Trans-Species Psychology: Theory and Praxis

G. A. BRADSHAW & MARY WATKINS

In the dream, the elder was joined by the animals of the forest and desert. One by one they came to sit around him: the stag, the bear, the mountain lion, the birds, the snakes, and others. As they gathered around, the animals spoke of their grief and broken hearts as they saw what human people were doing to the land and waters. The animals had come to the elder to tell him that their grief was so great that they were leaving the earth. The animals felt they had no place in a world without soul and one sculpted bare by humans absorbed in violence and destruction. As the tribal members listened to the elder's vision, they too were overwhelmed with sorrow. The elder exhorted the tribe to call the animals back before it was too late.

—Lakota Sioux Elder

G. A. Bradshaw, Ph.D., Ph.D., is a faculty member in the Depth Psychology Program, Pacifica Graduate Institute, and the Environmental Sciences Graduate Program, Oregon State University. Her research and teaching focus on trauma recovery, cultural conservation, and psychotherapy of elephants, parrots, and primates. She is completing a book on *Elephant Breakdown: The Psychological Study of Animal Cultures in Crisis*. Descriptions of current and past work and publications are found at her website www.kerulos.org.

Mary Watkins, Ph.D., is a core faculty member and the Coordinator of Community and Ecological Fieldwork and Research in the M.A./Ph.D. Depth Psychology Program at Pacifica Graduate Institute. She is the author of *Waking Dreams, Invisible Guests: The Development of Imaginal Dialogues*, the co-author of *Talking With Young Children About Adoption*, and a co-editor of *Psychology and the Promotion of Peace*. She has worked as a clinical psychologist with adults and children, and with small and large groups around issues of peace, envisioning the future, diversity, vocation, and social justice.

Introduction

Psychology is an all-encompassing discipline because it embodies how and why we each perceive and experience the world. Individual experiences inform our relationships and how we live. While *psych*ology lies at the heart of all of psychology schools, each defines "psyche" and "soul" uniquely. These definitions frame how psychological understanding and healing are approached. Conventionally, psyche has been restricted to humans and bounded by the paradigm of individualism. A range of new writers stress the need to release psyche from identification with solely human subjectivity. Archetypal psychologist James Hillman returned to Platonism to emphasize that each being—human, plant, animal, and man-made—has a soul spark.[1] Arne Naess offered the concept of an ecological self to emphasize how human subjectivity cannot be properly conceived of apart from animals.[2] Diverse cultural workers such as Vandana Shiva, Wangari Maathai, and Grace Lee Boggs from Kenya, India, and the United States have brought repeated attention to the interdependence of human psychological health and ecological renewal.[3]

These efforts are based on a well-being that re-envisions psyche existing across humans, animals, and nature. But while ecopsychology often reflects on environmental destruction—the devastation of forests, pollution of water and air, and degradation of soil—extinctions of individual animals and their communities are too often omitted. Rather than acknowledging the individuality and diversity of myriad species, psychological discourse maintains nature in generic anonymity: more like a scenic backdrop or an afterthought in the abstract. The construct of psyche decoupled from other species precludes interspecies' relationships with animals in ways other than as object or projection. Not only is human healing undermined, but the deep psychological suffering sustained by animals through such objectification is ignored.

Psychologies of liberation have been developed to help understand the psychical impact of oppression on humans in colonialism and in its present form as transnational capitalism. Such psychologies argue that individual liberation is not possible while simultaneously oppressing others. But they too have disregarded the similar oppression, marginalization, exploitation, forced migration, and genocide that animal communities experience. When Paolo Freire proposed his pedagogy of the oppressed in Brazil, he explicitly differentiated humans from animals, excluding them from the sphere of concern.[4] Ironically his descriptions of animals as lacking history and future, intention and reflection, are not unlike racist colonial descriptions of "natives" submerged in an endless present and merged with the natural world in a presymbolic manner: a "description" his work underscores and critiques. Similarly, when Ignatio Martín-Baró wrote that psychologists need to "make a contribution toward changing all those conditions that *dehumanize,*" he did not have in mind animals and our relations to them.[5] His discourse was limited to human conditions of poverty, violence, and injustice. Human concerns have placed animal suffering as unfortunate, but inevitable, collateral damage.

