



Vital Signs: Psychological Responses to Ecological Crisis

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This anthology focuses on our psychological predicament as news of the Earth's failing systems slowly penetrates our defenses and as we struggle both as individuals and as a society to find an adequate response. "Vital signs" are, of course, the basic physiological measures of functioning which health practitioners use to assess the gravity of a patient's predicament. By "vital signs" the contributors to this volume also mean signs that such a response is beginning to take shape: signs of hope, signs of healing.

Ecopsychology is part of a much larger movement seeking to develop awareness of climate change together with all the other developing ecological crises (pollution, over-consumption of resources, destruction of habitats, etc). What distinguishes ecopsychology from many of the other players in this larger movement, however – apart from the psychological focus itself – is a very widespread perception of human beings as just one element in the global ecosystem; and an agreement, both ethical and practical, that humanity cannot save itself by throwing other species out of the sledge. The ecosystem stands or falls as a whole, human, other-than-human, and more-than-human; and a failure to recognize this is itself a symptom of our culture's dissociation from its place in the larger whole, which is one of the causal factors leading to our current situation.

Ecopsychology in Britain has a distinctive voice and unique contributions to make. By bringing together these essays, this volume is designed to facilitate debate and dialogue within this new and growing field, in the hope that more developed theory and practice will emerge.



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