

IV A CO-OPERATIVE INQUIRY INTO DEEP ECOLOGY

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The Masters degree in Responsibility and Business Practice at the University of Bath is an innovative management degree addressing social, environmental and ethical issues. The course addresses the challenges currently facing society as we seek to integrate successful business practice with a concern for social, environmental and ethical issues. It looks at the complex relationship between business decisions and their impact on local and world communities and economies, on the environment and on the workplace itself, and helps participants develop management practices which are responsive to pressures for greater awareness in these areasⁱⁱ.

The course addresses the connections between the management of business activities and the major social, political and environmental issues of our time. Since business increasingly binds the planet together in a shared economic network, we believe there is a need to consider anew the responsibilities that accompany such world-wide capability. Eight intensive week-long workshops over two years each delves deeply into particular topic as well as building the course community as a community of inquiry. The workshop topics include the issues that surround the increasing globalization of world economy and culture; the way our economic theories and policies place value on certain activities and ignore others; the potential for corporations to act in sustainable ways and as corporate citizens; human needs at work, including the need for the discovery of meaning and spiritual practice.

The staff team, when they originally designed the programme, were adamant that the programme, while clearly a business programme in a prestigious business school, should attend to questions of meaning, value, spirit, and in particular that students should be exposed to radical thinking about the nature of the planet Earth which is the originator of all human and non-human wealth. We wanted to explore deep ecology (Box 1) and Gaia theory (Box 2), and, as far as it possible in the overcrowded British Isles, offer students a 'wilderness experience', an opportunity for a direct experience of the wildness of the natural world.

--Box 1 & Box 2 about here—

To this end we have teamed up with colleagues at Schumacher College in Devonⁱⁱⁱ, and in particular with the resident ecologist Stephan Harding (Harding, 1997, 2001; Harding & Lovelock, 1996). Together we designed a week-long experience which includes lectures on deep ecology (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1989; Seed, Macy, Fleming, & Naess, 1988), Gaia theory (Lovelock, 1979) and the state of the natural world, but where a lot of time is spent outside. We take participants on a night

walk through woodland and spend an afternoon meditating by the River Dart. We summon the Council for All Beings, the ceremony developed by John Seed and Joanna Macy (Macy & Brown, 1998; Seed et al., 1988) in which participants come to the council circle to speak as the many diverse beings of their concern for the state of the world. And we spend one whole day in a hike along the upper reaches of the River Dart, along what must be one of the last remaining stretches of wilderness in England. On this walk we leave the footpaths and scramble over rocks and under branches. We have to help each other through bogs and over torrential streams. And under Stephan's guidance we experiment with deep ecology exercises: imagining how the world that we sense is also sensing us (Abram, 1996); guiding each other in pairs on a blindfolded experience of the trees, rock, and mud; identifying with a being in the natural world and exploring through imaginative meditation how it is part of the cycles of Gaia.

Co-operative Inquiry

The whole MSc programme is designed using action research as a basis for learning, and throughout the programme there is an emphasis on inquiry processes and skills^{iv}. This deep ecology workshop is designed using the format of co-operative inquiry (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 2001; Reason, in preparation 2001), which is form of collaborative action research practice—research *with* rather than *on* people (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). In traditional research, the roles of researcher and subject are mutually exclusive. The researcher only contributes the thinking that goes into the project, and the subjects only contribute the action to be studied in a relationship of unilateral control. In co-operative inquiry these mutually exclusive roles are replaced by a relationship based on reciprocal initiative and control, so that all those involved work together as co-researchers and as co-subjects. It is argued that for a truly human science of persons, those involved in the inquiry process must engage as persons rather than as passive objects, contributing with awareness to the both the ideas and the action that are part of the inquiry endeavour.

A second fundamental assumption of co-operative inquiry is that our 'reality' is subjective-objective and involves an extended epistemology. As human persons we participate in and articulate our world in at least four interdependent ways: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical. These four forms of knowing can be seen as aspects of human intelligence and ways through which we dance with the primal cosmos to co-create our reality. *Experiential knowing* is through direct face-to-face encounter with a person, place or thing; it is knowing through empathy and resonance; *presentational knowing*, which grows out of experiential knowing, provides the first form of expression through story, drawing, sculpture, movement, dance, drawing on aesthetic imagery; *propositional knowing*, is 'knowledge about', expressed in concepts and ideas; and *practical knowing*, consummates the other forms of knowing in action in the world. (Heron, 1992, 1996). The process of co-operative inquiry can be seen as cycling through four phases of reflection and action, in each of which a different way of knowing holds primacy.