Congruent with depth and liberation psychologies' call to prioritize "what or who has been marginalized,"[6] we bring attention to the marginalization of animals and those aspects of psychology that exclude nonhuman species. The impetus to engage a liberation *eco*psychology derives from ethical and psychological considerations. *Psychology, by maintaining an agenda of speciesism, violates one of its central projects: individual development of moral consciousness.*[7]

Connecting the liberation work of Freire and Martín-Baró with ecology brings us to the question of the psychic toll endured by animals through human oppression, and, in its trans-species form, into the project of psychology. This expansion is consistent with historical analyses that show how liberation movements are always partial and require continued efforts to include the marginalized. Liberation movements are often themselves exclusionary, as for example, early American efforts to establish liberty left out both women and people of color (Native Americans, Africans, Chinese, and Mexicans). The animal rights movement calls attention to the exclusion of animals and their liberation.

We approach this imposed absence through the concept of a trans-species psyche and its praxis, which engages the principles of liberation and eco-psychologies together.[8] The model of the trans-species psyche explicitly names the interpenetration of human and animal domains in parity absent the assumption of ascendance.[9] Our intent is to articulate a trans-species psychology—a theory and praxis—in which the interdependence and well-being of humans and animals can be

understood in parity, in the language, concepts, and practice of psychology.

We illustrate how a trans-species psychology might express as a multi-species praxis in the description of individuals working in African Elephant recovery. Like their neighboring human tribes, Elephants suffer deeply from the effects of violence that became systemic with European appropriation.[10] Borderland[11] people—individuals who psychologically and physically live across the species divide—such as evoked in animal rescue work illustrate alternative ways of being and knowing that are not bound by human privilege.

Much as liberation psychologists are asked to help change conditions that dehumanize, trans-species' psychologists are called to address conditions that de-nature humans by separating them through false species' distinctions. A trans-species psychology embeds humans in the continuum of nature through the disavowal of human privilege, thereby admitting to "the great principles of liberty, equality and fraternity over the lives of animals… [and letting] animal slavery join human slavery in the graveyard of the past."[12] Animal liberation is part of the critical step toward our own and other species' psycho-ecological health. By engaging in this liberatory work, there is a conscious embrace of psychological theory and praxis that is trans-species and understands animals as individuals deserving empathy, respect, and concern.

Psychology and Speciesism

For millennia, western views have held humans apart from all other species. But this is changing. Definitional boundaries are beginning to blur even in science where the human-animal divide has been strongly enforced. For example, stem cell researchers worry about mixing neuronal and psychological capacities of humans with other species in the creation of hybrid chimera. At the same time, new genome analyses bring human and chimpanzees almost to identity. Commenting on these recent findings, one Australian anthropologist reflected that "it could be possible for humans and chimps to have sex and produce offspring, although there would be ethical problems." Implicit in this almost casual statement is a profound observation. The remaining barrier separating chimpanzees from humans has begun to cease as a

scientific issue and be understood in terms of ethical deliberation. However, this adjustment brings a certain sense of discomfort.

Three decades before the genome studies, when Jane Goodall reported on anomalous chimpanzee behavior, the news was received with startled interest mixed with reservations. Chimpanzees in Gombe, Tanzania, were gang-killing other chimps. Particularly disturbing were the accounts of the mother and daughter team killers, Passion and Pom, who killed and ate infants. Chimpanzees were behaving in very unpleasant, *human*like ways: exhibiting what appeared to be psychopathology. Today, nonhuman primate infanticide has been absorbed into scientific theory as normative behavior and has contributed to the expansion of evolutionary models to include psychology. But the concept of animal psyche is not entirely settled.

The use of the term psychopathology—not symptom—is important because psychopathology insists on attention to psyche, something that has been denied to all species except for humans. While animals play an important role in human myths and are used to symbolize aspects of human experience, they are relegated to psyche's periphery and excluded from psychological models except when used to assert human uniqueness and ascendancy. C. G. Jung's model of collectivity and psyche perhaps brings the clearest articulation:

> The various lines of psychic development start from one common stock whose roots reach back into the most distant past. Theoretically it should be possible to peel the collective unconscious, layer by layer, until we come to the psychology of the worm, and of even the amoeba.[13]

Jung's conceptualization connects psyche across species but does so by conforming to biomedical and cultural models of progressive evolution.[14] Psychological intersection between humans and other species in these models are permitted only in the common roots of instinct. Humans are related to animals only "from below [where] we trace back through our line of descent."[15]

The surprise from Gombe, therefore, was not chimpanzee aggression but the intentionality of violence—behavior that extended consideration of animal psychological experience beyond biological instinct. By definition, such behavior was un-natural because only humans are defined as lying outside nature; humans alone have been

considered to possess the capacity to be un-natural. The fact that evolutionary theory was changed to accommodate nonhuman primate infanticide, thereby normalizing what was otherwise anomalous behavior for an animal, testifies to the resistance to acknowledging how close human and animal experiences may really be.

