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Original Manuscripts

Journal of Humanistic Psychology
1–20
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DOI: 10.1177/00221678231155517
journals.sagepub.com/home/jhp

A Pedagogy for the White Nonpoor in the United States: Returning Stolen and Excess Wealth, Land, and Resources to the Common Good

Mary Watkins[1]

Abstract

Liberation psychology prioritizes the needs and experiences of those who suffer oppression and have been locked out of the commons. Upstream in the United States, those with stolen and excess wealth, land, and resources remain within "gated" communities, protected by ideologies, false narratives, laws, and policing practices. Without leaving a roadmap, liberation psychologist Martín-Baró urged psychologists to reorient their work with the economically privileged to include disrupting compulsive consumption. Excess wealth is largely accumulated through histories of stolen land, extraction of resources, abuse of labor, hoarding, and intergenerational inheritance. This accumulation has benefited White people at the expense of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) individuals and communities. The tasks of conscientization, de-ideologization, and prophetic imagination that liberation psychology engages with those suffering oppression need also to be deployed with willing elites to assist in returning assets, land, and power to the commons. This article addresses the psychosocial tasks that

[1]Pacifica Graduate Institute, Carpinteria, CA, USA

Corresponding Author:
Mary Watkins, Professor Emerita, Pacifica Graduate Institute, 249 Lambert Rd., Carpinteria, CA 93013, USA.
Email: watkinsmarym@gmail.com

are part of this return of excess and stolen wealth and privilege, a return that opens possibilities for mutual accompaniment and solidarity for the sake of justice and peace. This work seeks to contribute to the pedagogy of the nonpoor and the potential role of the helping professions in this pedagogy.

Keywords
liberation psychology, pedagogy for the nonpoor, reparations, greed, conscientization, shame, commons, positive peace, prophetic imagination

"No Justice, No Peace": Facing the Violence Spawned by Greed

> It will take a lot longer than I thought to civilize the Indians. For they know no greed, and until they know greed, they will not understand the private ownership of property.
>
> General William T. Sherman

Liberation psychology emerged in Latin and Central America in the 1980s and has spread throughout the world in the last three decades. It was inspired by some of the central tenets of liberation theology: dedicating itself to the needs and welfare of the majorities, rather than to the desires of elites; addressing and redressing the effects of social injustice and violence on individuals and whole communities; accompanying and walking in solidarity with those struggling in the face of oppression; and confronting the greed born of the capitalist system that enables the accumulation of excess wealth and resources for the few and dire material poverty for many (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Liberation psychology sought to break unquestioned allegiance to Euro-American psychologies that promoted individualism. Too often, these psychologies decontextualized and de-historicized the individual, making invisible the root causes of social inequalities and violence, while maiming the potential to establish individual and community well-being.

Liberation theology judged the hoarding of excess capital as social sin. In *Writings for a Liberation Psychology*, Jesuit and social psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró challenged psychologists to analyze and break the grip of greed. He wrote as a firsthand witness to the war in El Salvador and to the devastating effects of elite-driven state-sponsored violence on children, families, and communities. While he enjoined psychologists to accompany those suffering from oppression, he also pointed to the need for mental health professionals to reorient their work with the economically privileged to include disrupting

the compulsive consumption that breeds violence to extract resources, unfairly remunerate workers, and protect excess capital and power (Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

> I believe there is an extremely urgent task of education for mental health. And this task consists not so much in teaching relaxation techniques or new ways of communicating, however important these objectives may be, as in training and socializing so that people's desires truly conform to their needs. This means that our subjective aspirations, both as groups and as individuals, must be oriented toward the satisfaction of our true needs; in other words, toward the requirements that lead us down the path of our humanization, and not those which tie us to compulsive consumption to the detriment of many and the dehumanization of all. (Martín-Baró, 1992, p. 121)

This would be a psychotherapy in its original meaning—a care of the soul—that would affect some of the causes of direct and structural violence. What might such a process look like?

Martín-Baró's life was cut tragically short in 1989, when he and five fellow Jesuits, their housekeeper, and her daughter were assassinated by a U.S.-trained Salvadoran death squad. He was not able to outline what this "psychotherapy" of the future might look like. Others, such as Frederick Douglass (1857) and Paulo Freire (2008), have cautioned us that those who oppress seek to continue their domination as long as they are allowed to do so, that they are not themselves prone to confront and redress their own contributions to injustice. While this is sadly true for many elites, it is not true for all. Cross-race, cross-ethnic, and cross-economic class coalitions have always been important in forging, supporting, and sustaining justice and peace movements (Horton, 1997). Psychology has largely failed to turn its attention to discerning "the requirements that lead us down the path of our humanization" (Martín-Baró, 1992, p. 121). It has steered clear of addressing how to help one other deprivilege and divest when holding excess privileges and resources at the expense of others. It has failed to assist people in acting on their true needs, rather than those manufactured and then naturalized by capitalist society.

