

Ecopsychology Roundtable: Patricia Hasbach and Peter Kahn

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Abstract

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Thomas Doherty spoke with Patricia Hasbach (right) and Peter Kahn (far right), coeditors of the upcoming *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*, an edited volume from MIT Press. Patricia is an educator and psychotherapist in private practice in Eugene, Oregon. Peter is an associate professor at the University of Washington who has written extensively on the topic of nature, technology, and human development. The following interview is based on a phone dialogue between the three participants.

Thomas Doherty (TD), *Ecopsychology* journal: I want to welcome Patricia Hasbach and Peter Kahn. It is an honor to have both of you on the line for this dialogue. I am excited to talk about your new text, *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*, which is in press at MIT Publishing. Peter and Pat, the publication of your new text is a major event in ecopsychology scholarship. A central message of your new volume is a call for an integration of our totemic selves into our scientific culture and our technologies. I will ask you both to share more about these ideas with our readers. I am

also curious about what you have learned from your collaboration and about your careers and personal lives and what has led to your interest in and collaboration on this project. *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*—why this text, and why now?

Patricia Hasbach (PH): I will start. I think as we took a look at this volume, we sought to build on the foundation of first-generation ecopsychology and address

what seemed to be a very rapidly changing relationship we humans have with nature. As Peter and I began to conceptualize what ecopsychology has already offered and where we wanted to move to or through, we recognized the influence of our scientific culture: that we are technological beings who have become increasingly influenced by our own technology. To back up a little bit, what ecopsychology offered us was the recognition that we need nature in our lives. We need nature for our physical and our psychological well-being, and we always have.

We often begin talking about this topic by saying, “Well, we came of age as a species interacting with the natural world and developed with it.” Somehow, we are getting increasingly away from that. We have forgotten that. There is a resulting disconnect. Long-standing patterns of interaction with nature have contributed to how we treat nature differently, how we have a different kind of relationship with it. Peter and I see ecopsychology as the field that is poised to integrate what we are calling our “Totemic Self”—our relationship with or kinship with the more-than-human world, to borrow a term from anthropology—with scientific culture and with our technological selves.

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Peter, what can you add about that?

Peter Kahn (PK): Pat, you did a nice job summarizing our focus on technology and on the science. I think in some ways—to get right into it—ecopsychology has been too narrow and too insular. Maybe in the beginnings of a field there is a place for that, but at some point it needs to broaden. I think what we are trying to do—and I think it is sympathetic with what you are aiming to do, Thomas, with the journal—is to broaden the base of ecopsychology in terms of people's experience of their totemic and technological existence within our scientific culture.

This is an edited volume. It is not like we are just writing this all out. The people we are bringing into the volume, there are some core first-generation voices that are included, people like Andy Fisher, whom you just interviewed recently, and ...

PH: Laura Sewall.

PK: Yes, Laura Sewall, and Lynn Margulis, to the extent that Gaia Theory is part of ecopsychology. So we have some core people in the volume, but we are also trying to broaden the discourse. I think, again, that is what you have been trying to do with the journal. So we have people like Scott Sampson, writing on what he calls the topophilia hypothesis, emphasizing the importance of place. We have Howie [Howard] Frumkin, Dean of Public Health at the University of Washington, who has a chapter titled "Building the Science Base: Where Ecopsychology Meets Clinical Epidemiology." Howie was the head of one of the divisions of the CDC [U.S. Center for Disease Control] before he took up a deanship in public health. He is a scientist and is just wonderful. We are so excited to have those voices coming in to broaden the discourse and the content of the field.

TD: Thank you both. I wanted to talk about some of the topics in the book and how your vision and idea of ecopsychology draws on and bridges some diverse fields. Could you say a bit about the five key orientations that you identified in ecopsychology? I think you have structured your volume and categorized your contributors along those orientations.

PH: We chose to approach ecopsychology from the broader perspective of the underlying epistemologies and ontologies. One of the challenges we had as we started to conceptualize ecopsychology was what to include and what not to include, looking at it in terms of what the foundation was.