Even while maintaining human supremacy, C. G. Jung understood that the psychic loss of connection with nature had occurred by virtue of western worldviews.

> As scientific understanding has grown, so our world has become dehumanized. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos, because he is no longer involved in nature, and has lost his emotional "unconscious identity" with natural phenomena… His contact with nature has gone, and with it has gone profound emotional energy that this symbolic connection supplied.[16]

Today, we no longer "seek animals' advice but, rather, require them to conform to our standards. We may 'love' them but domination is the strongest imperative in many of our interactions with them."[17]

Domination is a central theme in western understanding. The domination of nature is found throughout the archetypal images and fantasies of western human identity and *mythos*: the pioneer, the conquest of Nature through colonialization, and Nature as *terra nullis*—empty wilderness.[18] Symbol, myth, and cultural habits are deeply engrained in concepts of human and individual identities. Practices of speciesism begin early in childhood when "we begin a lifelong work of differentiating ourselves from [animals]."[19] Through a succession of collectively mediated disconnections, the human psyche becomes increasingly experienced as anthropocentric: a process that is defined by and demands the denial of animal agency and their reduction to the status of objects.

Psychology participates in speciesism by ignoring individual and personal animal psyche except in the form of colonized fragments as projections (e.g., anthropomorphism), symbol (e.g., mythic figures), or physical objects (e.g., laboratory animals) whose identities are shaped by human need. The pervasiveness of anthropocentrism is subtle. Margot McLean, in dialogue with James Hillman in their book *Dream Animals,* brings attention to the ways in which psychology translates

animals from being perceived as psychological beings to beings in psychological service to humans:

> I wouldn't want to forget about the real fox. I think it is important to see the same respect given to the real animal wherever it appears. I think it is important to see the animal as you do in dreams, but dream animals must not be segregated from the animals living out back under your porch or in the bush…One must be careful when adopting an "inner" animal that the connection to the animal world is not reduced to a feel-good-about-me condition.[20]

In another example, a psychiatrist argues for "integrating animal images so that [we] can experience them as part of [ourselves]" and "to become the animal incarnate."[21] Even while seeking a restoration of *anima mundi*, such imaging can threaten psychological phagocytosis by imprisoning animals through definitions of and for the human psyche if animal agency and their psychological boundaries are not respected.

Consequently, bound in speciesism, individuation remains tethered to collective definitions of psyche, thereby violating a key project in depth psychology: individual development of moral consciousness. Locating ethical authority in collective mores "deprives the individual of the moral decision of *how to live his own life"* where "without [such] freedom there can be no morality."[22] By retaining animals as colonized fragments defined by human utility, psychology denies animal individuation and excludes animal agency from the creation of the ethics of everyday living.

New scientific evidence and political movements have begun to disable many epistemic arguments used to support psyche as a uniquely human possession. Science and society are converging on the idea of brain and psyche as trans-species.[23] Recognizing the trans-species nature of psyche removes presumptions that allow animal objectification and undermines rationales used to withhold animals' rights. This shift, however, raises several challenges. Dismantling human-animal psychological difference unravels a primary cultural organizing principle. Human-animal differencing comprises much of what defines western human collective identity and an ego construct based on what animals are presumed to lack. A theory of a trans-species psyche does not erase species differences—differentiation is

how we decide what to eat, with whom to live, and how to live—but the epistemic logic informing core cultural and political agendas based on human privilege is significantly eroded.

Liberation Psychology and the Animal Rights Movement

Martín-Baró argued that liberation psychology begins by acknowledging that psychology itself must be liberated. Liberation is understood as actions and ways of thinking that do not require subjugation of an Other: a psychology whose theory and praxis is not contingent on exclusion or domination for its legitimization.[24] The transformation of how one perceives, thinks, deliberates, and acts necessarily engages both the oppressor and the oppressed. In this manner, liberation psychology engages the empowered and disempowered in mutual transformation. Echoing C. G. Jung's concept of individuation, Martín-Baró maintains that "[c]onsciousness is not simply the private, subjective knowledge and feelings of individuals" but relational.[25] However, historically, the relational basis of psychological transformation is often overlooked or represented in terms of individualism, not individuation.