Brazilian liberatory pedagogist Paulo Freire worked with people in groups, rather than individually, as most counselors and therapists do. Through this form of popular education, he discovered that when trying to help group members develop critical consciousness about how their everyday world is constructed, individuals learn from one another and can help each other piece together understandings that would be hard to reach without the accompaniment of others (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). While Freire worked with groups oppressed by their socioeconomic circumstances, the affluent and privileged can also be helped to develop critical consciousness within carefully designed

group structures. There is a need for liberation psychology to also "study up,"[1] promoting conscientization among those with excess resources and power. To see more clearly the history they are embedded in, as well as the defenses and ideological narratives they share, working together in a group can be extremely helpful. Fortunately, there are a number of groups[2] that are actively grappling with helping affluent, often White, people understand how their wealth and privilege were amassed across generations, the effects of this on others, and pathways of reparations to deprivilege and to divest excess wealth and power that rightly belong to the common good. Given the history of Native American genocide, chattel slavery, and the effects of centuries of racism in the United States, the return of excess resources needs to be largely prioritized for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

I theorize and write as a White woman psychologist in the United States who has participated in many of these groups, as I have grappled with divestment of excess wealth and social power. I am drawing on my own experiences and those of other White people who have joined the grassroots racial justice and reparations movement in the United States. We live in a society where massive wealth accumulation of wealth by White people was made possible by racism, the genocide of native people, slavery, convict leasing, policing, and laws and policies that supported White people, while sacrificing the potential prosperity of people of color.

Contrary to General T. Sherman's pronouncement at the start of this chapter, it is my people, White people, who too often need to learn about the true nature of greed. Stepping on to a path of repair is often begun when one turns with curiosity and openness toward disturbing thoughts, feelings, interactions, and realizations regarding inequality and racial injustice. This is critical to forging a commitment to explore one's role and the role of one's ancestors in perpetuating such inequality. Ones steps are quickened by seeking out companions on this path.

A Pedagogy for the Nonpoor

> If, as Jameson argues, the formerly centered and legitimated bourgeois citizen-subject of the first world (once anchored in a secure haven of self) is set adrift under the imperatives of late capitalist cultural conditions, if such citizen-subjects have become anchorless, disoriented, incapable of mapping their relative positions within multinational capitalism, lost in the reverberating endings of colonial expansionism, and if Jameson has traced well the psychic pathologies brought about in first world subjectivity under the domination of neocolonial drives in which the subject must face the very "limits of figuration," then the first world subject enters the kind of psychic terrain formerly inhabited by the historically-decentered citizen-subject: the colonized, the outsider, the queer, the subaltern, the marginalized. So too, not only are the "psychopathologies," but also the survival skills, theories, methods, and the utopian visions of the marginal made, not just useful, but imperative to all citizen-subjects, who must recognize this other truth of postmodernism—another architectural model for oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world. (Chela Sandoval, 2013, p. 26)

While many of the steps on the path of humanization for the nonpoor[3] overlap those taken by the oppressed, there are others that are distinct and need to be specified and embarked upon. Below I will take the tasks that Martín-Baró outlines for the victims of oppression and attempt to clarify how people with excess privilege might engage them. Those that are the same are the recovery of historical memory, the de-ideologization of everyday experience, and the utilizing of the people's virtues. I add Freire's (2008) emphasis on prophetic imagination or what he called "annunciation." Then I will clarify the additional tasks that need to be undertaken by elites to unlock the gate to the commons and return stolen and excess wealth, land, resources, and power. Figure 1 describes how the gate remains locked. The remaining figures outline steps that can be taken to unlock it. These steps are not discrete and linear. Many occur at the same time. The circle of tasks is more like an ongoing spiral that has the potentiality of deepening interdependence, mutual accompaniment, and solidarity for the sake of justice and positive peace.

My own reflection point has been from the perspective of a privileged White person in the United States. However, White and privileged people in other nations and elites of color may share many of the same tasks and challenges.

The Recovery of Historical Memory: Re-Contextualizing Oneself and One's Ancestors

> People who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and become incapable of seeing or changing themselves, or the world.

> This is the place in which it seems to me, most white Americans find themselves. Impaled. They are dimly, or vividly, aware that the history they have fed themselves is mainly a lie, but they do not know how to release themselves from it, and they suffer enormously from the personal incoherence. (James Baldwin, 1965, p. 47)

Martín-Baró asserted that the active recovery of historical memory is necessary to counter the ways in which the status quo presents reality as comprised of only the present. This "apparently natural and ahistorical reality" denies people the opportunity to "derive lessons from their experience" and to connect with the roots of their identity. Unfortunately, the helping professions have too often colluded in this failure to see historically and critically.