I can delineate the five orientations that we decided upon. The first was the ecological unconscious, the recognition that unconscious processes exist, including those of identification and repression, not only in relationship to other people but to the earth itself. We drew on Ted [Theodore] Roszak's work for that, as well as Paul Shepard's.

The second orientation that we focused on was the direct sensorial experience of the phenomenon of nature, as constituting a real, foundational source of knowledge and joy and a way that we fully realize our human potential. That is the phenomenological piece, and we drew heavily on David Abram's work.

The third orientation that we drew from was the recognition of the interconnectedness of all beings—represented by Gaia Theory and Deep Ecology—that human life is interdependent with other human life and with nonhuman life and the nonhuman world, and we need that interdependence.

Fourth, we looked at the transpersonal level, at interactions with nature that lead to optimal mental health and help to develop a sense of inner peace, compassion, and trust that pushes us forward into service and finally to the transcendental, which commits to a metaphysic of the supernatural.

These were, again, the deeper perspectives that we wanted to build from as we tried to conceive of what a re-visioned ecopsychology might look like. Do you have anything to add on that, Peter?

PK: No, but Thomas, I think you had a very interesting question when you were reading the introduction. Do you want to bring forth your question about the orientations?

TD: Sure, Peter. I appreciate from my own experience the challenge of working in a broad paradigm such as ecopsychology and the pitfalls of trying to identify any core ideas to begin with. It is, of course, as we know from our study of ecology: When you pick on one part of nature, it is all connected. When you commit yourself to one thing, you immediately open yourself up to potential blind spots. So I appreciate the bravery that it takes to do this work.

I agree with you both that these are key orientations in ecopsychology, or in the different flavors or approaches to ecopsychology. What came up for me was a curiosity about the political—political engagement—that I have always seen as central to the environmental activism of people like Joanna Macy or the late Theodore Roszak and to the critical realism of David Kidner's work.

Another point that came up for me is gender, particularly in terms of ecofeminism. I know that in what we call the "first generation" of ecopsychology, there was an elevation of the feminine, a recovering of the feminine. Using language from feminism or ecofeminism, we

could say “The personal is political,” but now we could also say “The personal is ecological.” Were these things that you were working with as you both were thinking this through?

PK: We have a couple of responses. One is very easy: that you make excellent points, and we agree they could be included. In one sense, we could just leave it there, and everything looks great. But I think you are also picking up on something quite perceptive on your part: that the ideas are not showing up in that way.

About the political—one way to think of this is that the political is more of an area of application for ecopsychology, rather than a defining ontology. But we recognize that others have different views about this.

About ecofeminism—at stake is how to read the history of the field, whether ecofeminism has been central to ecopsychology or whether it has largely grown parallel to ecopsychology and in more recent years has largely joined with it. It sounds like you are reading the field as more the former, that they were closely intertwined in the beginning. Pat and I have tended to see it more as parallel development, but very important to the scholarship currently in the field, and we call that out particularly in the afterword of the book where we highlight future directions.

Instead of calling it “ecofeminism,” we talk about what we call the “warrior ethos” and the way that warrior sensibility emerged in the Neolithic period, where people in larger social systems had a choice of becoming war-faring or not. Largely people did. But war is not part of our essential nature, in our reading of the historical record. War has become, though, part of hierarchical, patriarchal systems that we need to be able to name. But we have choices still today about being war-faring or peace-faring.

I think maybe the reason we did not use the terms in quite the way you are framing them is that it’s almost too politically correct, if I can say that. If you think of ecopsychology and the narrowness of the field, partly it has been pigeonholed by some people as little more than political and a variation of ecofeminism. And in broadening the base what we are trying to do is to not latch on to the very things that have narrowed the base but to look at the field in some new ways.

TD: This is very helpful, Peter. There was a statement you both made—I believe in your introduction—that for the field of ecopsychology, its initial strengths became its weaknesses. I am wondering if that “standing up,” that taking an assertive, political stance was necessary or appropriate at the time for ecopsychology and then later became limiting. Am I on the right track here?

