A New Geography for Vocations in Psychology: Crafting the Roles Your Community and Bioregion Need

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The usual approach to finding a vocation is to begin by studying the currently existing roles in a given field. A more radical method is to imagine the world you want to live in, and seek a path that can help bring it more fully into existence. Some people are interested in studying psychology but for assorted reasons do not want to work doing psychotherapy. They may see clearly that psychological understanding and sensitivity are needed throughout society, and should not be sequestered in settings that proceed primarily through practices of psychiatric diagnosis and clinical treatment, and which are not widely available and/or cross-culturally appropriate and effective.

As we shift to lend our weight to what eco-philosopher Joanna Macy calls “The Great Turning”—the necessary shift from industrial societies to life-sustaining societies—we need to further develop the roles that psychologists can undertake to assist in needed individual, social, and ecological restoration and regeneration. This necessitates a radical engagement in re-conceiving psychology as a potentially liberatory force in society, a commitment present in the early years of psychoanalysis but subsequently almost wholly lost.

For the last 20 years at Pacifica Graduate Institute I have been studying the kinds of community and ecological work doctoral depth psychology students engage in when released from the constraints of clinical training, and urged to turn toward their communities with a depth psychologically-minded eye and a systemic understanding of interdependence. From student and faculty work I am attempting to sketch out a new map for those trained as psychologists that focuses on the kinds of psychological work and roles that are needed in “The Great Turning.” This new geography for psychological work assumes transdisciplinarity. It is an invitation to craft psychologies that are more adequate to the problems we face, and the dreams and hopes we harbor for a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world.
Our communities need psychologists who know history, who can understand the social, economic, and political context of psychological and community life. They need to know how to identify ideologies, to see their psychic consequences, and to critique them. Their accompaniment is needed for individuals and communities who are burdened by experiences of collective trauma and oppression. Such depth psychologically minded cultural workers need to know how to facilitate dialogue, to be animators for groups seeking critical consciousness of the everyday situations they are encountering. They need to know how to map community assets, and facilitate appreciative inquiry and empowering evaluation of what is working in a group and what its gifts are. They need to be able to create a space so that a group can listen to its dreams and aspirations, to work through its conflicts, and to deeply inquire into its most pressing problems. By helping a community to identify and hold their vision, psychologists can help to build the kinds of inspired solidarity that are necessary to realize what we most deeply desire. Such psychologists are scholar-activists; some are gifted in liberatory arts, documentary filmmaking, or writing. They craft their roles and activity by identifying their and others’ visions, carefully working with others to understand the actions needed to move from present reality to desired dream.

Now psychologists are called to not only accompany and witness other humans, but other species, ecosystems, earth, and water. Their work to help reconcile what has been dissociated occurs on the interrelated planes of psyche, society, and nature. Those working in this new geography will grasp that psyche is not only in the person, but is throughout our world. Indeed, as archetypal psychologist James Hillman said, psyche is not in us, we are in psyche. The health of the individual is indivisible from the health of the family, the community, the state, the society, and the ecosystem. Psychologists who are working for the Great Turning must see holistically and be able to skillfully move between interrelated parts of our living systems.
This psychological work is in alignment with the areas set out by the Earth Charter: work that fosters respect and care for the community of life; ecological integrity; social and economic justice; and, democracy, nonviolence, and peace. At Pacifica Graduate Institute, we have forged our specialization in Community Psychology, Liberation Psychology, and Ecopsychology with these values as our teloi. Critical community psychology has challenged the paradigm of individualism that undergirds much clinical and counseling practice, restricting the understanding of psychological suffering to the intrapsychic and the familial. It addresses the roots of shared suffering in the culture, refusing to falsely individualize distress.

Liberation psychology and ecopsychology direct our attention to the effects of oppression, violence, and excess greed on individuals, families, communities, and ecosystems, while they invite our vision and actions for communities to more deeply enjoy justice, dynamic peace, and sustainability. They guide our efforts toward cultural and ecological restoration, and to creating forms of democratic, dialogical, joyful, sustainable, and nonviolent living. In the Community Psychology, Liberation Psychology, and Ecopsychology Specialization of the M.A./Ph.D. Depth Psychology Program at Pacifica Graduate Institute, and in the Depth Psychology Program before it, students and alums have embarked on a wide variety of vocational pathways.