Presently, in the United States, there is a struggle between those who perceive the moral necessity to grapple with the sins of the past and those who prefer to elide the history of Native American genocide, slavery, and ongoing violence caused by racism. While Nikole Hannah-Jones (2019) in "The 1619 Project" proposes 1619, the date when the first Africans were pressed into bondage in Virginia, as the necessary starting point of our critical reflection, those who want to legitimize social amnesia to valorise the role of White people in the United States argue that the prideful moment of U.S. independence in 1776 should be the starting point for our reflection. This conflict has crucial ramifications for how history is taught and understood, for how we understand ourselves and our ancestors, and our responsibilities for repair.

The "recovery of historical memory" for White people in the United States must go back at least as far as 1607, the founding of Jamestown. Rather than the undiluted pride that the starting point of 1776 yields, a deeper historical dive adds surprise, horror, disgust, shame, and guilt to be metabolized. This is true not only for those whose ancestors were directly involved in Native American genocide, chattel slavery, and convict leasing, and other manifestations of racism but for all White people who have profited from the structural arrangements that have created a tilted playing field that automatically delivers economic and social privileges to them. Seeing into what has enabled many White people to accumulate excess assets will lead to needed understandings about the role of the following in the generation of wealth: intergenerational inheritance, ideologies that justify hoarding excess assets, the role of elite education in positioning one for higher paying jobs, ownership of land and its appreciation, use of cheap or unremunerated labor for one's own profit, participation in the stock market, and ready availability of loans. These factors co-create a far different landscape for most White lives to unfold in, than the landscapes Blacks and Indigenous have endured. Theirs has been marked by enforced limitations, such as unremunerated and poorly remunerated labor, hurdles to land and housing ownership, redlining, the withholding of loans, along with ongoing racial discrimination, brutal policing, disproportionate

imprisonment, terror, and racist violence. The recovery of historical memory for those with excess assets strips off the veneer on "giving" and philanthropy. What is called for by the history that is revealed is reparations, not "charity" or "generosity."

The kind of popular education proposed by Freire proceeds by posing generative questions that group members can grapple with, sharing their understandings with one another. If you inherited wealth, what kinds of activities did it come from? If your ancestors were in the United States before the Civil War, what roles did they play in the genocide and displacement of Native Americans and with chattel slavery? Where did your ancestors stand in relation to convict leasing and to labor movements such as unionizing? Which ancestors were lauded by your parents and grandparents? Why were they held in esteem? Were any of your ancestors involved in crafting laws for their state? What were they? Who and what did they serve? What kind of education did you and your ancestors have access to? How did this effect your family's history of wealth generation? Gradually a more precise understanding emerges of how the commons have been enclosed in the United States and the lock put in place on the gate, keeping some inside a resource-rich environment and keeping others out.

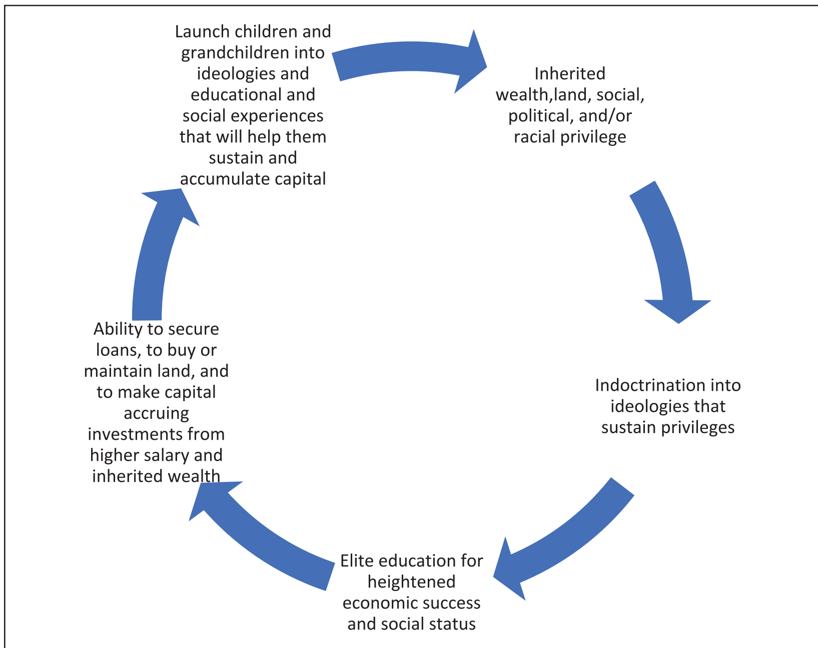
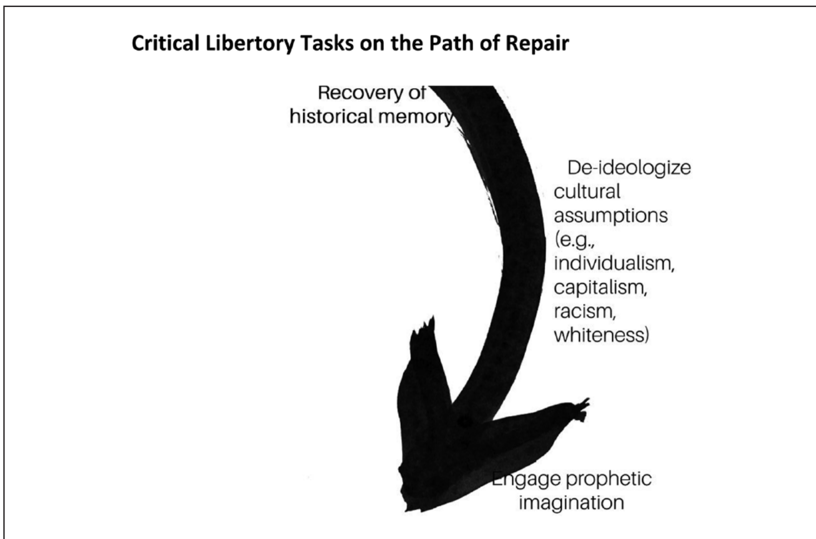