In Phase 1 a group of co-researchers come together to explore an agreed area of human activity^v. In this first phase they agree on the focus of their inquiry, and develop together a set of questions or propositions they wish to explore. They agree to undertake some action, some practice, which will contribute to this exploration, and

agree to a set of procedures by which they will observe and record their own and each other's experience. Phase 1 is primarily in the mode of propositional knowing.

In the deep ecology workshop the focus of inquiry is established as part of the course content. The questions posed for the week are 'what is the experience of deep ecology?' and 'what activities and disciplines aid its development?' within these broad questions individual participants are invited to develop their own specific questions as the week progresses. The propositional knowledge on which the inquiry is based is the ideas about deep ecology and Gaia theory offered by Stephan.

In Phase 2 the co-researchers now also become co-subjects: they engage in the actions agreed and observe and record the process and outcomes of their own and each other's experience. In particular, they are careful to notice the subtleties of experience, to hold lightly the propositional frame from which they started so that they are able to notice how practice does and does not conform to their original ideas. This phase involves primarily practical knowledge: knowing how (and how not) to engage in appropriate action, to bracket off the starting idea, and to exercise relevant discrimination.

Starting with the night walk the evening we arrive at Schumacher College, participants are invited into the range of activities outlined above. As faculty we have designed activities through which they can bracket their preconceptions and engage with the natural world in novel ways—to enter into relation with trees, to walk on the earth as a living being, to meditate with the River, to speak as a slug or as an oak tree...

Phase 3 is in some ways the touchstone of the inquiry method. The co-subjects become full immersed in and engaged with their experience. They may develop a degree of openness to what is going on so free of preconceptions that they see it in a new way. They may deepen into the experience so that superficial understandings are elaborated and developed. Or they may be led away from the original ideas and proposals into new fields, unpredicted action and creative insights. Phase 3 involves mainly experiential knowing, although it will be richer if new experience is expressed, when recorded, in creative presentational form through graphics, colour, sound, movement, drama, story, poetry, and so on.

For many participants it is this experiential knowing that is the key to the workshop experience. For many, living for a week in community in an area of amazing natural beauty, having time just to sit by a river, and being given permission to open themselves to the voice of the more-than-human world is a great significance.

In Phase 4, after an agreed period engaged in phases two and three, the co-researchers re-assemble to consider their original propositions and questions in the light of their experience. As a result they may modify, develop or reframe them; or reject them and pose new questions. They may choose, for the next cycle of action, to focus on the same or on different aspects of the overall inquiry. The group may also choose to amend or develop its inquiry procedures—forms of action, ways of gathering data—in the light of experience. Phase 4 is primarily the stage of propositional knowing, although presentational forms of knowing will form an important bridge with the experiential and practical phases.

The course community is divided into small groups (who also work together each day on simply household tasks to maintain the ecology of the College) which meet at the end of each day to review and make their sense of the experiences. We invite participants to help each other articulate what has been important for them, to write reflectively, to draw or otherwise create visual images.

In a full inquiry the cycle will be repeated several times. Ideas and discoveries tentatively reached in early phases can be checked and developed; investigation of one aspect of the inquiry can be related to exploration of other parts; new skills can be acquired and monitored; experiential competencies are realized; the group itself becomes more cohesive and self-critical, more skilled in its work. Ideally the inquiry is finished when the initial questions are fully answered in practice, when there is a new congruence between the four kinds of knowing. It is of course rare for a group to complete an inquiry so fully.

The deep ecology workshop is designed with three cycles of inquiry: discussion of the philosophy of deep ecology followed by an afternoon in meditation with the River Dart; an introduction to Gaia theory and the state of the world followed by the Council for All Beings; and the day-long eco-walk down the River Dart with mini-talks and exercises. Each of these cycles is followed by a review in small groups, and on the final morning we meet as a whole group. Each person is given 'post-it' stickers and asked to write three answers to each of the two questions of the inquiry: 'what is the experience of deep ecology? And 'how do you get there?' Participants take it in turn to present their answers to the group, and to place their stickers on a wall chart, with the aim of clustering them into meaningful groups. This session was audio recorded and forms the basis of this article. This reporting session was an energetic affair, full of both laughter and tears.