Explore them in our CLE newsletters, *Hearing Voices 2013* and *Hearing Voices 2014*, and through the categories and links below to their work. To access the links, go to the online version.

Work that fosters care for the community of life; ecological integrity; social and economic justice; and, democracy, nonviolence and peace
The Earth Charter’s Four Principles of the Earth Community Linked to Vocational Roles for Psychologists and the Psychologically-Minded

Respect and Care for the Community of Life

Co-Creator of Public Homeplaces (i.e., for groups such as Refugees and Immigrants, Veterans, First Responders, African-American Community, Incarcerated and Previously Incarcerated Youth and Adults, Orphans)
Youth Mentor
Foster Care Youth Advocate
Psychotherapist (with psychosocial and interdependent perspective)
Community Arts Facilitator
Individual and Collective Trauma Healer/ Psyche-Soma Practitioner
Accompanier of People with Chronic Psychiatric and Medical issues
Psychosocial Accompanier
Accompanier of Seniors/Tercer Edad
Social Hospice Creator and Worker
Co-Creator of Community of Resistance
Assisting in Cultural Recovery/Cultural Resistance Dialogue & Council Facilitator
Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator
Facilitator of Grassroots Governance Urban Strategic Planning Facilitator
Cultural Broker w/ Immigrants & Refugees

Ecological Integrity

Co-Creator & Steward of Ecovillages Transition Towns, Sustainable Communities Ecological Sustainability Worker Transition Town Networker Community Ecotherapist Eco-Trauma Specialist Ecotherapist Healer of the Human and Other-than-Human-Nature Divide
Transpecies Relations (i.e., Parrots and Humans and Wolves and Humans)
Restorative Gardening
Wilderness Immersion Guide
Shamanic Practitioner
Fostering Contemplative Practice in Nature
Place-based and Nature Educator

Earth Ethics Advocate
Environmental Ombudsman for Animals, Places (i.e., rivers, forests, earth, oceans)
Peak Oil Planning Facilitator
Eco-Art Activist
Urban Community Gardener & Mentor
Cultural/Social/Eco-Permaculturist
Community Ecosustainability Leader
Land, Water and Marinelands Conservationist and Protectionist
Habitat Restorer/ Eco-Converter Regional Environmental Equity Facilitator
Environmental Pollution and Protection Mediator
Environmental Justice Advocate

Social and Economic Justice

Facilitator of Grassroots Governance & Urban Strategic Planning
Social Policy Advocate
Worker for Reparation for Historical Harms
Forger of Alternative Economic Systems

Alternative Currencies
Barter Systems
Workplace Democracies
Understanding the Psychic and Community Effects of Capitalism and Excess Privilege
Educator re Differentiation of Desires and Consumerism
Financial Regulation Advocate
Critiquing Capitalism and Corporate Greed, Psychic Effects of Privilege
Restorative Justice Convenor
Re-Conceiver of Justice Systems Alternatives to the Juvenile Justice System
Accompaniment of Prisoners and Detainees
Educator within Prisons
Re-Entry Partner
Reversing the Pipeline to Prison and Detention
Theater of the Oppressed and Legislative Theater Facilitator

Systems that Engender Community and Interdependence
Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace

Assisting Communities and Groups to Address Historical Harms (i.e., genocide, war, racism, sexism, colonialism, etc.) Building Sites for Reconciliation between Estranged Groups & Communities (i.e., between citizens and immigrants, between different racial, ethnic, religious, and economic groups, etc.)

White Privilege and Diversity Facilitator
Creating and Hosting Restorative...psychologists are called to not only accompany and witness other humans, but other species, ecosystems, earth and water.