Figure 1. Keeping the Gate to the Commons Locked: Perpetuating Inequality

When elites engage in social amnesia, they find themselves either unrooted or with roots that are sick, even if valorised. The mobility of many in the United States only increases a sense of the hyperpresence of the present, a present that is without history. Migration by Whites to the Americas was often laced with an intention to disconnect from the past. There is a difference, however, between trying to release oneself from a past where one was religiously persecuted or unable to sustain oneself in the face of poverty from releasing oneself from a past where one's ancestors were perpetrators of and benefited from racist violence and unjust social structures.



De-Ideologize Myths That Perpetrate Feelings of Superiority and Merit and Inventory Their Toll on Self and Others

The second crucial task Martín-Baró outlined was de-ideologizing everyday experience to reveal the lies and false narratives of the prevalent discourse. "To de-ideologize means to retrieve the original experience of groups and persons and return it to them as objective data" (p. 31). It involves seeing through what is taken-for-granted as normal and acceptable.

One ideology many White people labor under is individualism (Watkins, 1992). Unfortunately, psychology often colludes with individualism. This ideology enables those with excess assets to falsely understand themselves as self-made and to view their accumulation as a result of their own energies and merit. This false and narcissistic sense of superiority is often laced with racist

ideologies about the inferiority of others. The inheritance of intergenerational wealth, the ways that laws have privileged White people in terms of loans and subsidies, the role of unremunerated or low paid workers in the accumulation are made invisible by the ideology of individualism (al-Gharbi, 2019). A critical approach to this ideology exposes the interdependence between wealth accumulation and the abuse and misuse of others and, often, of the environment. The vast disproportionality in wages between those at the "lower" end of the socioeconomic scale and those at the "higher" end defies any rational justification.

Individualism shears off cultural and historical context. Where a person stands in the social hierarchy is seen to be a function of their own merit or fault, disregarding the multiple contextual factors that advantage one group of people over others (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). When a culture promotes individualism as the dominant paradigm, people's failure to secure health care, adequate wages, stable and secure housing, and education is seen as their own fault. Pressure on the society to provide a robust safety net for all is undermined. In the absence of such a safety net, individuals become more preoccupied with their own survival and success and that of their family, failing to attend to the well-being of the larger community.

The ideology of individualism promotes comparative neurosis, where individuals are constantly judging themselves and others as superior or inferior, as entitled or undeserving (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Individualism pits each person against others through a narrative of scarcity, a belief that there is not enough for everyone to be able to thrive. This ongoing competition for resources undermines a sense of community and often, even, of family.

The psychic results of individualism may include separation from and distrust of others, leading to loneliness and a sense of alienation. People may suffer from a sense of meaninglessness and vacillate between an inflated sense of self and plunges in self-esteem. Psychologist Phillip Cushman (1995) described a shift in how identity has formed since the Industrial Revolution and increasing secularization. Rather than identify oneself with community and family which leads to a greater sense of interdependence, Cushman describes what he calls the "empty self," a self experienced as autonomous and bounded; a self motivated by the accumulation of resources rather than traditional values; a self prone to drug and alcohol abuse, to anorexia and overeating, compulsive consumerism, and passive forms of entertainment. Psychoanalyst and social critic Erich Fromm (1976) described this historical shift as one from a focus on being to that of having. Indeed, he tracked a shift in the meaning of "profit," from profit for the soul to material profits. This materialism, Freire (2008) argued, inanimates and dehumanizes both self and others as it embraces various forms of violence to achieve its ends.