Our purpose as faculty in using the co-operative inquiry model is twofold: to continue our emphasis that the Masters course is based on a process of mutual inquiry in which all learn; and to formally introduce and teach the form of co-operative inquiry so it is available as an approach for course participants who want to use it in their own work. On this workshop we use a form of the inquiry model in which we as faculty use our authority to structure much of the learning experience, rather than a fully collaborative form. We do this as a teaching and learning device, and because we believe it is appropriate for us as faculty to use our authority and experience in the service of learning while being open to feedback and comment from the group.

The Participants

In order to appreciate fully the impact that this co-operative inquiry week had upon all the participants, it is important to understand something of the background of the group. This may add an additional resonance to some of the emotional experiences related below and demonstrate the radical steps many of us took away from our former paradigms towards a new understanding of the world—although it is clear that for some the experience was more moving than for others.

Whilst we are brought together on this Masters programme by a shared interest in deepening our understanding of the issues it addresses and the possible roles we may

have in helping to shape a better society, we are a relatively diverse group of 24 individuals. We are 10 men and 14 women with ages between early 20s and late 50s, and are nine nationalities living in seven countries from Finland to Vietnam. Our jobs are mainly in the corporate sector ranging from multi-nationals such as Rio Tinto and Barclays to independent consultancy but we also work for NGOs and local government. We found that deep ecology as we experienced it in this co-operative inquiry cuts across potential differences of gender, age, race and nationality. This in itself is indicative of the universality of the deep ecology experience to which we hope this account does justice.

The experience of deep ecology

The experience of deep ecology started for most of us with a true appreciation, as if for the first time, of the simple beauty of the more-than-human world versus the human-made urban world many of us live in. This experience is one of profound joy expressed by one participant as ‘post human exuberance, when you sit on a rock and feel happy, it's not like when you're happy because you've had a birthday present, it's a different, more profound sort of happiness’^{vi}.

Beauty in this sense does not include the merely aesthetic. Deep ecology is ‘awe at the proliferation and richness of living things’ and at the more-than-human world’s wondrous self-organisation: ‘Everything finds its own place, one plant seems to be in just the right spot, there's no other place it could be’.

--Box 3 about here--

It was clear that for the city-based participants particularly, an obvious first step towards this experience was simply to ‘take time to be in the non-human world’. We began to question why such a large part of our lives is spent indoors in contrast to the week at Schumacher College when on average half a day was spent outdoors. However, it was agreed that being in the more-than-human world was not enough unless we were truly open to experiencing its magic, not just through sight but with all our senses: ‘Deep ecology is about using my senses and my intuition to actually connect with what is happening with the rhythms of life, it’s being still and touching the wonder’. It was only through this intensity of focus, which felt difficult for some but easy for others, that we were able to cut through the weight of our preoccupations and preconceptions and experience the more-than-human world in a way that bypassed our reason and made connections at a deeper emotional level.

By dwelling in and taking the time to be receptive to the broader ecosystem of the river Dart as well as individual living beings, many of us experienced deep ecology as a realisation that every living thing, including ourselves, is interconnected through their role in endless natural cycles. The Council of All Beings was another way in which this realisation was developed as one participant explains: ‘I would like to invite everyone to try and identify with being a water molecule, because I found the notion of water being present in everything was wonderful, it’s really developed my understanding of interconnectedness’.

We found beauty in 'the wonder and magic of nature's complex cycles'. Through cycles of birth, death and re-use we became aware that 'everything is related in one way or another' and deep ecology provides us with an 'understanding of the intimate relationships which exist and which we have with nature as well'. Our 'connectedness to the rhythms of the natural world' is something which our urban lives allow us to forget and the experience of deep ecology places us back within our most fundamental context: 'we are nature'. One participant elaborated on this: 'I thought the core experience was to actually feel myself as part of the natural world. I don't think we normally actually feel that'.

This interconnectedness created in some a sense of perfect balance, so often missing in our own personal lives: 'Deep ecology is the opposite of the unstable equilibrium that we try to live with. We've fallen over, we need to get back to the balance that we once had, where we could live life in a much richer and fuller sense'. This idea of balance is inherent in natural cycles where nothing is ever wasted and one participant gave us the flippant yet sobering reminder that 'we are recycled and should make the effort to treat our bodies well and so become good compost'. As another example of this balance, for others deep ecology was 'the acknowledgement of order in chaos and chaos in order', 'when you can allow your conscious and subconscious mind to become aware of the controlled chaos of natural systems'. This has parallels with the deep ecology experience itself which was for many of us a turbulent one: 'I feel like I've been sitting on the edge of chaos all week'^{vii}.