The prevalent construct of individualism that forms the base of many psychological theories has tried to understand individuals with little cultural context and even less nature context. This decontextualization has meant that psychological theories and practices carried within them the seeds of the very pathologies from which its patients suffered.[26] This has been the case, for example, in the interpretation of black people in white people's dreams where often a similar lack of regard for the individuals symbolized has been carried.[27]

In contrast, psychologies of liberation have sought to work from an interdependent paradigm of the self. Rather than understand an individual solely in the light of their intrapsychic experience, their early family experiences, or even their biochemical dispositions, liberation psychologies assert that to understand individuals we must understand the historical and cultural context in which they live their daily lives. Further, it is necessary to decode prevalent ideologies that affect us or others psychically to fully grasp the roles they play. Psychology is urged not to limit individual change as a process in isolation, but rather facilitate the process as an ethical dynamic between an individual and their environment.

A liberation ecopsychology consciously expands the context of psyche to include consideration of conditions that oppress nonhuman species. Animal rights is "a liberation movement [that] demands an expansion of our moral horizons, so that practices that were previously regarded as natural and inevitable are now seen as intolerable."[28] By releasing psychology from collective assumptions of human privilege, we understand nature as peopled by psychological individuals of diverse specieshoods. Biological differences are re-conceptualized as extended definitions of cultural diversity. Psychologists are asked to refrain from the exploitation of other species as natural and inevitable and instead to ask for:

> a complete change in our attitudes to nonhumans [and] demand that we cease to regard the exploitation of other species as natural and inevitable, and that, instead, we see it as a continuing moral outrage.[29]

Linking ecopsychology with a liberation movement challenges the moral compromise implicit in psychological practices and theories based on speciesism. To uncouple psychology from the collective agenda of speciesism means to de-center from anthropocentrism and therefore compels a re-design of psychology so that the struggle, suffering, and aspirations of nonhuman individuals become integral to psychology's project.

African Elephant Trauma and Recovery: Trans-Species Relations

For over half a century, Daphne Sheldrick and the Elephant Keepers at the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust have worked to rescue and rehabilitate orphaned Elephants.[30] Most Elephants arrive after experiencing severe trauma directly or indirectly caused by humans. Massive culls (systematic killing of Elephants to control population), translocation, altered habitat, hunting, and ivory and meat poaching have caused Elephant populations to drop in the last century from an estimated 10 million to less than half a million. Beyond statistics, it is difficult to deny that Elephant society is breaking down. As one African Elephant researcher sadly noted, outside a few parks, there are no normal Elephant herds left.

Similar to humans suffering genocide and war, Elephants are exhibiting symptoms related to social trauma.[31] Young male Elephants,

orphaned by culls, killed over one hundred rhinoceroses in South Africa. Elsewhere, diminished mothering skills, infant neglect and rejection, and other asocial behavior have been observed. Elephant intra-species male-on-male mortality exceeds 70-90% compared with no to little mortality in relatively undisturbed landscapes. Some Asian Elephants raid villages for vats of alcohol, leading to alcohol causing uncharacteristic behavior such as "separations from [the]herd groupings and changes in ….behavior..[such as] decreased feeding, drinking, bathing and exploration for most animals [and increased] inappropriate behaviors such as lethargy and ataxia."[32] In India, "marauding Elephants" in Assam have killed 605 people over the past twelve years and over 300 people in Jharkhand in the past four years. Daily reports describe Elephants frantically storming villages and stalking lorries in search of food because of starvation.[33]

The relatively benign co-existence between human and Elephants of pre-colonial times has turned into civil war. Human on Elephant violence is considered so pervasive that a formal term has been coined to describe inter-species strife: Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC). Once revered as gods in Asia, Elephants are now regarded with hostility. The log book of one Indian veterinarian records scores of Elephant deaths that occurred after "torturing and shock induced by mahouts and other people, blood poisoning caused by torturing as well as arthritis, undernourishment and too strenuous work, shots from the police, constipation caused by wrong nutrition, electrocution, an explosive device in the Elephant's mouth."[34]

People at the Trust are working to redress the effects of this breakdown: indeed save Elephant culture from extinction. The Elephants who come to the Trust survive only because of human assistance. It is a time of both physical and emotional distress:

> The babies are always severely traumatized on arrival, often having witnessed the violent massacre of their Elephant family… [T]hey inevitably enter a period of deep grieving for their lost loved ones, something that can last for months. Not all calves can be persuaded to make the effort to try to live.[35]

One rescued orphan, Imenti, was literally born through trauma and into terror, born while tribesmen were hacking her mother to death and brought to the Trust Nursery still covered by foetal membranes.

The Trust is staffed by Elephant Keepers. These are Kenyan men who substitute for traditional Elephant allomothers—constellations of female Elephants comprising the natal herd responsible for the rearing and teaching of young wild Elephants. The Keepers are responsible not only for the infant's physical survival but for re-creating Elephant family life.