De-ideologizing individualism sets people on a path to challenge notions of autonomy and modes of separation and distancing from others and the natural environment. It questions the "normality" of competition and excess accumulation of material goods. It upends ideas of scarcity that justify hoarding and violence. Deideologizing capitalism and racism are critically necessary in the pedagogy of the White non-poor.

The third task Martín-Baró outlines is "utilizing the people's virtues" which involves appreciatively inquiring into and acknowledging a group's virtues rather than turning elsewhere to import ideals. Liberation theology emerges from a focus on Christian values that dictate against the stealing and/or abuse of another's labor, and against murder, torture, and greed. Liberation theology has, however, sprung roots in other major religions and forms of spirituality—Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism. Across these approaches to liberation is common agreement about treating others as brothers, sisters, and neighbors, with respect, dignity, and loving regard (Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

While these values could become virtues if embodied, Martín-Baró argued that too often the highly privileged do not see themselves as part of "the people" and do not act in solidarity with the people. Seeing through the ideology of individualism enables one to begin to grasp our radical interdependence with one another. From this vantage point, one cannot achieve well-being for oneself in the face of others' misery. The challenges of issues such as climate change, mass forced migration, unfettered capitalism, and inadequate health care infrastructure can be claimed, knowing that they affect all of us.

Prophetic Imagination

To Martín-Baró's list, we will add prophetic imagination or what Freire called annunciation. Freire argued that it is only when we have been able to understand critically how everyday life is arranged by powerful forces and then naturalized and presented as the only way things can be that one is able with others to imagine the possibilities of deeply desired realities-yet-to-come. The desired futures can be created in the present within and between groups that become aligned in their vision. People with excess wealth and privilege involved in work toward social and economic justice begin to imagine how work in the present resonates with efforts in the past and the future-yet-to-come to grow the kinds of relationships and structural arrangements that would create a "world in which it is easier to love" (Freire, 2008, p. 40).

While much of the work of conscientization, historical memory, and prophetic imagining by those directly impacted by oppression and violence shares some overlaps with those who have profited from oppression, there is a need to more clearly specify how the work of the nonpoor differs. Each of us may have parts of our ancestral history that overlap with the work of the oppressed *and* the oppressors.

Bearing Ongoing Witness to Harms Perpetrated by Self, One's Group, and Ancestors

To recover historical memory and to see one's ancestors' and one's own place in it, allows one to witness the kinds of harms that have (and are) being perpetrated. Even if this witness is centuries belated, it is necessary to open even the possibility of future relationships with descendants of former victims. Without looking with specificity at one's own history, one's contribution to harms can remain hazy and ill-defined. If, for instance, one commits to recover one's family's participation in the slave trade and works to discover the lists of enslaved people in their custody, sudden definition to harms committed comes into focus. Emma, age 14; Betty, age 2 months; Phillip, age 34.

Without this labor, one is left with either no sense of history and ancestry or with a prettified image that often bears little resemblance to reality. For instance, an enslaver of 74 Africans upon his death can be described as "a man of the highest Christian values. He was always generous to his community. His understanding of the law enabled him to contribute to the needed legislation of our region."

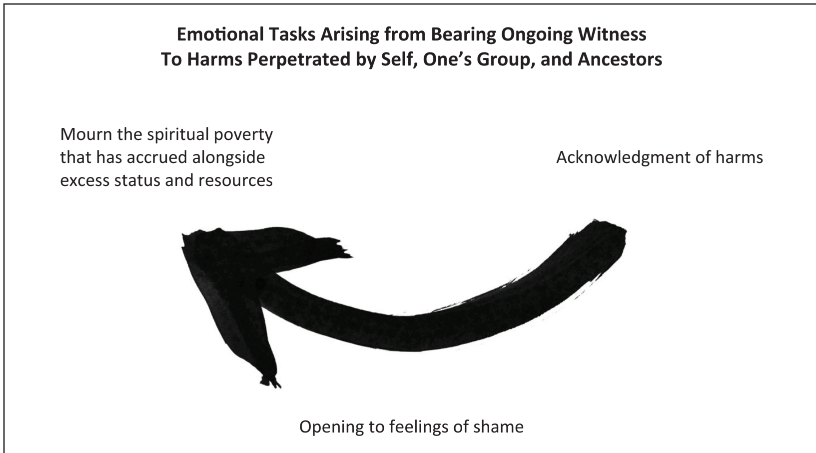
Bearing witness to the perpetration of dehumanizing should be conceived of as a process, rather than a singular event. In this way, the dangers of minimization, denial, amnesia, and falsification are diminished. Once one engages in the process of bearing witness, one is no longer an orphan of history—one with no known lineage. Bearing witness to harms committed is a step to re-humanization. James Baldwin (1965) speaks clearly about this: "one cannot deny the humanity of another without diminishing one's own: in the face of one's victim, one sees oneself" (p. 48).