It seemed that this aspect of deep ecology was one that was particularly fostered by more formal scientific learning, that is, propositional knowing. Stephan's lectures were original and exciting and his passion for cycles inspired us to see them at work for ourselves outside the classroom. For some of us, propositional knowing is vital on the path towards the experience of deep ecology, if only because of its familiarity from traditional education. It was important to complement our experiential knowing with a more conceptual framework and one participant spoke of her 'relief and excitement that there are now facts I can share with others'. Another claimed: 'I don't like Maths particularly, I hated statistics in my first degree but I found through Stephan that I could actually see some beauty in mathematics'. The importance of wise teachers and elders in the journey towards the deep ecology experience cannot be overemphasised; their inspiration and guidance was crucial to the success of the week.

A greater understanding, both rational and intuitive, of the interconnectedness of nature's cycles leads us to re-evaluate our own roles within those cycles. The afternoon spent in quiet beside the River Dart highlighted this for one member of the group: 'I really got a sense of the busyness of what's going on at a not-human level. I had never before appreciated the rich detail of life's activity happening without any reference to us humans'. The experience of deep ecology is therefore 'to redefine what it means to be human, we are not dominant'. Others experienced deep ecology in a similar way, as a 'knowing of nature's secrets, they've been unlocked for me and now I know that I am part of this experience and this is my story too.'

One participant expressed a commonly held view: 'Before I came on this week I had my doubts because I always felt that I had an affinity with nature but was outside nature, not necessarily a part of it. Now I see we're all equal parts of the same earth, there's the interconnectedness of one big family'. Another participant agreed: 'The

essence of deep ecology is seeing yourself as a part not as an observer, and so moving from knowing truths to feeling truths. It is still seeing but it's also smelling, touching, feeling and sensing, getting the whole of yourself into it. What was really powerful for me was putting myself in the place of another being and looking at myself in the mirror'. Deep ecology is therefore the experience of personally 'relating to everything'. This transition from unengaged observer to engaged participant is paralleled in the approach of action research (see above) as is the acknowledgement that there is more than one way of knowing truths.

Deep ecology is about realising 'the dependency of all beings upon each other' and that 'every living thing has a purpose'. This leads to the questioning of one's personal sense of purpose and ultimately to a redefinition of one's personal identity. We discovered that 'the experience of deep ecology is about the spiritual quest to really reconnect with our true human nature' and this was expressed in other ways: 'A journey *of* the self and a journey *to* the self', 'Realising I have a role to play' and 'Finding peace and inner self'. This led to a growing understanding that our human viewpoint is just one of many equally valuable perspectives and it provided us with the realisation that the more-than-human world is responding and reaching out to us in turn. We had complementary experiences, at once both a melting of the barriers between ourselves and other non-human beings and a heightened sense of the conscious, separate life of those beings.

For one participant, the experience of deep ecology during the week had been one of increased self-worth and self-confidence: 'My relationship with places and rocks and trees is often better than my relationship with people. One of the things I can do is to use deep ecology to be all right with me'.

We found our experience was particularly heightened by the exercises during our day long wilderness walk when we were invited to close our eyes, touch our surroundings and sense our surroundings touching and feeling us in reply. One participant spoke of 'the blur between me and the moss I was touching, it was difficult to know where I ended and the moss began. Then there was the exercise where we really probed our surroundings, I almost felt like asking permission of this other living entity, 'May I?' and 'Should I?' and 'I've never done this before'. I really experienced a wonderful balance between the blur and the sense of otherness, in our existence, our relationships with the living world, our very being.' This notion of otherness was also expressed in this way: 'Now I know the earth and everything on it has a heart and has feeling'.

Throughout the week we felt welcomed by the more-than-human world and many of us shared this participant's feeling 'of coming home, of being accepted by the place like when I've had a really happy home, I've just walked in and been embraced'. One participant described the experience of deep ecology as 'a mutual 'letting-in-ness' where nature lets you in on all its huge libraries of knowledge and you are willing to be let in'. Another participant admitted: 'I've now recognised that I've got everything I've every asked for whenever I've gone to my special place to try and work things out. I might not have realised it at the time, but it's all been there for me to take'.