> It is very important that the young Elephants are psychologically stable, because if not, the wild herds will not want them. The key to this is the replacement family during infancy and 24 hour contact with their Keepers…. when the Elephants and their Keepers go as a group free ranging, but at night the Keeper will sleep with each Elephant in its stable.[36]

The Keeper-Elephant bond cannot be underestimated. In the event that a Keeper "has time off, or is sick, the Elephant will grieve and go into a decline" and behave like he or she is losing another family member.[37]

Rescue work at the Trust is distinguished from many other animal rehabilitation efforts because it recognizes the need for Elephant psychological care and healing. The Trust work describes conscious attention to psychological work with another species and thereby acknowledges psyche that is not bound to humans alone. Through relating to each other psychologically absent the agenda of human domination, Elephants and Humans suggest the beginnings of an interspecies culture where the power of mothering—irrespective of gender and species—is able to regenerate in the absence of traditional families. Humans have stepped in to help mend the holes in Elephant society created by Human violence.

Human mothering of Elephant infants relates to other cultural recoveries necessitated by similar experiences of community breakdown. For centuries, African people were also culled, had lost elder leadership, and were translocated as slaves to foreign lands. African traditions of non-nuclear family adult-child relations have provided some measure of resilience to traumatic attacks on the family by slavery, AIDS, famine, and separation of family by forced migration in these situations. These traditions call for children to be nurtured not only by their biological mothers but by "Othermothers," members of the extended community.[38] Where children have lost their mothers or where their

mothers' attention is impaired by oppressive circumstances, Othermothers come to the fore. In the United States, Othermothers have provided a mothering constellation that is crucial in communities negatively impacted by the legacies of slavery. Othermothers rear their own and others' children and in the process, stitch together traditions with new world landscapes.

By combining western, tribal, and Elephant knowledge and experience, the Keepers cultivate social and ecological Elephant knowledge that is challenged by the human impacts on the environment. This knowledge is vital for the young Elephants so that they will know how to live, what to eat, how to be in healthy relationship again, and be an Elephant when they re-join wild herds. Like African-American Othermothers, the Keepers "provide road maps and patterns, a 'template'" which enables the Elephants "to create and define themselves as they moved from childhood through adolescence to adulthood."[39] Connection does not stop once the young Elephants re-join the wild herds. Traditionally, older Elephants bring younger herd members to visit the bones and skulls of family who have died.[40] In like fashion, many reintroduced Elephants return to the Trust with their young to meet their human relatives.

While some of the rescued orphans die, the Trust remarkably has saved over seventy Elephants and rhinoceroses. These survivors, as well as their human counterparts, live and raise families to pass on their experiences across successive generations.

Trans-Species Psychology: Epistemes, Practices, and Cultural Change

It important to grasp the depth to which a trans-species psychology challenges practices in psychology, science, and culture at large. A trans-species psychology profoundly deconstructs foundational premises upon which globalized cultures, and much of psychology, are built in several ways. One of the most critical aspects of liberation ecopsychology is its charge to bring animal psychic well-being into the project of psychology. In so doing, it asks for a reconciliation of psychological theory and practice to serve human and animals equally.

In the main, animal well-being has been considered the territory of veterinary medicine and conservation science. These professions conventionally deny animal psyche and view collectively sanctioned

methods such as culls, laboratory experimentation, and translocations as legitimate and necessary practices. Similar assumptions employed elsewhere in the history of slavery, labor abuses, and violence against women and children were also once part of cultural norms but later understood as profound abuses.

The trans-species psyche views both animal and human psyches as subjects of psychology's commitment to healing and care. It therefore disabuses the notion of psyche as uniquely human and throws into question the power differential that permits the sacrifice of animal objectification. Denying animals their full status as psychological beings is understood as a belief that abets animal exploitation. By recognizing a shared subjectivity, psychology ceases to be a solely a human enterprise and animals enter the sphere of psychological concern. This move prepares for what Martín-Baró's identifies as two requisite steps for deconstructing psychological and cultural privilege: the creation of a new episteme (a new way of seeking knowledge) and a new praxis. The task at hand is, given that so many of its methods are predicated on human cultural idiosyncrasies, how will psychology be able to serve animal psyches without their marginalization?