Acknowledgment of Harms

To re-member one's history and to bear witness to it and its effects is to then be faced with the responsibility of acknowledging harms. Sometimes this may call for a formal apology directed to a specific person or group of persons. It certainly involves sharing and voicing what one has discovered with one's family, friends, social groups, and wider community. To build a culture of reparations where members acknowledge and redress harms committed requires open and honest communication. This itself is a step beyond individualism. One is not alone in having caused harm or discovering the harms committed by ancestors. However, this shared reality is not held and honored by a group unless it is spoken about and acted upon. However, without reparative action, an apology may help the apologizer feel better, but fail to redress what is apologized for.

Opening to Feelings of Shame and Collective Remorse

Efforts to avoid feelings of guilt and shame, and, perhaps, even disgust, can deter us from bearing witness to and acknowledging harms. Broadly speaking, American culture has been defined as shame and guilt avoidant (Watkins, 2018). In the Korean way of understanding shame, it is seen as the first of four noble qualities leading to the development of compassion (Chodorow, 2009). To ignore and fail to honor our shame is to amputate our potential for compassion. Philosopher Sara Ahmed (2004) distinguishes shame from guilt. We most often experience guilt when we violate common standards for our actions. Shame does not simply spring from an action of violation, but from a sense about oneself. Ahmed (2004) says, "In shame, more than my action is at stake: the badness of an action is transferred to me such that I feel myself to be bad . . ." (p. 105).



Feelings of shame and remorse can arise not only when I perpetrate harm on others but when a group to which I belong, including my ancestors, does so. Margaret Gilbert (2001) points out that collective remorse does not rule out individual remorse, but it also does not require it. One may feel no personal responsibility for offenses that harmed others yet still acknowledge membership in the group that was responsible. The acknowledgment of such remorse addresses the harms of the past, while being a building block of the future. For without such acknowledgment, no trust can develop between those from the group that was harmed and those from the group that perpetrated the harm. Experiencing shame can create a movement from a hostile and defensive stance that forecloses genuine relationships to the

initiation of such relationships that are grounded in not only apology but commitment to nonrepeat of harm and the making of amends, restitution, and reparations. This labor of shame also enables one to build authentic self-respect.

John Braithwaite (1989), in *Crime, Shame, and Reintegration* underlines the importance of both denouncing the offense (but not the offender) and offering reparative pathways. This approach to shame enables it to be both reintegrative and generative (Casey & Watkins, 2015). When pathways are embraced for people to set situations right (or righter, when full repair is not possible), they have the possibility of being integrated into the larger community.

Mourn the Spiritual Poverty That has Accrued, Hand-in-Hand with Excess Status and Resources

> The way forward is with a broken heart. (Alice Walker)

Because the accumulation and/or hoarding of excess wealth leads to separation from the interdependencies that are all part of the larger web of life, having excess material wealth, land, and resources impoverish the spirit. As people with excess resources retrieve their histories and acknowledge their present complicity in systems that benefit themselves at the expense of others, shame and grief may be felt, alongside an emerging sense of the spiritual poverty of one's way of life. On the flip side of this realization is a potential roadmap of repair. In lieu of separation and hoarding, relationship and letting go of excess assets and resources become potential pathways.

Deepen Sense of Interdependence and Understanding of the Interconnectedness of Well-Being of Others and Oneself

All of the previous steps aid one in moving from a sense of radical independence and separation to a felt-sense of belonging and interdependence with others and the natural world. Commons are understood and named differently across cultures (Brooks, 2008). I borrow from the history of the commons in England and Ireland (Watkins, 2019). One shared thread, however, is that while being part of a commons allows one to get one's needs met when possible, it also involves obligations to the commons. There is a reciprocal flow of resources and energy. One does not draw on the resources of the commons in ways that would deplete the commons for others. While the resources of the commons are not privately owned by oneself, they are also not set apart

from oneself. To participate in commoning one lives into relationships graced by mutual aid and interdependence.

In England and Ireland, commoning was increasingly disrupted from the 17th Century on by the enclosure and privatization of common lands. The wealthy and powerful seized commons for their own profit, forcing commoners off the land and into the cities. There they became the first industrial workers or fell into poverty, many being imprisoned and deported (Linebaugh, 2014).

Disidentify With Excess Wealth

As one becomes more sensitive to interdependence and to the traumatic histories of abuse that are tragically foundational to excess wealth accumulation, one becomes more open to understanding that the profits accrued from land appreciation and return on investments were gained largely without one's own commensurate labor. These profits have a dark side, as they siphon off assets from the common good into private ownership. The questions of whether to return these gains and how to return them begin to insinuate themselves as one disidentifies with owning and being entitled to the excess wealth.