We spoke of our surprise and pleasure at this, that the more-than-human world was soft and sensual rather than painful and frightening as we are sometimes brought up to believe. But it was only through 'active, strenuous physical engagement' with the

more-than-human world that these experiences were made possible, 'by fitting yourself into the nooks and crannies'. One group member spoke of the artificial barriers we erect between ourselves and the more-than-human world when she said: 'Walking along the river, particularly the clambering, reminded me how neat and tidy we are invited to keep ourselves and how we never exert ourselves or get dirty. There's all sort of things we don't do, which stop us making the connection to the bigger picture'.

This breaking down of both physical and emotional barriers, 'allowing the armour or uniform to fall away', is a vital component for the achievement of the deep ecology experience and a developing sense of the reciprocal relationship between ourselves and the more-than-human world led some of us to begin a new kind of dialogue. One group member spoke emotionally of his personal route to the deep ecology experience: 'Take your poor battered heart into the wilderness and when you're there, you listen to the wind and you ask and you listen and you ask and you listen, and that's how you get there'.

Throughout the week we explored the Gaian concept of the living world as a single conscious entity able to express emotions such as happiness. Whether we chose to interpret this literally or metaphorically we shared this participant's view: 'Something that's been moving for me is that, having talked about qualities, I really got the notion of a happy wood, I really understood it when Stephan pointed out that it was so diverse and full of life and abundant and growing. I think all the billions we spend on tourism and holidays show how we are yearning for this kind of happiness but actually we destroy it at the moment in our yearning'. One group member brought together the ideas of a conscious world and a reappraisal of personal identity in 'the notion of the ecological self, we humans are one of the parts of the universe which is conscious of itself so we are the universe looking at itself'.

One theme that is raised throughout the MSc course is that of timescales, from the short-termism of shareholders' expectations to long term visions of a new society, and the week at Schumacher prompted further consideration of this. Deep ecology is about 'experiencing the moment fully and being deeply connected to what's going on'. This notion of being fully present in and engaged with the moment is also one which is central to action research and is a practice many of us find hard during the self-imposed rush of our lifestyles. The way to achieve this experience of deep ecology is therefore to 'be still, be silent and appreciate the moment for its intrinsic value'. One group member elaborated this quality of the deep ecology experience: 'I experienced the moment rather than thinking 'What have I been doing?' and 'What am I going to do?' I was aware that I was just deeply connected with what was going on. But somehow, in that moment, I could perceive the past and future, I could see the past in that I could see where the rocks had come from, I could see the future in the sense that I could see where the river was going, and for me time did seem to stop'.

On the other hand, deep ecology provides 'a sense of eternity which is a big issue for a lot of people, they are concerned about how their memory will survive and whether they will leave a mark'. Deep ecology 'is timeless so it's the past, the present and the future and we need to understand all of them and explore the future in order to take ourselves there'.

The eternal quality and beauty of interconnected cycles and individual living beings led many of us to explore the spiritual nature of the deep ecology experience. One participant explained how the week at Schumacher clarified her beliefs: 'Years ago, when people used to say to me 'Are you religious?' or 'What's your faith?' I never had one. I was never able to say anything except 'Well, the only sense I've got is that I believe in nature', and that was when I started to realise that spirit is all around me. Deep ecology for me is about understanding nature, about understanding the bigger picture, it's about the spirit that's all around me, and it's in everything and everyone'. For those of us who are Christians, deep ecology provided 'A language and a means of meeting and celebrating the creator of all things'.

It also provides individuals with a sense of purpose in a spiritual context, as described by one participant who assumed the nature of a kestrel during the Council of All Beings: 'I began to think about my kestrel and I was beginning to wonder what the purpose of a kestrel is and yes, it controls small animals so they don't overrun, but in a way the purpose of a kestrel is to sense freedom, but more than that, to enjoy the sense of freedom. And I think that as you get more sentient you have a greater purpose to enjoy the senses you have and you enjoy those senses on behalf of creation, or creator, and for me personally that is God.'

