

## The Living Mountain

Attachment to landscape and its importance in regulating emotions

## Nan Shepherd 'The living Mountain'



## The mountain as self

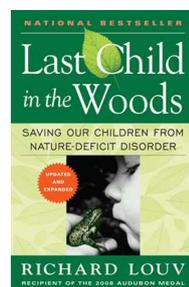
- *"It is a journey into Being: for as I penetrate more deeply into the mountain's life, I penetrate also into my own. For an hour I am beyond desire. It is not ecstasy, that leap out of oneself that makes man like a god. I am not out of myself, but in myself. I am. To know Being, that is the final grace accorded from the mountain"*

## Children and nature

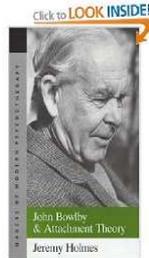
The ecological self develops alongside the object relational self  
Anita Barrows – 'the ecopsychology of the child'

We need to expand our notions of 'object relations' to encompass the natural world

Relational Psychotherapy including relationships to the natural world



## Bowlby



## Styles of attachment

- Secure - I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.
- Avoidant - I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
- Anxious/Ambivalent - I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.

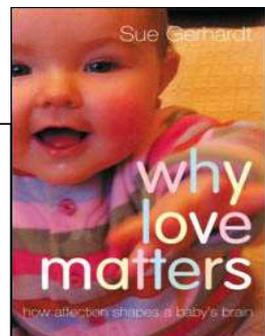
## Harold Searles

- *"the human being is engaged, throughout his lifespan, in an unceasing struggle to differentiate himself increasingly fully, not only from his human, but also from his nonhuman environment, while developing, in proportion as he succeeds in these differentiations, an increasingly meaningful relatedness with the latter environment as well as with his fellow human beings"*

## Growing our own minds

Early love relationships  
Central to develop of brain

The capacity to experience union with another, and therefore a felt sense of attachment to nature results from early positive experience of the self-being with another .  
Without this fundamental positive early experience and the development of the capacity to relate, meaningful attachments are difficult to form



## Affect regulation

- The ability to regulate our own emotional states
- Centrally linked to attachment
- What is the role of natural environments in helping maintain positive mood states
- The ability to 'mentalize' a role for nature in our emotional worlds

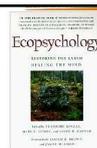


## Restorative nature



## Evidence?

- Biophilia Hypothesis
- Attention Restoration Theory
- Mind report
- Several reports from environmental psychology studies



## Ecopsychology

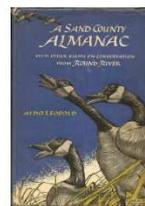
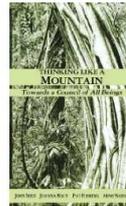
- For millennia we have lived an intimate existence within nature and to all intense and purposes we still do.
- We are intrinsically connected to water, food and the turning of the seasons, and of course the climate.
- Technological development has fostered our ability (in the western world) to exist primarily within urban or semi urban environments allowing us to disconnect from nature, changing and challenging our sense of identity and affecting our mental health

## Ecotherapy



## An Ecological Self?

- Gaian Thinking (Mary Midgely)
- Thinking like a mountain – Deep Ecology



## Indigenous wisdom?



## A new vision for psychotherapy?

- What might it look like?