PH: Yes, I can respond to that. Just to reiterate what Peter is saying, I think we made a conscious effort to shy away from some of the traditionally “politically correct” ways of seeing ecopsychology, recognizing that that is part of the base, but moving into a broader base was what we were really after.

I thought that was a really good question that you posed, highlighting a strong statement that we make, that ecopsychology’s initial strength became its weakness. What we mean is that ecopsychology as a field, as we understand it, emerged as part of the counterculture of the 1960s. It largely rejected scientific traditions as reductionist and mechanistic and saw continued development of technology as a major contributor to our current ecological problems. And it was very critical of mainstream psychology for being complicit in this regard. These are important stands that ecopsychology took, and it is important to call out the shortcomings of mainstream psychology. So I think that has been a tremendous contribution of ecopsychology.

But a countercultural theory can work only if the culture it is countering is completely misguided. And if it is not—and it is not in this case [we believe]—then at some point insights from the theory have to be reintegrated into what it initially rejected. We see that there is a growing recognition of this in the *Ecopsychology* journal, as well as the *European Journal of Ecopsychology*, and all the work that you have been doing, Thomas. When you look at both of those journals, there are a variety of articles, evidencing multiple ways of knowing, including empirical scientific articles and essays from multiple disciplines.

So in our view, in order for ecopsychology to be taken seriously by the larger psychology community and thus effect a change in that community, it needs greater scholarship and stronger scientific research. We understand that not all the ecopsychology community is going to agree with that position, but that is how we see the field moving forward effectively, and we are hoping that the vetting of an academic press, like MIT Press, will contribute to that scholarship.

TD: Thanks, Pat. This is great. I really appreciate you both modeling principled, respectful debate on these topics. I do think it will ultimately prove to be a benefit for people working in this area.

I know Peter’s work on “technological nature” and the work you are both engaged in on “nature language” and the concept of “rewilding” are key to attempts to transcend some of the dualisms we have alluded to and to bring us into an engagement with the modern world that values our technological nature and our wild nature. I am wondering if you could speak a bit about this idea of rewilding—I think it is something that readers may identify with in their lives or something they may be aspiring to. What does rewilding look like?

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PH: Do you want to take that one, Peter? Go for it.

PK: I love Paul Shepard in this way for what he brought so powerfully to ecopsychology. His work does two things that in my view are beautiful and important. One, he is tracing our heritage back not just to Neolithic times but to Paleolithic times, to our hunter-gatherer self. And you know, he in a sense makes the same case that E. O. Wilson made in 1984 with the publication of *Biophilia*, which is that the need for nature is deep in the architecture of our bodies, minds, and spirits. But it is not just nature in a domestic, easy, friendly, pet-oriented, garden, Neolithic way. It is also a wilder nature.

To say it straight on, Pat and I think environmentalists in general, and ecopsychologists as well, have gotten too soft. We have gotten soft in a technological, urban environment. There is a drawback to that because the harder and wilder aspects of nature are still essential for our well-being. When the very people arguing for the importance of nature are themselves largely speaking about domestic, everyday, local nature—which has become a common way to speak about nature to the larger public, and of course it's important—it's only half the story, only half of what we need to flourish, as individuals and as a species.

The other half that we need to keep alive—in our experiences and in our language—is the importance of wildness, of places that are large in scope, self-organizing, and unbounded, and autonomous and self-regulating systems, and of interactions that can be grand and awe inspiring and also frightening and difficult. For an ecopsychology to be a full-bodied psychology, it needs to bring more of the wild into its theorizing and discourse.

PH: I would add that when we also speak of rewilding, we are speaking not only of the wildness “out there” but being in touch with the wildness within, our own wildness. We seem to be more blunted in terms of our experience of our own wildness. That is the topic of another whole volume that we are working on called *The Rediscovery of the Wild*.

