tap to dislodge the dust pile.
- If there is an ember, transfer it into the nest and gently blow into the center until the nest catches flame.
- Set the nest in the fire pit and use your kindling and small sticks to slowly build the fire larger. Be careful not to smother the fire with too many sticks at once.
- Once it is established you can add larger and larger sticks and branches.

Processing ideas

- What thoughts and feelings appeared when we began? During? After?
- We may start by giving very little instruction to see how the person approaches the task: with fear, with excitement, with problem solving, with avoidance, ambivalence or anxiety.
- With couples it may give insight into how they work together, communicate or handle stress.
- Use this as a means to start a ceremonial fire in which the participant is able to burn or let go of a burden. It can be an abstract representation of the dramatic arc in a parallel process of rising action/challenge, climax and falling action/resolution.
- This can be a powerful method for signifying a rite of passage.
- Hand-drilling and primitive fire making is a powerful tool for approaching and processing grief.

- As part of a longer process of clay therapy, this method may play a role in lighting the fire or primitive kiln.
- A simple yet powerful way to use this skill is to begin an outdoor session/experience by hand-drilling a fire. The act itself moves us into liminal space by de-centering from our cognitions and grounding us into our senses. We are then more free to enter into a flexible understanding of our experiences. The fire provides a constant anchor point and poly-aesthetic atmosphere.

Personal commentary

The primal nature of this skill brings us to our essence and our evolutionary roots as a human being. The hand-drill gives us an opportunity to challenge our ego and shows us the importance of understanding true reciprocity in a relationship where attunement, respect and nurturing are the key terms. The hand-drill can humble your expectations and help strengthen patience and acceptance. The authors often perform this skill together when camping or starting ceremonial fires. It brings to our awareness a lens into how we are interacting and quickly lets us know if we are not attuned with one another or with ourselves. The hand-drill is unforgiving if approached with arrogance, urgency and a mindset of control; this skill lends itself well to an attitude of mutual respect, mindfulness and recursive influence. It is our responsibility as practitioners and artists to listen deeply to our materials and allow them to influence a deeper awareness of ourselves in relation to the world; this awareness is often beyond what words can capture.

References

Abram, D. (1996) *The Spell of the Sensuous.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Abram, D. (2010) *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology.* New York: Random House.

Adams, M. (2003) "Daily Practice." In S. Atkins, M. Adams, C. McKinney, H. McKinney *et al.* (eds) *Expressive Arts Therapy: Creative Process in Art and Life.* Boone, NC: Parkway Publishers.

Allen, P. G. (1986) *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions.* Boston: Beacon Press.

American Psychiatric Association (2013) *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition.* New York: American Psychiatric Association.

Anderson, W. L. (ed.) (1991) *Cherokee Removal: Before and After.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Andrews, T. (2002) *Animal Speak: The Spiritual and Magical Powers of Creatures Great and Small.* Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications. (Original work published 1993.)

Antonovsky, A. (1979) *Health, Stress, and Coping.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Atkins, S. (1996) "Narrative and Healing in Two Cultures." In S. M. Schacher (ed.) *Celebration of Indigenous Thought and Expression.* Sault Ste. Marie, MI: Lake Superior State University Press.

Atkins, S. (2005) "The Guard of the First Kiva." In S. Atkins (ed.) *Picking Clean the Bones.* Boone, NC: Parkway Publishers.

Atkins, S. (2010) "Especially in Spring." In M. Fuchs-Knill and S. Atkins (eds) *And When We Speak.* Boone, NC: Parkway Publishers.

Atkins, S. (2012) "I asked myself, what is beauty." *Poiesis: A Journal of the Arts and Communication 14*, 232.

Atkins, S. (2014) "The Courage to Meet the Other: Presence and Openness in the Professional Relationship." In H. Eberhart and S. Atkins (eds) *Presence and Process in Expressive Arts Work: At the Edge of Wonder.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Atkins, S. and Williams, L. D. (2007) *Sourcebook in Expressive Arts Therapy.* Boone, NC: Parkway Publishers.

Atkins, S., Adams, M., McKinney, C., McKinney, H. *et al.* (2003) *Expressive Arts Therapy: Creative Process in Art and Life.* Boone, NC: Parkway Publishers.

Bateson, G. (1972) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind.* San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company.

Bateson, G. and Bateson, M. C. (1987) *Angels Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred.* New York: Macmillan.

Becker, C. M., Glascoff, M. A. and Felts, W. M. (2010) "Salutogenesis 30 years later: Where do we go from here?" *International Electronic Journal of Health Education 13*, 25–32.

Berensohn, P. (2001) *Whatever We Touch Is Touching Us: Craft Art and a Deeper Sense of Ecology* (monograph). Deer Isle, ME: Haystack Mountain School of Crafts.

