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

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.

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, and so 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 2015 and Hearing Voices 2015, and through the categories and links below to their work.
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<th><strong>Respect and Care for the Community of Life</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ecological Integrity</strong></th>
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<td>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 &amp; Council Facilitator Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator Facilitator of Grassroots Governance Urban Strategic Planning Facilitator Cultural Broker w/ Immigrants &amp; Refugees</td>
<td>Co-Creator &amp; Steward of Ecovillages Transition Towns, Sustainable Communities Ecological Sustainability Worker Transition Town Networker Community Ecotherapist Eco-Trauma Specialist EcotherapistHealer 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 Ombudsperson for Animals, Places (i.e., rivers, forests, earth, oceans) Peak Oil Planning Facilitator Eco-Art Activist Urban Community Gardener &amp; Mentor Cultural/Social/Eco-Permaculturist Community Ecoresilience Leader Land, Water and Marinelands Conservationist and Protectionist Habitat Restorer / Eco-Converter Regional Environmental Equity Facilitator Environmental Pollution and Protection Mediator</td>
<td>Facilitator of Grassroots Governance &amp; Urban Strategic Planning Social Policy Advocate Worker for Reparation for Historical Harms Forger of Alternative Economic Systems that Engender Community and Interdependence 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</td>
<td>Assisting Communities and Groups to Address Historical Harms (i.e., genocide, war, racism, sexism, colonialism, etc.) Building Sites for Reconciliation between Estranged Groups &amp; 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 Justice Initiatives in Schools and Justice Systems Individual and Collective Trauma Healer Creating Alternatives to Violence Violence against women Alternatives to Violence Project Co-Facilitator in prisons, jails, and communities Conflict Resolution and Community Mediator Peacebuilder Nonviolence Educator Participatory Action Researcher Reconciliation Facilitator Direct Democracy &amp; Consensus Builder Domestic Violence Education and Prevention Worker Public Conversation Facilitator</td>
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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, JFK 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, Art Institute of California, Berry College, Eastern Mennonite University, University of Southern California, Monterey College, University of California/ Santa Cruz, Chapman College, Bridging Worlds Retreat Center, 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, Highlander Research and Education Center, Earth Charter Initiative, Mississippi Mediation Project, Prosper*
Rochester, Callie Rose Literary Café, Center for the Empowerment of Refugees and Immigrants

Re-Humanizing the City: The Art of Social Activism, Edinburgh Chiapas Solidarity Group

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1 Hillman, J. (1992). *The thought of the heart and the soul of the world.* Dallas, TX: Spring Publications.

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/](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.