PK: This volume is also going to be published by MIT Press and will likely come out in winter of 2013. We are very excited about that, and how the two volumes complement each other. With *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*, we try to lay out a larger agenda and then move forward nine months later with more specificity with *The Rediscovery of the Wild*.

PH: So much of our lives are lived in urban settings, so we just have fewer experiences of what it is to be in wild spaces and to

connect with that space within ourselves. I think one of Peter's biggest contributions to the field of psychology has been his concept of environmental generational amnesia. He really speaks about the shifting baseline, in this case, a shifting baseline of what counts as wild nature. If members of each generation construct their idea of what is “normal” in terms of how they describe wild nature, it begins with what they encounter as children. So if a child never gets that opportunity to sleep under the night sky and to look up and see stars or to sit around a campfire and tell stories—and we are quickly losing that—if children do not get that opportunity, then very quickly what that aspect of ourselves looks like, feels like, and is experienced is getting out of our consciousness.

I think it blunts us. We are losing something, and without it we are not flourishing fully as humans. Robert Michael Pyle speaks of this as “the extinction of experience.” I think we are saying something very similar using different words; we keep circling around that idea of wildness.

Wildness is a hard term. What do we mean by *wildness*? It is a hard term to define, and people are very reactive to it. So we hope the volume will be a way of opening that discourse and getting us to talk about wildness in our own lives a little more.

PK: Thomas, how do you see wildness or rewilding in terms of the field of ecopsychology?

TD: We recently published a paper on “the wild” that I thought was great. In “A Definition for Wildness,” (*Ecopsychology*, 3 pp. 187–193) Lawrence Cookson distinguished between the wild and the artificial, and I thought cut through the difficulty people have with the term *nature*, which is used in so many different ways that it tends to not really have a core meaning.

I think people are somewhat rudderless when they try to connect with something that they call “nature.” I think what they are trying to align with or experience is wild, self-organizing systems, systems that operate either in parallel or outside of direct human control.

There is something very restorative about this because, of course, parts of our own psyches and our life systems are wild and self-organizing in that way. It is that alliance with the self-organizing—and I struggle with the language here myself—that I think people are striving for as the world around us becomes more artificial in the sense of being a production of human artifice.

The other important piece here, and we can circle back to Paul Shepard, is the question of what is normal [or sane], especially in terms of our relationship with wild nature. Inherently, there are value

judgments here about what is normal and what is healthy. I know Paul Shepard can be critiqued for being critical or maybe even cruel or bitter about the modern world, labeling society as pathological in his *Nature and Madness*, for example. But questions like this are at the heart of ecopsychology.

You get to that in your work with the idea of the warrior ethos and questioning moral relativism. For me, as a psychologist, this cycles back to “What does the ethics code say?” We seek to avoid harm and increase health. That means we need to take a stand on what we see as healthy and what promotes health.

PK: Well, you raised a lot of points right there. Paul Shepard had quite a way with words. He talked about nature and madness in the title of his book, and he also talked about “crippled ontogeny.” I do not know of anyone who could get away with that phrase today. And yet he speaks truth, I think, with that sort of language.

You are right. I think the values dimension is a very important one, and I also think it is one that ecopsychologists have largely shied away from. Pat and I are here trying to offer some ways forward for the field. Let’s consider, for example, indigenous cultures, which have been a central focus of many ecopsychologists. Different ways of knowing. Wade Davis closes out our volume with a beautiful essay on his experiences with indigenous cultures and different ways of knowing. But I think his work carries with it a tension, which we write about in the afterword. On the one hand, you want to draw out these cultures, respect them, honor them, and learn from them. At the same time, not all indigenous cultures are acting in ways that are either sustainable or ethical—in terms, for example, of people, such as women or people outside their own culture. Many indigenous cultures are patriarchal and unjust in certain aspects of their relationships. Just because we identify a culture as indigenous does not by itself mean that the culture is living sustainably or ethically.