Roles That Can Be Helpful Across These Categories

Writers: A Sampler of Depth Program
Student and Alumni Books

Thom Allena, Restorative justice on the college campus: Promoting student growth and responsibility, and reawakening the spirit of campus community
Gay Bradshaw, Elephants on the edge: What animals teach us about humanity
Joseph Coppin & Elizabeth Nelson, The art of inquiry: A depth psychological perspective
Craig Chalquist (and Linda Buzzell), Editors, Ecotherapy: Healing with nature in mind
Craig Chalquist, Terrapsychology: Re-engaging the soul of place
Madeleine Feijoo, Listening to our children's voices: Abandonment, invisibility, and resilience in the lives of high-poverty Hispanic drop outs
Heidi Gailor-Loflin (co-author), Building leadership skills in adolescent girls
Susan Guadarrama, The alchemy of food: From soil to soul
Jeffrey Hull, Shift: Let go of fear and get your life in gear
Andrew Kimbrell, The masculine mystique: The politics of masculinity
Andrew Kimbrell (co-author), Your right to know: Genetic engineering and the secret changes in your food
Gordon Lee, On the edge of hope and healing: Flipping the script of Filipinos in Hawaii
Ruth Meyer, Clio’s circle: Entering the imaginal world of historians
Jennifer Selig, Integration: The psychology and mythology of Martin Luther King, Jr.
Jennifer Selig (co-editor), Reimagining education: Essays on reviving the soul of learning
Ricki Tannen, The female trickster: The mask that reveals
Shelly Tockluk, Witnessing whiteness: First steps toward an antiracist culture and practice

Educators

Our graduates teach at free-standing graduate schools, state colleges and universities, liberal arts colleges and universities (i.e., Antioch College, John F. Kennedy University, California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS), Pacifica Graduate Institute, Sonoma State University, Cal State Los Angeles, University of Hawaii, University of La Verne, University of New Mexico, Rutgers University, Temple University, Alameda College, California State University, Northridge, Lincoln Memorial, University, William Peace University, Rancho Santiago Canyon College, Mount St. Mary’s College, Cuesta College, San Francisco State University, New York University, Our Lady of the Lake College, Art Institute of California, Berry College, Eastern Mennonite University, University of Southern California, Monterey Community College, Webster University, University of California/ Santa Cruz, Chapman College, Barstow Community College, UCLA Circle of Caring, Bridging Worlds Retreat Center, Santa Barbara Adult Education Center, Harker School, prisons, youth authorities, retreat centers, community centers, alternative learning centers, elementary and secondary schools, nature schools.
Creating and Working in Non-Profits

Some examples of the non-profits our students and alums have created or worked at:
New Earth, Kerulos, Rodale Institute, Alternatives to Violence Project, African Great Lakes Initiatives, Fortune Society, Los Angeles Waterkeeper, The Ojai Foundation, Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities, Sarah House, The School of Lost Borders, Half the Sky, First Tee, Academy of Healing Arts (AHA!), Jamaicans for Justice, Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, Center for Council, AWARE-LA (Alliance of White Antiracists Everywhere), Sky Mountain Institute Expressive Arts Therapy Training and Ecological and Community Programs, Sisters of Mercy, Highlander Research and Education Center, Earth Charter Initiative, Mississippi Mediation Project, Callie Rose Literary Arts Café, Center for the Empowerment of Refugees and Immigrants, Center for Council Training, Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts

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2 Faculty member, Linda Buzzell in "Lifework: Meaningful Careers in the Emerging Sustainable Society" (Hope Dance, April-May, 2005), points out that there is work to do in moving toward sustainability in every sector of society.
3 See the Earth Charter Initiative, http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/
4 By "Earth Community" David Korten is contrasting an "egalitarian democratic ordering of relationships based on the principle of partnership" with hierarchical ordering based on domination (p. 20).
5 Most of these are roles that psychologists are currently filling. Most of them are drawn from students and alumni in the Community Psychology, Liberation Psychology, and Ecopsychology Program at Pacifica Graduate Institute. I have hyperlinked some of them so that those interested can explore the role further.
6 A public homeplace is a cultural gathering place, an autonomous zone, where people who are marginalized by the dominant society gather and celebrate their culture, welcome intergenerational voices, dialogue and think critically together, feed the spirit, integrate the arts, work together to realize common dreams and to forge new creative pathways to living together (see Belenky, 1996; Watkins & Shulman, 2008).
7 Accompaniment (Watkins, 2014) occurs when one is invited to assist someone or a group. One shares the difficult situation, witnesses it, and offers support that is desired. The practice of psychosocial accompaniment integrates dignity, interdependent understanding, dialogue, participatory and collaborative approaches, historical understanding, critical consciousness, prophetic imagination and arts-based practices.