Much of psychology's methodology is tailored to meet not just human but Euro-American criteria[41] and thereby disallows animal cultures from participation. Science's epistemic model, to which much of psychology still adheres, "unfortunately, does not link knowledge and morality, but rather it connects knowledge and power and makes them equivalent."[42] Clearly an episteme and discipline, science and psychology, respectively, that have based much of their learning on animal experimentation is inappropriate. A trans-species psychology therefore compels the recreation of an epistemic basis alternative to the exclusionary aspects of science: one where the "fundamental horizon for psychology as a field of knowledge is *concientization*."[43]

Concientization "characterizes the process of personal and social transformation of the oppressed."[44] In terms of the trans-species model of psyche, this advocates for clarifying an ethical and practical re-orientation of western culture, episteme, and ontology that eschews the assumption of human ascendance and prioritization of human benefit. By understanding animals in psychological parity with humans and not as reduced, surrogate forms of human experience, psychology desists from such practices and models. Science and knowledge-making

emerge as consciously relational processes that are accessible to both animals and humans. A multi-species science and *ethos* includes other species as partners in decision making, culture-making, and community meaning making. This brings us to another critical move in articulating praxis of trans-species psychology: the de-privileging of human language.

Trauma studies have underscored the importance of therapeutic relationships where psychological recovery can be supported without objectification of the injured (e.g., witnessing).[45] However, even such practices rely on the ability to hear, relate, and exchange experience symmetrically. Given the degree to which language plays a pivotal role in such relational exchange in psychology, how is interspecies dialogue to be comparably envisioned?

Euro-American cultures are heavily invested in spoken and written language. Indeed how human language is regarded has been used to define human superiority and animal oppression. Many channels with which humans have historically connected with nature have been lost through industrialization.

> Thunder is no longer the voice of an angry god, nor is lightening his avenging missile. No river contains a spirit, no tree is the life principle of a man, no snake the embodiment of wisdom, no mountain cave the home of a great demon. No voice now speaks to man from stones, plants and animals, nor does he speak to them believing they can hear.[46]

A liberation ecopsychology insists upon the de-privileging of human language and a renewed reconnection with all other beings. Michael Cohen writes that such:

> reconnecting with nature consists of bringing into your consciousness a sensory way of thinking and relating with which you are born. Moment by moment…nature produces consensual relationships at every level from microorganisms to natural people to weather systems. It is the process that nature uses to sustain its diversity peace and sanity.[47]

To be able to hear and speak across species bounds is to encourage modalities that permit such exchange. Most of these modalities—the wordless unconscious, smell, touch, sight, taste, other types of vocalizations (fifty-three by Cohen's count)—have atrophied in

postmodern human culture but are increasingly acknowledged as core to human communication. Through the marginalization of other communication modalities, psychology has pathologized non-European peoples as well as animals.[48]

Many peoples have ways of communicating that facilitate exchange with other species. Aboriginal peoples of Australia practice *dajirri*: an "inner deep listening, a knowledge and consideration of *community* and the diversity and unique nature that each individual brings to *community.* It is communication for community benefit, not for lone individuals. The principles of reciprocity in *dajirri* are informed by the responsibilities that come with knowing and living *dajirri*.[49]

A liberation ecopsychology is informed through such listening and other modalities of communication engaged by individuals such as Elephant healer, Elke Riesterer. By shaping her therapeutic methods to the body and psyche of Elephants, Elke is able to translate human healing practices across species.[50] Elsewhere in the USA, the director of The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, Carol Buckley, works in the recovery of severely traumatized, older captive Elephants rescued from zoos and circuses. She has created a process that supports Elephant individuation as they begin to process the decades' long layers of physical and psychological suffering. Key to these processes is her support of Elephant agency and concomitant deconstruction of any human-imposed power differential. She has changed her ways of being and listening from mainstream culture in order for Elephant healing to occur.[51]

These examples illustrate the creation of open, cross-species access to communication, mutual agency, and the emergence of a trans-species psychotherapy. Such practices, however, oppose a principle that is forcefully maintained by the mainstream culture: a human ego identity and ontology intact and apart from all else. Elephant trauma recovery at the Trust and the Sanctuary defy this position and the conventional myth that prolonged, intimate human contact is deleterious to wild animals.[52]

Conventional scientific models do not support intentional interspecies bonding nor do they legitimize interspecies communication that does not maintain a power differential. To engage in such is considered anthropomorphism, the practice of considering that animals share human experience and that is considered to be a

serious breach of science. Affective and psychological aspects of interspecies transactions that blur species' boundaries, such as Keeper-Elephant bonding, have been a source of controversy for years.[53]

