

## Independent Report on PhD Thesis Submission By Louie Gardiner

### **‘Attending, Responding, Becoming ~ a living-learning inquiry in a naturally inclusional playspace’**

In this extraordinarily intensive, wide-ranging, courageous and creative thesis, Louie Gardiner addresses a truly fundamental question:-

*How do we as human beings come to know and understand the complexities of the natural world in which we are situated?*

She recognises how the way we do this both affects and is affected by the way in which we live, the stories we believe and the assumptions we make along the way.

She recognises also the need to question the learnings and teachings of our predecessors, and explore afresh for ourselves.

A feeling of personal discomfort with the status quo and her own lack of understanding motivated her to investigate what felt like ‘unknown territory’. From the outset she was aware of a profound problem in how much academic research – especially scientific research – is targeted towards some supposedly definable end point. Such practice is prejudicial in making it possible retrospectively to stand back as an objective, third-person observer and single out those steps along a linear time line that have led to arrival at the destination. As if these steps have been made deliberately, with foresight, regardless of subjective feelings, experiences and uncertainties.

She recognised that such ‘post-hoc rationalisation’ and its concomitant ‘economical attenuation of the truth’ is a self-excluding source of profound misunderstanding of evolutionary processes. And she also saw this as the source of a lacuna – the exclusion of the receptive centre of responsive agency in a living self – in the complexity and systems science base from which her enquiry was launched.

So she decided instead to embark on a ‘self-inclusive’ enquiry, using ‘subjective empiricism’. She puts on record the ongoing iterative and re-iterative, widening and deepening process of flowing exploration, discovery, misadventure and reflection that her enquiry entails, together with the personal feelings she experiences along the way.

What emerges is a highly original and innovative *magnum opus*, both in its findings and mode of reporting. This contains new intellectual insights and discoveries as well as practical applications in her ‘abductive fruits’, notably ‘the P6 constellation’ and ‘Presence in Action’.

By combining first-person and third-person with second-person perception and including all of these within an infinite spatial ground, Louie becomes aware of the little known but fundamental evolutionary principle and philosophy of ‘natural inclusion’. This both provides validation and focus for her self-inclusive approach enabling her diverse findings to confluence into place. It opens up possibilities for developing ‘symmathesic’ ways of living and learning that are more honest, compassionate, considerate and creative than currently exist.

The thesis is written up ‘metalogically’, corresponding with its evolutionary approach, and is both extensively referenced and remarkably free from technical or typographical mistakes. There is an innovative use of four distinctive voices called ‘state waves’ (corresponding with the natural mutual inclusion of spatial stillness and energetic motion), and a provision of supportive visual and poetic presentations alongside the more formal text.

This is an exhaustive work that combines considerable intellect, technical skill and scholarship with deep sensitivity and sensibility. It far exceeds the standard required for the award of PhD.

Alan Rayner  
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