I think this distinction has been conflated in the field of ecopsychology, as ecopsychologists tried to counter the early and mid 1900s anthropological rigidity that trivialized indigenous culture. But the pendulum has now swung too far in a relativistic direction. Pat and I are aiming for an ecopsychology that is of the middle ground—but still with rigor—in terms of being able to appreciate and learn from the diversity of indigenous cultures, such as those that Wade Davis writes about, and at the same time being able to ask questions about ethics and inequality between people and make moral judgments that transcend culture.

PH: As we think about indigenous cultures, it is important to be conscious that these cultures are unique. You cannot reify them. We

need to understand what indigenous cultures have been able to do in terms of living sustainably. What has worked that we have lost? How do we name that so that we can somehow recover that within our own lives, or recognize what we have lost?

TD: This is really great, folks. We could go in many directions here. What I am looking forward to myself in your book is reading what Howard Frumkin and Glenn Albrecht have to say. As a clinical psychologist, who works with people, I feel an imperative to promote health and avoid harm. I think having some of the data that these writers will share will provide a basis for new work in ecotherapy. An empirical basis, so that ecopsychology it is not simply a good idea or some sort of naturalistic fantasy of reconnection, but something that can be seen as quite practical, beneficial, and measurable in the right context.

I understand now that you are trying to hold off on the applications of this work and to build on the base, the theoretical, ontological, and epistemological base. So maybe rather than getting into the applications, we can step back and talk about your collaboration.

In psychology, much is made of the “scientist/practitioner split.” There is the culture of academia and research, of the controlled experiment, and there is the culture of the practitioner who is out working in “the real world,” where things are much muddier, where we have less control, and where people do not easily fit into neat boxes. Often, there is a gulf there between those two worlds. I see you both as bridging that gulf in this collaboration: someone who is a practicing psychotherapist and someone who is a noted academic. Can you speak about your experiences of your collaboration and how it came about?

PH: I will start. I do not think we experience our different approaches so much as a split but more as addressing the issues from a different position on the circle of inquiry. I think it enhanced our work, and it certainly expanded and deepened our individual perspectives. For example, I would make a statement about something as we were talking about these different issues, and Peter would sometimes raise a question about it, and he did it in a way that forced me to deepen my response or perhaps look at a bias about something. What I learned was arguing an academic point can be pretty intense at times!

Peter draws on many fields and certainly on all the cutting-edge technology literature around human-robotic interaction, computer interaction, and of course, developmental psychology. So it is always very mind expanding for me to get into these discussions with him.

On the flip side, I bring 25 years of clinical experience to our discussion, and the real-world experiences of working with people

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directly, both in my office and more recently outdoors, and also doing consulting work with community organizations. So how the theory actually plays out in practice is something that I bring to our discussion.

What we both have is a very deep connection to land and to nature. That seems to be what holds it all together. It is evidenced in our individual work, and it is our most common meeting place when we do have differences. I think many of our best discussions happened while we were hiking in the woods somewhere.

Our very different perspectives have certainly enhanced our rather lively discussions. We have sketchbooks that we keep of many of our intellectual discussions. We have a two-and-a-half-year sketchbook of spiraling ideas, many of which have found their way into this volume, as well as into our forthcoming volume. Do you want to add anything to that, Peter?

PK: Pat, that is beautiful. I think it has been effortless. I have not been particularly aware of the split, as you characterized it, Thomas. I am intellectual and reflective, and I guess the practitioner as an ecopsychologist is by training also very reflective. That reflectivity is also part of academic training. I think maybe the one surprise Pat has had on the academic side is how I critique a lot. [Laughter.]

PH: Yes.

PK: I like to think that I critique to build; I have never been a deconstructivist. You know, my training is much more as a constructivist, going back to Jean Piaget's constructivist psychology. But clearly in constructing there is a lot of, not just reflectivity, but critique of other people's work and one's own work in order to make it stronger.

My sense is that therapy is just as reflective as academia, and equally focused on discourse for development, but it doesn't use critique for as much of the discourse. I think maybe that is one interesting difference.

PH: It forced me to grow a lot.