Berry, T. (1988) *The Dream of the Earth.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Berry, T. (1999) *The Great Work: Our Way Into the Future.* New York: Bell Tower.

Berry, T. (2009) *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-First Century.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Berry, W. (1983) *Standing by Words.* Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint.

Brooks-Harris, J. E. (2008) *Integrative Multitheoretical Psychotherapy.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Brown, B. (2010) *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are.* Center City, MN: Hazelden Publishing.

Brown, B. (2012) *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead.* London: Penguin.

Brown, J. E. (1992) *The Spiritual Legacy of the America Indian.* New York: Crossroad Publishing Company.

Brown, J. E. (2001) *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Buber, M. (1958) *I and Thou* (2nd ed.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. (Original work published in German 1923.)

Buzzell, L. (2009) "Asking Different Questions: Therapy for the Human Animal." In L. Buzzell and C. Chalquist (eds) *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Buzzell, L. and Chalquist, C. (eds) (2009) *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Cajete, G. A. (2015) *Indigenous Community: Rekindling the Teachings of the Seventh Fire.* St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.

Calderon, J. M. (2014) "'Tinkuy': The Encounter Between the Peruvian Imaginary and the Expressive Arts." Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Carson, R. (2002) *Silent Spring.* New York: Houghton-Mifflin. (Original work published 1962.)

Carson, R. L. (1956) *The Sense of Wonder.* New York: HarperCollins.

Clinebell, H. (1996) *Ecotherapy: Healing Ourselves, Healing the Earth.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Coelho, P. (1988) *The Alchemist.* New York: HarperTorch.

Coperthwaite, W. and Saltmarsh, J. (2007) *A Handmade Life: In Search of Simplicity.* White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Deloria, V. (2003) *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion.* Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing. (Original work published 1973.)

Dissanayake, E. (1995) *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes from and Why.* Seattle: University of Washington Press. (Original work published 1992.)

Dissanayake, E. (2002) *What Is Art for?* Seattle: University of Washington Press. (Original work published 1988.)

Dissanayake, E. (2012) *Art and Intimacy: How the Arts Began.* Seattle: University of Washington Press. (Original work published 2000.)

Dutton, D. (2009) *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure and Human Evolution.* New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Eberhart, H. (2014) "The Adventure of the Unknown: Working in a Process-Oriented Way." In H. Eberhart and S. Atkins (eds) *Presence and Process in Expressive Arts Work: At the Edge of Wonder.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Eberhart, H. and Atkins, S. (2014) *Presence and Process in Expressive Arts Work: At the Edge of Wonder.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Frankl, V. E. (1959) *From Death-Camp to Existentialism: A Psychiatrist's Path to a New Therapy.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Gablick, S. (1991) *The Reenchantment of Art.* New York and London: Thames and Hudson.

Gablick, S. (1995) *Conversations Before the End of Time.* New York and London: Thames and Hudson.

Gendler, J. R. (2007) *Notes on the Need for Beauty: An Intimate Look at an Essential Quality.* New York: Marlowe and Company.

Guattari, F. (1996) "Remaking Social Practices." In G. Genosko and F. Guattari (eds) *The Guattari Reader.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Hadley, S. (2013) "Dominant narratives: Complicity and the need for vigilance in the creative arts therapies." *The Arts in Psychotherapy 40*, 373–381.

Hanh, T. N. (1992) *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life.* New York: Bantam Books. (Original work published 1991.)

Hahn, T. N. (1993) *Love in Action: Writings on Nonviolent Social Change.* Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.

Hahn, T. N. (1999) *Call Me by My True Names.* Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.

Hanh, T. N. (2002) *Thich Nhat Hanh: Essential Writings.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. (Original work published 2001.)

Hanh, T. N. (2007) *The Art of Power.* New York: HarperCollins.

Hernandez, P., Gangsei, D. and Engstrom, D. (2007) "Vicarious resilience: A new concept in work with those who survive trauma." *Family Process, 46,* 2, 229–241.

Highwater, J. (1981) *The Primal Mind: Vision and Reality in Indian America.* New York: Harper & Row.

Hill, K. C., Malotki, E. and Black, M. E. (1998) *Hopi Dictionary/Hopiikwa Lavaytutuveni: A Hopi Dictionary of the Third Mesa Dialect.* Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Hillman, J. (1989) *A Blue Fire.* New York: HarperCollins.

Hillman, J. (1992) *The Thought of the Heart and the Soul of the World.* Putnam, CT: Spring Publications.

Hillman, J. (1995) "A Psyche the Size of the Earth: A Psychological Foreword." In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes and A. D. Kanner (eds) *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind.* San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Hillman, J. (1996) *The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling.* New York: Warner Books.