Resolve to Return Excess Wealth, Land, and Power to the Common Good

The resolution to return stolen and/or excess wealth, land, and power to the common good can come slowly over time or like a sudden conversion, born of one's efforts at the recovery of historical memory, conscientization, de-ideologization, and prophetic imagination. After decades of attention to elites and theological study, Archbishop Oscar Romero described his own conversion to

the poor to a friend. He said it was like a piece of charcoal being lit inside him. Once lit, charcoal can be long burning and easily rekindled (Sobrino, 2015). A conversion decisively changes one. One begins on a new path.

Co-Create a Plan for Return and Embark on Divestiture

This decisive shift requires a plan for return of assets, resources, land, and energy to the commons. Now, situated more firmly within a paradigm of interdependence, it has become clearer that this plan needs to be formulated through conversation and relationships with others. White people may need to confront desires to control assets even when disbursed, rather than develop trust in BIPOC and other grassroots leadership of projects that contribute to a regenerative economy and shared well-being.

Each step of divestment helps to inscribe a path on which a person may begin to feel a sense of heightened integrity; that is, an alignment of their understanding and vision with the ways they are acting, living, being. Ironically, divesting wealth is often experienced as a step toward greater wealth, a wealth of spirit, relationship, and a sense of belonging.

Invest Time, Energy, and Resources in Horizontal Relationships and Mutual Accompaniment, Aid, and Solidarity

> If the foundation for a people's mental health lies in the existence of humanizing relationships, of collective ties within which and through which the personal humanity of each individual is acknowledged and in which no one's reality is denied, then the building of a new society, or at least a better or more just society, is not only an economic and political problem; it is also essentially a mental health problem. By the very nature of the object of our professional work, we cannot separate mental health from the social order . . .
> (Martín-Baró, 1992, pp. 120–121)

Relationships of mutual accompaniment across racial, economic, ethnic, and other lines of division sensitize one to diverse realities and open the possibility for building solidarities to help birth cooperative, nonviolent, mutually beneficial ways of living together. These new relationships only become possible when harms are acknowledged, addressed, and commitments made for nonrepeat.

As one heightens investment of time, energy, and resources into the commons, new relationships become possible. One learns from and shares with those one has been estranged from due to apartheid-like arrangements in many neighborhoods, cities and towns, schools, workplaces, and houses of worship. A deeper

sense of belonging to a wider community develops. Ways to mutually accompany and accomplice in more horizontal relationships become more apparent. As the false separation and self-preoccupation common to individualism soften, feelings of joyful interdependence can emerge. Reparationists report "profit" in its original sense—profit for the soul: feelings of gratitude, of liberation, love, respect, deep connection, and even the unbinding of energy (Duncan, 2023).

Breaking the Cycle of Excess Intergenerational Inheritance Wealth While Attentive to the True Needs of One's Family

It is likely that those with excess resources have passed on the privileges they have enjoyed to family members, such as education, housing, and health care. Now they feel more clarity that they are part of a larger human family and have obligations to those who have been harmed by the very excesses enjoyed by their family. "What is enough?" becomes an ongoing query that helps sort normalized ideas that feed compulsive consumption from a felt sense of enough that can release sharing. Keeping money and land within a small, discrete family when it is not needed continues the harms one has come to understand. These harms are not only to those who have been deprived of opportunities and security, but to one's family members who may suffer many of the emotional and relational dilemmas that come with excess wealth that have been discussed above. A commitment to nonrepeat of behaviors that cause such harm is strengthened.

The processes described above are at the group and individual levels of organization. It is easy to see that there are societal changes that would support people to allow resources to flow to the common good: the teaching of history that includes the grievous missteps in the past that have negated and abused others; the making of psychic and social space so that people can acknowledge shame and understand the pathways to restorative actions; the provision of an adequate social safety net so that the fear of scarcity does not aggravate tendencies toward excess hoarding. Legislation, rules, and regulations that disadvantage BIPOC people in securing stable and secure economic and living conditions need to be uprooted. Legislation is needed that reins in excessive transfers of wealth and that creates a culture of reparation through federal embrace of racial reparations.

When groups of White people with resources labor together with such a pedagogy, they are able to spark reparations in the groups to which they belong, including faith and community-based groups. These, in turn, help to strengthen popular pressure for federal, state, and local governments to enact reparations. This contributes to a needed synergy for establishing a culture of reparations.

Liberating Psychology

Martín-Baró (1992) argued that before psychology can be a force for liberation, it must liberate itself from complicity with the structures and ideologies that cause social misery. This is true for clinical psychology, counseling, and social work. They need to continue to open their lens to help recontextualize individuals and groups in a larger historical and socioeconomic frame. Their professional education needs to take a decolonial direction to decisively align itself with grassroots movements that strive for the common good. A decolonial lens helps students understand the psychological and community harms that have ensued from racism, capitalism and gross economic inequalities, colonialism, sexism, militarism, and imperialism. Brave spaces need to be available to them so they can ferret out their own positionalities with regard to historical harms.