Taking deep ecology into our lives

Inevitably many other questions arose in connection with our new experience but the most pressing was 'How do you take it away and keep it for yourself?'. Most of the group agreed that the deep ecology experience 'takes effort to allow into our lives and requires mental and spiritual preparedness. We're not all going to have Aldo Leopold^{viii} moments in which we suddenly form a connection with the non-human world which instantly and permanently transforms our way of thinking'. Another participant acknowledged the difficulties: 'We're so distanced from nature's cycles, some of us are distanced from them scientifically as we don't know the facts and some of us are distanced from them because we just don't spend enough time outside.'

--Box 4 about here--

One proposed solution to these difficulties was the continuing of practices such as creative thinking, meditation and free-fall writing which some of us were introduced to during the week: 'There has to be a yearning for this approach to become part of our skill, part of our practical knowledge. I think that's very important because we will be making our own cycles in our lives and we must introduce interconnectedness of thinking there, too'.

Another difficulty to overcome was that of self-consciousness and concern at the judgements of others, something which many of us were acutely aware of at the beginning of the week. One participant whose discovery of his ecological self was particularly emotional admitted: 'People were saying to me last Friday when I was going on this course, that's the tree-hugging part of the course, you'll be flapping around and free-associating and I thought 'Absolutely no chance, no way will I be doing any tree-hugging.' How wrong was I!' However, by the end of the week we all felt much more at ease with this issue as one group member admitted: 'I don't really

care now if people think I'm completely mad, sitting in the middle of a field on my own, reflecting, in silence'

One thing that we all agreed upon was the importance of striving to enable others to experience a similar transformation: 'I feel very strongly that deep ecology is not about a club, it shouldn't be a secret or the privilege of a few, it's about rolling it out, making it accessible, so it becomes an experience for the many.' For some the experience of deep ecology was essentially about 'getting engaged to a movement to create new thinking and to provide a new way of providing solutions to a society in search of trust'. The transformative power of simply sharing the deep ecology experience with other members of the group was also noted: 'I really enjoyed sharing everything with the group; this was what helped me to feel a lot better about myself'. Another group member highlighted how the blindfold exercise fostered trust at an individual level; for another 'the experience of how to get there is, for me, through overcoming loneliness and through fellowship.'

Ultimately to maintain the deep ecology experience requires 'a commitment to the choice to live in a certain way' and we agreed that 'deep ecology is not a skin deep thing, it's not about putting on a pair of boots and walking outside, it's really a deep change, a deep commitment throughout one's life, based on fact and a sense of spiritual awakening'. This deep change involves 'acting on new-found responsibilities' so that 'we begin to treat the earth as we would treat ourselves'. One participant expressed it like this: 'For me the week has first of all been about realising my place in all this, which I'm not sure I did before, and then along with realising my place, realising my responsibilities for being in that place.' This may take the form of a reappraisal of what is truly important and valuable in our lives and of 'living gracefully': 'Deep ecology is about remembering our vital needs and finding freedom those in vital needs'. When combined with a shared experience of deep ecology, this could lead to a 'collective experience of responsibility for the many'.

The experience of deep ecology was an emotional one for all of us, ranging from joy to confusion to frustration to sorrow. As our busy week demonstrated, there is no one path to the experience of deep ecology and practices and exercises which work for one individual may leave another cold. This is why the planning of the co-operative inquiry and an acknowledgement of the four ways of knowing are so important; as one participant said: 'I felt I was being invited to approach this in any way I liked, and there was no demand for me to feel this or believe that, either spiritually or rationally. It was more about finding your own way.' The fact that there are so many ways to achieve the experience of deep ecology gave us all a sense of optimism which is sometimes missing on this course, dealing as it does with the catastrophes we have brought about because we falsely place ourselves outside the more-than-human world. 'I believe that deep ecology is an incubator for a new value system. Being able to reach people through both heart and intellect gave me a sense of hope. There's potential with this approach, we could actually reach anybody; how can someone say no to this as long as we're not pushing it and saying you must feel it in this way and not that? I don't know if anybody can turn it away.' It is important to the future we share with all living things that they don't.