PK: But, you know, sometimes I lead and Pat follows on our ideas and writing, and other times Pat leads and I follow on our ideas and writing. Most of the time we are moving side by side, and it has all been a beautiful place to be.

TD: Well, thank you both for your efforts! I think coming from these two worlds will add great credibility to your work and speak to a

much larger audience. I really appreciate this idea of a common meeting place. It sounds like it is a conceptual meeting place and a values-oriented meeting place, but it is also a literal, experiential, real place in the outdoors, in the natural environment. And it also sounds like you have avoided some of this scientist/practitioner split because you have an actual relationship versus a relationship based on your projections or stereotypes.

Let's talk about how you live this work. In my recent interview with Andy Fisher and having met Andy at his home, I know that he does practice what he preaches in terms of his radical ecopsychology vision in his community life. Pat, I know you have a connection with the McKenzie River in Oregon. Peter, I know that you make a point of being "off the grid," as you say, on land in northern California. I was in Trinidad, California, recently, thinking about where exactly you are off the grid there. Can you both speak a bit about those places that are a part of your work and a part of your intellectual and creative process?

PH: I do not think I could do this work without the deep embeddedness I feel within nature. As you know, Thomas, I moved to the McKenzie River Valley in Western Oregon seven years ago from Pennsylvania, and I just fell in love with the place. I have let the place really do its work on me. My home sits on the shores of the McKenzie River, which is a beautiful white-water river that is home to salmon and steelhead. There are osprey and bald eagles and great blue heron and Canada geese seen daily up and down the river, and cougar, elk, and deer are part of my home community.

I try to spend unstructured time just being there, just either walking down to the river's edge or sitting up on the hill above the river, to ground myself both personally and professionally. I have really come to know—not just to think about it but to know in my bones what it is to have a deep sense of belonging to a place. I have that where I live.

You asked a little bit about what we do in our home communities to sort of "walk the talk." I do a number of volunteer activities in my community. I have had to put some of that on hold a bit with the writing of these two volumes, but I am getting back to a little more of it again. When I first moved out here, I took training to be a Master Gardener, both to learn how to garden in this part of the world but also to connect with other people that had a similar value about living sustainably on the land and gardening in a holistic manner.

Being a Master Gardener also involves being a volunteer community educator. I also am a "Climate Master" volunteer. This involves educating homeowners about how to be more sustainable with their energy usage and water usage and their transportation

decisions. So all these community endeavors involve people, meeting them where they are and looking at techniques that allow them to be more mindful about their place in the scheme of things.

Thomas, you have a little girl whom I have met and who is wonderful. I like to think about how I have been as a parent to my own daughter, who is now grown up, and how this has also been a way that contributes to walking the talk. She was raised in a way that developed a deep and integrated relationship with the natural world. Like me, she is an only child, and she has a deep kinship with the nonhuman world. It has been incredibly important to her and her development, and it has been reflected in some of her career choices.

The only other thing I would add is that, like Peter, my best work has happened out in nature, off the grid, allowing for the natural flow of time—not by the clock but by the sun and moon. To fall into that space, to me, that is where a lot of creative energy happened.

Similarly, when we were working on our book on rewilding, we spent a couple of fairly long trips in a wilderness area where we did not see another person for 7 to 10 days. That is a profound experience, and I cannot help believe it deeply influenced the work that came from me.

TD: And for you, Peter? I sent a message recently to the Conservation Psychology listserv and saw an auto responder from you saying “I am off the grid.” So you make a point of this. I am guessing that it takes some discipline to get down from Seattle to the land you visit. Can you talk a little bit about that, and how that works in your life?

PK: The land that we speak of is 670 acres, an hour’s drive up a dirt road from the nearest small town. When I was 16 years old, I went to that land. It was a commune years ago, and I joined that group, and from age 16 to 20 I lived full-time on that land and with that talented group of people.

I did not go to high school. I had taken the GED exam at 16 and satisfied that requirement. So then at 20 years old I got interested in academics and started going back to school. But I spent those four years on the land, and our community has stayed together all these years since.