A decolonial history of the helping professions would help to illumine for students psychology's collusion and complicity with ideologies and practices of ongoing coloniality. It would assist them in questioning the ways in which their professional practices have been and are being shaped by and responsive to capitalism. They need to be introduced to current alternatives and enlisted to imagine their own work into and past them. These students can be challenged to envision together the kinds of social structures and intergroup and interpersonal relationships that are most conducive to psychological well-being. This kind of prophetic imagination enables the helping professional to not only address therapeutically the psychological damage wrought by racist and capitalist structures and systems, but to aid grassroots groups in creating mutual aid networks that are responsive to the needs and desires of the majorities.

When the recovery of historical memory becomes an essential process in the education of psychologists, counselors, and social workers, an understanding of individual trauma is radically supplemented by the importance of collective or social trauma, trauma that has affected whole groups and populations. When attentive to what Martín-Baró (1992) calls "the people's virtues," it is clear that there are multiple epistemologies that make contributions to understanding suffering and addressing healing. How might psychology evolve in the next 50 years if it was truly respectful of this multiplicity and able to de-center Euro-American epistemologies?

By integrating popular education and its methodologies of recovering historical memory, de-ideologizing, and prophetic imagination through generative questions and group dialogue, the helping professions have a critical role to play in unlocking the gates to the commons. By helping individuals and groups transition from an individualistic paradigm that

upholds false innocence, fears of scarcity, and the naturalization of hoarding resources, it can address the pathologies of having and assist movement toward interdependence. People would be assisted in grasping the interdependence between their own well-being and that of others and their communities. Psychology can assist people in more deeply contextualizing their lives in current socioeconomic and political realities as well as in history. It can open psychic and social space to invite feelings of shame, guilt, and disgust around historical and current racial harms, helping to transform a shame-avoidant culture to one that can mobilize shame to create reparative actions and commitments. Attention can be given to how individuals can create lives of integrity, where their actions are congruent with their critical insights and values.

Without articulating the psychic harms of bystanding and the perpetuation of unjust inequalities, psychology turns a blind eye to the benefits for well-being of moving from these stances to solidarity with others to create racial justice. These harms include separation and loneliness, false consciousness, denial of feelings and restriction of emotional range, exaggerated fears of scarcity, inauthentic existence, and unmetabolized shame about hoarding in the face of others' misery.

While there is ample reason to embark on a pathway of repair for the sake of others, it is important to articulate the benefits to those who help to unlock the gates to the commons through their divestment of resources. Beyond the deep fulfillment of living a life of integrity, those who have embarked on this path remark on the capacity to form relationships with people who have lived on the other side of security, in lives challenged by insecurity and precarity. Through these relationships, they enjoy a sense of wider belonging to their community, and, even, moments of joy. Indeed, people have a tangible sense of a shift from their lives being oriented around *having* to lives that are freer to be grounded in *being* (Fromm, 1976). Those who have moved beyond individualism are no longer plagued by a sense that they alone are responsible for their survival and well-being. There are treasured discoveries about the two-way nature of mutual aid.

Vandana Shiva, Indian eco-feminist and environmental activist writes that "[o]nce we see everything in relationship with one another, like how it is in the commons, only then will we be able to move into a future of peace and sustainability" (Shiva, 2020, p. 308). The helping professions have a responsibility to undertake this shift of seeing within their own paradigms and practices. Then they can assist interested individuals and groups to engage a pedagogy for the White nonpoor.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Mary Watkins https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1061-333X

Notes

1. Anthropologist Laura Nader (1969) introduced the term “study up” to urge anthropologists to turn their attention to understanding middle- and upper-class people and groups in order understand social power.
2. Some illustrative groups are Coming to the Table, Reparations4Slavery, Aiming for Justice, SURJ, Resource Generation, Grassroots Reparations Campaign, Ancestors and Money, “Enough” workshops by Right Sharing of World Resources.
3. The “non-poor” was a term offered by Evans et al. (1987) in *Pedagogies for the Non-Poor*. While their focus was on liberative education for the middle-class, my hope is to build upon their work for the upper-middle class and the upper-class.

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Author Biography

Mary Watkins, Professor Emerita, is co-founder of Pacifica Graduate Institute's Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-Psychologies Doctoral Specialization. She is the author of *Mutual Accompaniment and the Creation of the Commons, Waking Dreams, Invisible Guests*, and co-author of *Toward Psychologies of Liberation, Talking with Young Children About Adoption, Up Against the Wall: Re-Imagining the U.S.-Mexico Border.* She presently focuses on accompaniment of immigrants in detention prison and on the pedagogy of the White nonpoor for the purpose of racial reparations.