Box 1

The Deep Ecology Platform

- All life has value in itself, independent of its usefulness to humans.
- Richness and diversity contribute to life's well-being and have value in themselves.
- Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs in a responsible way.
- The impact of humans in the world is excessive and rapidly getting worse.
- Human lifestyles and population are key elements of this impact.
- The diversity of life, including cultures, can flourish only with reduced human impact.
- Basic ideological, political, economic and technological structures must therefore change.
- Those who accept the foregoing points have an obligation to participate in implementing the necessary changes and to do peacefully and democratically

This version of the Deep Ecology Platform was formulated by those attending the *Deep Ecology* course at Schumacher College, May 1995. (Harding, 1997:17)

Box 2

Gaia

Gaia Theory proposes two radical departures from the conventional view [of life on earth]. The first proposal is that life profoundly affects the non-living environment, such as the composition of the atmosphere, which then feeds back to influence the entirety of the living world. The second property emerges out of this tight coupling between life and non-life. This 'emergent property' is the ability of Gaia, of the Earth System as a whole, to maintain key aspects of the global environment, such as global temperature, at levels favourable to life, despite shocks from both within and outside itself.

This sort of ability, which scientists call 'self-regulation' is exhibited by all living things.... So, according to this theory, Gaia is in some sense alive...

So how are we to relate to Gaia? We need to regain our ancient feeling for the Earth as an organism and revere it again. Gaia [is] a being of far greater vastness than ourselves, which we ignore at our peril.

Adapted from Harding (2001:17-19)

Box 3

What is the experience of deep ecology?

- The experience of deep ecology is a feeling of joy and awe at the beauty of the more-than-human world
- It is an appreciation of the delicate balance between chaos and order
- It is the acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of all living beings, including ourselves, in the endless cycles of the planet
- This acknowledgement leads to the direct identification of ourselves with other living beings and a redefinition of our place, no longer dominating nature but one equal part of it
- It is a sense of the consciousness of other living beings and the reciprocal relationship between us
- The experience is both of the moment and of eternity
- The experience is that of a spiritual quest to reconnect with our true human nature and break down the artificial barriers we have erected
- It is the feeling of home-coming
- It is the celebration of the creator

Box 4:

What activities and disciplines aid its development?

- Spending time outside, preferably in the wilderness, in a state of openness
- Physically engaging with other living beings which requires us to abandon our cultural preconceptions and overcome negative emotions such as embarrassment and cynicism
- The guidance of inspirational teachers and wise elders
- Being alone and/or having the support of a likeminded group, it varies for different individuals
- Personal practices such as meditation and free-fall writing
- A combination of the many ways of knowing, both emotional and rational, and an acknowledgement that different individuals will take different paths to the experience
- Ongoing effort and commitment to integrate the deep ecology experience into our lives and be aware of our responsibilities to the more-than-human world

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Participants on Intake Four, MSc in Responsibility and Business Practice are in the second year of their two year programme engaged in a wide range of action research projects in responsible business practice.

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ⁱ This article is based on a co-operative inquiry process involving all members of this course. The conclusions of the inquiry have been prepared for publication by Esther Maughan, a member of the group, who undertook the work of sorting the tape transcript into categories, selecting quotes and composing the text; and Peter Reason, who wrote the introductory material. The article has been seen and agreed by members of the course.

ⁱⁱ A full course description describing both content and education process can be seen at www.bath.ac.uk/management/carpp/msc.htm

ⁱⁱⁱ Schumacher college is an international centre for ecological studies offering a range of educational opportunities including short courses and an MSc in Holistic Science. www.gn.apc.org/schumachercollege/

^{iv} Full information of these inquiry processes can be found at www.bath.ac.uk/management/carpp

^v Co-operative inquiry has been used to explore a range of issues including race and gender in organizations (Bryan, 2000; Douglas, 1999), leadership in the police force (Mead, in preparation, 2001), holistic medical practice (Heron & Reason, 1985; Reason, 1988, 1991, 1999; Reason et al., 1992), transpersonal experiences (Heron, 1998), organization culture (Marshall, 1988); social work (Baldwin, 2001); midwifery (Barrett, 2001); nurse education (Hills, 2001); young women managers (McArdle, in preparation 2001).

^{vi} All words in quotation marks are taken from the audio tape of the group's reflection at the end of the workshop.

^{vii} The language on chaos and complexity was influenced by a talk by Brian Goodwin (see Goodwin, 1999a; 1999b).

^{viii} In Sand County Almanac, Leopold describes the moment of illumination that leads him to 'thinking like a mountain'. Employed to exterminate wolves, he writes of gazing into the green eyes of a dying wolf he has just shot: 'I thought that because fewer wolves meant no deer, that no wolves would mean a hunters' paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view' (1949:129-133).