I built a cabin when I was 16 on the land, just very small, 250 square feet. I added on 400 square feet to that. It’s rustic, with an outhouse and an outside shower. It has no electricity or cell phone reception, and I drive two hours to town to do e-mail every one to two weeks. Today, I drove two hours for our phone conversation. As an academic, I focus on my writing during the summer, and I usually spend about a month during the winter holiday on the land, focused on my writing as well. I came of age on this land. It is deep in my psyche.

I have also experienced a lot of loss. That has shaped a lot of my work and some of my focus on environmental generational amnesia. I think the largest loss happens across generations. That is how I distinguish EGA, the shorthand for environmental generational amnesia, from Bob Pyle’s concept of the “extinction of experience.”

I think we all may have the experience within our lifetime of losing places in nature that we love deeply. But the largest loss, I think, happens across generations, when a new generation is born and they construct a new baseline. That baseline may be strongly degraded, but experientially it is not recognized as degraded because that is the construction of a new baseline.

But the loss that I feel, that all of us feel as we get older, is still very profound. On the land that I am on, I used to be able to ride on horseback in any direction as hard and as fast and as long as I could go, often 10, 30, or even 50 miles in a single day. Now, on 670 acres, which is about a square mile, I feel like I live on a reservation. It is kind of dangerous to leave the land—with all the property boundaries and drug issues.

People often think of the 670 acres as a very large piece of land. I see this perception even with the children who have come of age on the land. I am looking at it and saying, “You’ve got to be kidding. We have already lost so much.” Many of the issues that I write about are issues that we face as a community on the land, and some of my disappointments emerge very personally as I try to speak about the power and importance of wide open spaces and wildness to the extended family that I am a part of. These ideas are not always well understood, and it is a very difficult issue.

So I experience some disappointments on the land, and I bring them forward, too, into my academic work. But I also have experiences very similar to what Pat talked about with herself and the McKenzie River. I love this land so much. And I go deep, and I’m always asking “How deep can I go?” And the land, it seems limitless. I think in the same way it is limitless with people—how deep can we go with one another?—there is no limit—I think it is limitless in how deep we can go on the land. I just feel blessed to be part of this land as a place.

TD: Thank you, Peter. I knew a bit about your land, but I did not know how it played into your personal history. That is fascinating. I think our readers will really appreciate that. I also had a number of associations come up, about this extinction of experience and the shifting baselines. I remember some years ago I saw the naturalist Jon Young speak at a wilderness skills gathering. He was talking about what he called the “Alien Test.” I did not know who Jon Young was and was wondering who this character was that had an alien test, but

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it was based on the fact that people in his community could not identify any of the species—the local species—and they were, in effect, aliens in their own community. That was something I have carried with me.

Pat, would you like to name any other key life experiences or mentors that contributed to your work?

PH: I was very fortunate as a child to grow up in a rural area in Western Pennsylvania, where I had parents who had a really deep respect for nature and for land, particularly my dad. A neighbor probably taught me the most about how to just be in nature. She introduced me to the world of birds, and she introduced me to the concept of gardening organically and composting before it was “cool” to do that. She passed away when I was only 11 years old, and I think that she was probably the first ecopsychologist I knew.

Professionally, I am indebted to Jed Swift and Will Keepin for introducing me to ecopsychology. Back in the late 1990s, I think it was around 1996, they offered a three-day workshop called “Ecopsychology for Educators” in the Palo Alto area. I was practicing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at the time and got a brochure about that workshop. It so resonated with me and put words to the very core piece that I always thought was missing in traditional psychology: that we live in a context that we are treating people in. In traditional psychology we look at the interpersonal relationships that we have and the family relationships that we have and the social and cultural contexts that influence us, but we have not given voice to the ecological context in which we live. I think ecopsychology is providing that.

Will and Jed were two people that brought this forward in a really meaningful way. This was also when I was introduced to the first *Ecopsychology* anthology. I still have my first copy, which is pretty tattered at this point. Jed and Will also did a year-long training in the Bay Area called “Leading with Spirit” that I took with them in 1999 that was wonderful.