Hillman, J. (1999) *The Force of Character and the Lasting Life.* New York: Ballantine Books.

Hillman, J. and Ventura, M. (1993) *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse.* New York: HarperCollins.

Holsten, G. (Director) and Traub, B. (Director) (2004) *The Barefoot Artist* [Motion Picture Documentary]. United States: Itinerant Pictures and Glennfilms Production.

Hyde, L. (1983) *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property.* New York: Vintage Books.

Irwin, R. L. and de Cosson, A. (eds) (2004) *A/r/tography: Rendering Self through Arts-Based Living Inquiry.* Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.

Jacoby, M. (1999) "The Necessity of Form: Expressive Arts in the Light of the Work of K. E. Logstrup." In S. K. Levine and E. G. Levine (eds.) *Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy: Theoretical and Clinical Perspectives.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Jordan, M. and Hinds, J. (eds) (2016) *Ecotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice.* London: Palgrave.

Kimmerer, R. W. (2013) *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants.* Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions.

Knill, P. J. (1999) "Soul Nourishment, or the Intermodal Language of Imagination." In S. K. Levine and E. G. Levine (eds) *Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy: Theoretical and Clinical Perspectives.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Knill, P. J. (2005) "Foundations for a Theory of Practice." In P. J. Knill, E. G. Levine and S. K. Levine (eds) *Principles and Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Knill, P. J., Barba, H. N. and Fuchs, M. N. (2004) *Minstrels of Soul.* Toronto: EGS Press. (Original work published 1995.)

Knill, P. J., Levine, E. G. and Levine, S. K. (2005) *Principles and Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy: Toward a Therapeutic Aesthetics.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kossack, M. (2012) "Art-based enquiry. It is what we do!" *Journal of Applied Arts and Health 3*, 1, 22–29.

Kovacs, Z. I., LeRoy, C. J., Fischer, D. G., Lubarsky, S. and Burke, W. (2006) "How do aesthetics affect our ecology?" *Journal of Ecological Anthropology 10*, 1, 61–65.

Kriz, J. (2006) *Self-Actualization.* Norderstedt: Books on Demand GmbH.

Kuhn, T. (2012) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1962.)

Lane, J. (2003) *Timeless Beauty: In the Arts and Everyday Life.* Foxhole, Devon: Green Books.

Lawrence, N. (Producer and Director) (2013) *To Spring from the Hand: The Life and Work of Paulus Berensohn* [Motion Picture Documentary]. United States: TOTM Film.

Levine, E. G. and Levine, S. K. (2011) *Art in Action.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Levine, S. K. (1997) *Poiesis: The Language of Psychology and the Speech of the Soul.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Levine, S. K. (2005) "The Philosophy of Expressive Arts Therapy: *Poiesis* as a Response to the World." In P. J. Knill, E. G. Levine and S. K. Levine (eds) *Principles and Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Lightman, A. (2005) *A Sense of the Mysterious: Science and the Human Spirit.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Louv, R. (2005) *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.* Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

Louv, R. (2011) *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder.* Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

Lovelock, J. (1995) *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth.* New York: W. W. Norton.

Lovelock, J. (2000) *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lovelock, J. (2001) *Homage to Gaia: The Life of an Independent Scientist.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lovelock, J. (2009) *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning.* New York: Basic Books.

Lubarsky, S. (2012) "Life Affirming Beauty." In T. Butler, D. Leveth and G. Wuerthner (eds) *The Energy Reader: Overdevelopment and the Delusion of Endless Growth.* Healdsburg, CA: Watershed Media.

Macy, J. (1991) *World as Lover, World as Self.* Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.

Macy J. R. and Brown, M. Y. (1998) *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World.* Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Macy, J. and Johnstone, C. (2012) *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy.* Novato, CA: New World Library.

Masten, A. S. (2014) *Ordinary Magic: Resilience in Development.* New York: Guilford Press.

May, R. (1985) *My Quest for Beauty.* Dallas, TX: Saybrook Publishing Company.

McGeeney, A. (2016) *With Nature in Mind: The Ecotherapy Manual for Mental Health Professionals.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

McNeley, J. K. (1997) *Holy Wind in Navajo Philosophy.* Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press. (Original work published 1981.)

McNiff, S. (1992) *Art as Medicine: Creating a Therapy of the Imagination.* Boston: Shambhala Publications.

McNiff, S. (1998) *Trust the Process.* Boston: Shambhala Publications.

McNiff, S. (2009) *Integrating the Arts in Therapy: History, Theory, and Practice.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publishers.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2013) *Phenomenology of Perception.* Trans D.A. Landes. London: Routledge.