Orphan rehabilitation practices at the Trust, however, are consistent with psychobiological studies on infant development and care.[54] Human health workers consider these types of transactional rearing essential elements for supporting healthy psychological, behavioral, and neurobiological development.[55] The Keepers' attachment re-patterning with the traumatized infant Elephants transforms growth inhibiting (i.e., loss of Elephant family) into growth promotion (i.e., Keeper allo- and othermothering bonding) experience that characterizes relational healing. Through committed care and love, infant Elephants are encouraged to develop psychological agency and self-empowerment—factors that are considered key to human trauma recovery.[56] When applied through the conceptual lens of a trans-species psyche, psychobiological models[57] describe Elephant psychological recovery and brain-behavior development through the process of interacting Human and Elephant psyches. The Keepers emulate mother Elephants but their own scent, touch, customs, personality, ways of being, and ways of interacting are in dialogue with the developing Elephant self through socio-affective dialogue.

Psychology is moved beyond collective images that rigidly separate humans and other species to an ecological self.[58] Walls holding apart theory, practice, and professions of human and animal healthcare in the past begin to disintegrate at places like the Sanctuary and the Trust. These new approaches and models of interaction extend outside the therapeutic context to the conservation of Human and Elephant communities.

Most conservation models proposed to address Elephant and Human conflicts remain embedded in colonial agendas and values where humans and nature are positioned in opposition, or at minimum, in separation. Western epistemes separate cultural from ecological renewal in its deepest sense. Similarly, sustainability—the ability for people and nature to continue—retains an agenda that subordinates nature in service to humans. Western models contrast with ecological cycles and patterns that describe many local cultures whose historical identity has been intertwined in nature and was not defined by righteous speciesism.

Unfortunately, many Africans today have negative associations with wildlife conservation. Conservation is linked with colonial appropriation of tribal lands or seen as a way that threatens human survival by its disallowal of access to natural resources.[59] These are the themes that underlie the hostility characterizing Human-Elephant Conflict. However, little attention is given to the fundamental element that has impoverished tribal and animal lives: colonialization. Although Africans today are warring with Elephants, it has not always been this way. People killed Elephants and Elephants killed people before European occupation. These occasions were the exception relative to the recent past's systemic annihilation. Forced removal from tribal homelands and the concomitant loss of traditional livelihoods that integrated human culture into the matrix of nature have disabled the ability to survive in ways other than those dictated by colonial and neoliberal models. Colonial legacies are associated with efforts to conserve wildlife on lands that tribal peoples once shared with wildlife but from which they are now barred. Violence to nature is embedded in the historical experience of indigenous trauma.[60]

Trauma for Elephants and Africans is historical, ecological, and unresolved. Elephant ethologist Evelyn Lawino Abe speaks of how these disrupting legacies have propagated and affected both Elephants and her own tribe, the Acholi of northern Uganda. Her descriptions of the two species, like the histories themselves, are almost indistinguishable.

> Fate has the Acholi people and Elephant linked. The Elephant is the totem of the Acholi people. In the cultural beliefs of the Acholi people, the very existence of their lineage depends on the Elephant. These taxonomically divergent groups have both suffered massacres that graphically mirror each other. Both have suffered the annihilation of adult males and the eventual turning of guns onto older females leading to a destruction of both cultures.[61]

Similar to colonial situations where the effect of racism and enforced hardship turned oppressed groups against one another rather than mobilizing dissent, Elephant and tribal community interests have became pitted against each other in competition for lands made depauperate by colonial appetites.

For many aboriginals, colonialization has entailed the loss of "homeland, the moral sphere, the seat of life and emotion, and place of heart."[62] It has meant the loss of livelihood and meaning. Even when colonial rule has given over to nationals, the profound dismantling of the bonds between people, animals, and land caused by European social, economic, and psychological oppression has yet to be addressed.

Meaning making from the perspective of a trans-species psyche envisions human and animal restitution as mutually beneficial because it recognizes the necessary relational role of healing. By definition, the work of the Trust Keepers and Elephants engages in meaning making—the essential process that allows individuals to develop and live with a sense of intactness after the fabric of life is rent.[63] In creating new ways of being in relationship with the animals and land of their heritage, the tribal Keepers have an opportunity to engage in building a new ecological vision. The Keepers have a choice to relate to Elephants in a way alternative to exploitation or domination. For some, caring for the orphans is "not a job—it is a passion."