TD: Thank you both. As I think about it, these interviews constitute an oral history and a living history for ecopsychology.

PK: I just want to add one other thought, a historical note on a mentor in the field of ecopsychology. I remember in the early 1970s Robert Greenway was teaching at Sonoma State University. He would bring his group of students up to the land I spoke about. So I was a kid, a teenager, pretty wide eyed. I would see him come up with his college students, and they would head on down to the river, which is about a mile away, and they would disappear for two or three days.

They would do certain things. I remember he would say people would become an object, a natural object or an animal, and they would do that for 24 hours or something, perhaps with some substances that they had ingested. And so I would see them coming back up from the river two or three days later. That was quite an eye-opening experience. In your interview with Andy Fisher, he was also talking about the centrality of Robert Greenway in his own life. So it is quite nice seeing Robert Greenway having an influence. But there is another Greenway connection worth noting, because his son, Hawk, also spent some time on the land. Hawk and I were about the same age, and our friendship emerged as we went long distances together on horseback and on foot. So there is a Greenway connection, both father and son, that I want to mention.

TD: Yes, thank you for recognizing Robert. He was the first interviewee I chose for this journal, and there is something about a personal connection with someone who just radiates experience, even if it is not codified in writing. There is something about the presence of that person and his or her existence that inspires, perhaps, the writing of others.

These interviews are always interesting to me. As we have been talking and hearing about your experiences, I am thinking about certain folks that grew up in the 1950s, say, and that came of age in the 1960s, who were able to combine a hard-won toughness and an ability to live in the back country in advance of all the neat technology and gear that we have now, basically with an axe and a knife and little else. And that was normal for the time, but it was also possible to fly around the world and be a part of the emerging global culture that arose at that time. Because of their point in history, I think those folks had a foot in two worlds. I am really thinking about those people now, particularly as people are passing: Theodore Roszak, James Hillman, Vaclav Havel, Lynn Margulis ...

PK: And Lynn Margulis just recently...

TD: So in some way, I think—I do not want to sound too profound here—you are carrying a torch and moving us into the 21st century in a way that is really authentic, and congruent, with the experiences of these people.

PH: Now I am struck, Thomas, by what you just said and the people that you named and of them having a foot in multiple worlds. All those people that you mentioned had that stream of wildness and that connection to wild places internally and externally. That really is a profound experience to bring forward that way.

TD: Well, I want to thank you both for your time today. I think this is a great preview of your upcoming works. It is always a pleasure for me to talk to people who are immersed in this work and who are kindred souls and who know this somewhat specialized history and knowledge. I am curious what you have in store following this call and for the rest of your day.

PH: Well, I am actually at my therapy office. I have a couple more sessions with clients in just a little while. While I am in town, I have got some errands that I am going to take care of before I head back up the river. Then I will be spending some precious time with my daughter. She is leaving for Kenya in a few weeks, and I am going to be enjoying time with her today on holiday preparations.

PK: As I mentioned, I drove to town for the phone conversation. That is a two-hour drive, so a town day for me means doing laundry at the Laundromat and food shopping and hardware supplies. I do a few hours of e-mail, what I have to do, and then I drive up back into the mountains, back to my cabin. I have been gone 24 hours, and I miss it so much.

I would like to raise one last thing. Pat and I want to thank you for your leadership with the journal. In some ways, you were an inspi-

ration. When Pat and I saw what you were doing a few years ago with the journal, we started talking about it, and your vision created an opening for us to think about these ideas. So I just want to thank you very much and say how effective and important I think your work with this journal is.

PH: Yes. I reiterate that thanks as well. And thank you for having us.

TD: Well, thank you both! I really appreciate that. Pat and Peter, coming from you both that means a lot.

Editor's Note

The use of personal pronouns such as *we* and *our* refers both to the speakers in this dialogue and also, more generally, to citizens of modern, industrialized nations.

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