Mind (2007) *Ecotherapy: The Green Agenda for Mental Health: Executive Summary.* London: Mind.

Morrison, T. (2015) "No place for self-pity no room for fear." *The Nation*, April 6, 2015. Accessed on 4/6/2017 at www.thenation.com/article/no-place-self-pity-no-room-fear.

Muller, W. (1996) *How Then, Shall We Live? Four Simple Questions That Reveal the Beauty and Meaning of Our Lives.* New York: Bantam Books.

Næss, A. (1973) "The shallow and the deep, a long-range ecology movement: A summary." *Inquiry, 16*, 95–100.

Neal, L. (2015) *Playing for Time: Making Art as if the World Mattered.* London: Oberon Books.

Nguyen, T., Davis, K., Counts, N. and Fritze, D. (2016) *Prevention and Early Intervention B4Stage4: The State of Mental Health in America 2016.* Alexandria, VA: Mental Health America. Accessed on 27/6/2017 at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/issues/2016-state-mental-health-america-report-overview-historical-data.

O'Donohue, J. (2005) *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace.* New York: Harper Perennial. (Original edition published 2003 under the title *Divine Beauty*.)

Oliver, M. (1986) *Dream Work.* New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Oliver, M. (1992) *New and Selected Poems.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Oliver, M. (2003) *Owls and Other Fantasies.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Oliver, M. (2005) *New and Selected Poems Volume Two.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Palmer, P. (1998) *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Peat, F. D. (2000) *The Blackwinged Night: Creativity in Nature and Mind.* Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing.

Perrone, B., Stockel, H. H. and Krueger, V. (1989) *Medicine Women, Curanderas, and Women Doctors.* Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Plotkin, B. (2010) *Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche.* Novato, CA: New World Library.

Pritzker, B. M. (2000) *A Native American Encyclopedia: History, Culture, and Peoples.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Richards, M. C. (1973) *The Crossing Point: Selected Talks and Writings.* Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press. (Original work published 1966.)

Richards, M. C. (1989) *Centering in Potter, Poetry and the Person* (2nd ed.). Hanover, NH: University Press of New England. (Original work published 1962.)

Richards, M. C. (1996) *Opening Our Moral Eye.* Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press.

Rilke, R. M. (2005) *Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God.* Trans. A Barrows and J. Macy. New York: Penguin.

Roszak, T. (2001) *The Voice of the Earth: An Exploration of Ecopsychology.* New York: Simon & Schuster. (Original work published 1992.)

Roszak, T., Gomes, M. E. and Kanner, A. D. (eds) (1995) *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Rothenberg, D. (2011) *Survival of the Beautiful: Art, Science, and Evolution.* New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Rozema, V. (2003) *Voices from the Trail of Tears.* Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair.

Rumi, J. (1995) *The Essential Rumi.* (Trans. C. Barks.) San Francisco: HarperCollins.

Rust, M. J. (2009) "Why and How Do Therapists Become Ecotherapists?" In L. Buzzell and C. Chalquist (eds) *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Shiner, L. (2001) *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Silko, L. M. (1977) *Ceremony.* New York: Penguin.

Snyder, G. (1990) *The Practice of the Wild.* Berkeley, CA: North Point Press.

Snyder, M. A. (2014) "Sense of Coherence and Daily Spiritual Experience among Pregnant, Post-Partum, and Parenting Women in Recovery from Substance Abuse: An Expressive Arts Group Therapy Intervention." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Springgay, S., Irwin, R. L., Leggo, C. and Gouzouasis, P. (eds.) (2008) *Being with A/r/tography.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Stoknes, P. E. (2015) *What We Think about When We Try Not to Think about Global Warming: Toward a New Psychology of Global Warming.* White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Swimme, B. and Berry, T. (1992) *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era: Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos.* New York: HarperCollins.

Trungpa, D. (2013) *The Tantric Path of Indestructible Wakefulness* (Vol. 3). Boston: Shambhala Publications.

Turner, V. (1995) *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure.* New York: Aldline DeGruyter. (Original work published 1969.)

von Bertalanffy, L. (1968) *General System Theory.* New York: George Braziller.

Walker, A. (1992) *The Color Purple.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. (Original work published 1970.)

Walker, A. (1997) *Anything We Love Can Be Saved.* New York: Random House.

Weisman, A. (1998) *Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World.* White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Whyte, D. (1994) *The Heart Aroused: Poetry and the Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America.* New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell.

Williams, T. T. (2001) *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place.* New York: Vintage Books.

Williams, T. T. (2008) *Finding Beauty in a Broken World.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Witherspoon, G. (1977) *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Zimmerman, Z. and Coyle, V. (1996) *The Way of Council.* Las Vegas: Bramble Books.

Index