> [The Keeper] Amos feels that had he not worked here he would have never liked Elephants or any of the animals which pose a threat to his clan's livestock. Spending every day with these creatures enables you to learn so much about them and can even benefit from their knowledge so he now sees Elephants as a true asset to lands that the Samburu traditionally call their own.[64]

The Keepers provide the Elephants with what psychoanalyst Winnicott called a *facilitating environment* and simultaneously Elephant recovery also supports the Keepers by creating a dialogical space of security and creativity.[65] In such communities, individuals "create safety for each other as they re-build community, and what emerges is a deepening self-knowledge not just of the individual but of the group."[66] Practices lose their cultural identifiers becoming neither recognizably Elephant nor Human but merging elements of both with the land. Freya Matthews calls such re-connection through place a return to "nativism:"

> To be native is to have one's identity shaped by the place to which one belongs: one is a creature of its topography, its colours and textures, saps and juices, its moods, its ghosts and stories. As a native, one has one's taproot deep in a particular soil: one has grown in that soil, and continues to be informed and sustained by its essence. One is kin to all the other beings who arise out of and return to that patch of earth, and one draws one's substance and one's templates for meaning from it.[67]

Liberation ecopsychology's focus on animals does not entail the marginalization of humans: only human privilege. It is consistent with many indigenous philosophies and ways of beings where animal and human survival are considered one and the same. As Martín-Baró underscored, trauma recovery is not limited to the single victim but "extended to the roots of those traumas, and therefore to [the] social psychopathogenic situation."[68] Cross-species recovery opens to a new psychology—and culture.

Conclusions

The theory of a trans-species psyche and its praxis through engagement of a liberation ecopsychology extend depth psychology's project across species lines. People in multiple cultural settings are already participating in this model of psyche and ethos. Liberatory practices and principles of analytical psychology—the *vas,* the therapeutic alliance, transformative processes of counter-transference and transference—are expressed in multiple cross-species settings. Many live with their companion dog, cat, parrot, and lizard much as others live with their beloved human family. These are seeds of a dramatic shift to multi-species borderland communities where psychological and physical worlds are shared in parity.

In itself, the concept of a trans-species psyche does not require the dismissal of human privilege of Euro-American cultures. However, because the presumption of psyche as uniquely human has formed the foundation for legal and ethical justification of animal exploitation, its replacement by models of a trans-species psyche suggests a parallel reconfiguration. Globalized culture is literally built on the exclusion, and often extinction, of other species. In the United States, 100-190 million birds a year are killed through collision with plate glass windows —windows in houses built to keep out the elements but also other species. Many cultural and psychological identifiers—windows, roads, barbeques, fast food, rodeos, zoos, cars, fox hunting, Thanksgiving, cuisine, telephone wires—are simultaneously agents of animal death.

Unexamined, these cultural structures maintain human privilege inconsiderate of costs born by other species.

Adopting liberation psychology's call to include the dispossessed and decouple human identity from models of biological difference leads to a re-examination on how to live (or even if to live)[69] and at whose cost. Liberation ecopsychology beckons each individual to re-create an *ethos* in consideration of other species through examining our own ego identity and what is assumed to be requisite for survival. The intent of liberatory praxis is not to erase all difference but rather refrain from engaging in behavior and thought that can only exist by oppressing an Other. This brings us back to C. G. Jung's insistence on the purpose of individuation—the development of moral consciousness. In the articulation of liberation psychology, undoing cultural behaviors that impede survival and agency of others and their ability to participate in the creation of knowledge and meaning is required to create a praxis congruent with moral sensibilities.

Liberation ecopsychology places us at a radical edge of co-rights of animals and humans. It requires facing questions, as Peter Singer does, that move us beyond assumed species alignments.

> What, for instance, are we to do about genuine conflicts of interest like rats biting slum children? I am not sure of the answer, but the essential point is just that we do see this as a conflict of interests, that we recognize that rats have interests too. Then we may begin to think about other ways of resolving the conflict instead of killing [rats].[70]

Liberation ecospsychology asks each individual to undo the collective artefacts of colonialization and avoid oppression of another species in our thoughts and actions even when it may appear to threaten us, our children, and our species. We then:

> no longer distinguish sharply between our own interests and those of the beings with whom we are intermeshed—their interests are seen as implicated in ours; protecting them accordingly becomes a matter of 'self-defence.'[71]

Not only does the adoption of a trans-species psychology represent a "chance [for psychology] to restore its Otherness, its spiritual and religious element which was always the ground from which it sprang"[72]

but a way to openly acknowledge the paralyzing grief and trauma in environmental destruction.[73] In seeking to deconstruct animal oppression, we are charged at the same time to engage in deep introspection and perhaps the reinvention of our own ontologies. To do so opens the possibility for regenerating ecological cultures and a way to call back the animals.

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