

## TI2:

An Integrative Methodology for Coming Home to Place, Nature, Matter, and Earth

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### Abstract

In 2007, the book *Terrapsychology: Reengaging the Soul of Place* introduced Terrapsychological Inquiry, a research methodology for the deep ecopsychological exploration of our ties to our surroundings, whether built or natural. Since that time, TI has been used in master's and doctoral work on how deeply the places where we live, and the creatures and even materials within them, pulse within the human psyche. TI also detects and works with *ecological complexes*: recurrent patterns of environmental wounding and colonization that recur thematically generation after generation in the symptoms, dreams, folklore, relationships, and even architecture and politics of a place's occupants.

The reorganized and amplified version of TI described below includes validity checks, tools from other research methodologies (including phenomenology, heuristics, case study, hermeneutics, autoethnography, Grounded Theory, Narrative Inquiry, Intuitive Inquiry, Organic Inquiry, Depth Inquiry, and feminist, indigenous, and action research), a summary of the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of terrapsychology, and a flexible twelve-step framework for making a wide variety of investigations of our psychic bonds to place, nature, matter, and Earth.

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All things are full of gods. - Thales

### What is Terrapsychology?

We have always gravitated intuitively towards locations that symbolize what we seek, whether mountaintops for peak experiences and higher views, deserts for clear skies and contemplative austerity, valleys for settling and soul-searching, open plains for spacious thoughts, or estuaries, bays, and rivermouths for opening the mind to the rest of the world....

It is not that such places *cause* our states of mind. The simple logic of cause-effect cannot serve the complexity of the relationship--or its nonduality, for geology, geography, and materiality *are* forms of psychology. Mt. Fuji is not only a basalt and andesite height, but a psychospiritual height too, as those who built temples on its flanks understood. California is geologically new compared to the mainland and, as a site of major faultlines, restless and edgy like so many who live here. Its Bay Area opens on a vast estuary: an ecological *and* cultural gathering site characterized by diversity and high productivity.

Terrapsychology is the deep study of our largely unconscious (because disregarded) connections to and interdependencies with the multileveled presence of our living Earth, including specific places, creatures, and materials. "Deep" because what links us to places and animals and the elements travels along bridges of symbol, metaphor, image, and even synchronicity and dream. Terrapsychology explores how the patterns, shapes, features, and motifs at play in the nonhuman world sculpt our ideas, our habits, our relationships, culture, and sense of self: freeway congestion in congested conversations, lake toxins in our darker moods, salt-choked fields and bitter relations, healing landscapes and regenerating hearts. We

also study the reverse, the province of ecopsychology: the impacts of colonialism, nationalism, and other dissociative cultural constructs on the increasingly paved and gridded world around us.

What authorizes us to read symbols like this? The nature poets of every land aside for the moment, depth psychologists knew long ago from examining symptoms, fantasies, mistakes, and dreams that conscious mental life rests on a foundation of unconscious fantasy, image, metaphor, and motif. Long before depth psychology, this imaginal dimension received abundant description by Plato and Neoplatonism, William Blake, Avicenna, Marsilio Ficino, Giambattista Vico, Henri Corbin, Gaston Bachelard, Gilbert Durand, and eventually Jung among many others throughout cultural history. “The mind is in the imagination rather than the imagination in the mind” is how novelists, dramatists, artists, naturalists, and poets reveal such rich, deep wisdom about human nature in comparison to academic textbooks on psychology or research on minds probed from the outside. In fact, such imagistic life is what makes cognition and its theories possible to begin with.

Other fields that explore the symbolic and metaphoric structure of mind include Goethean phenomenology and its search for the primal forms in living beings, somatic psychology and its sensitivity to the meaning of how the body presents itself, and the “embodied realism” linguistic work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who offer evidence that “higher” faculties like human reason are built out of basic metaphors rooted in the body and its continual sense of its environment.

To those who argue that metaphors and symbols are human constructs we would point out that the unsustainable nature-culture divide has been eroding for centuries and that basic mental and cultural patterns like spirals, mandalas, honeycombs, nets, and many other basic shapes are found in abundance all around us in the world in which human intellect evolved.

### **Ontological Premises of Terrapsychology**

Guba and Lincoln (*Handbook of Qualitative Research*) situate social science research in four major (and potentially overlapping) ontological paradigms:

#### Positivism:

- Naive ontological realism: there is only one objective reality, governed by discoverable laws.
- Science and experimentation offer the most effective ways to disclose this reality.
- Only what is tangible (e.g., already existing) shall be the proper study of science.

#### Postpositivism (positivism light):

- Ontological realism: there is only one objective reality, governed by discoverable laws.
- Science backed by experimentation provides a series of conjectures about this reality.
- Only what is tangible (e.g., already existing) shall be the proper study of science.

#### Constructivism:

- We actively construct our realities through varying degrees of (un)consciousness.
- Science itself is a set of constructs for explaining what we perceive via the senses.
- Whatever “ultimate” reality is independent of us we are forced to see through constructs.

#### Critical Theory (includes feminist, race, class theories):

- How we perceive reality depends on cultural, gender, social, and other lenses.
- Knowledge of reality is built through interactions between researchers and participants.
- This knowledge allows us to transform reality in the service of social justice.

Whereas quantitative research tends to favor positivism and postpositivism, most qualitative research falls under either critical theory or constructivism and, additionally, has moved from a structuralist to a poststructuralist emphasis:

Structuralism:

- Knowledge depends on the structures of language, signs, and symbols.
- Cultures produce meanings through systems of signification (signs, symbols, rituals, etc.).
- Understanding these systems and codes = understanding the culture.

Poststructuralism/Indigenous:

- What we think about reality depends heavily on our cultural and historical accounts of it. This is because discourses of public language create the subject, power, reality, truth, etc.
- A “text” cannot be understood as containing a single meaning; instead, a multifaceted, multivocal approach best illuminates it.
- Researcher and researched create multiple and changing meanings together, particularly if marginalized knowledges are involved.
- Indigenous methodologies further emphasize that knowledge is not just individual, but belongs to the community and ultimately to the cosmos.

Terrapsychology is realist in its emphasis on a world beyond human projections, constructivist in tending the lenses through which we perceive the world, structuralist in emphasizing symbols and meanings, and yet poststructuralist in taking multivocality and multiplicity of meanings into account. TI is also organismic and interactive in assuming ongoing multidimensional participation between self and world.

This is what Terrapsychological Inquirers assume about the world we study and our place in it:

- Our terrain (locale, planet, cosmos) is verifiably and unmistakably *real*, not a veil of illusion or a purely human construct. It preceded us by billions of years and will orbit our sun long after we and our signifiers, discourses, and creeds are gone. However, we know it best by participating in it as fully as possible, individually and collectively.
- Interiority (inwardness, subjectivity, an inner life) reaches wider and deeper than electrochemical activity in people’s heads. It is more like a dimension or field of being, as Pythagoras, Thales, Ovid, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, Paracelsus, Goethe, Jung, Dewey, Teilhard de Chardin, William James, Bateson, Koestler, Whitehead, and a host of others have either hinted or said outright: a *materiority* running all the way down, certainly to the molecular and bacteriological, and perhaps even into the subatomic.
- Like all other life on Earth, human beings are permanently, profoundly situated at every level of conscious and unconscious existence on the planet from which we evolved. Dualisms that erect absolute walls between self and world, culture and nature, subject and object, spirit and matter, etc. represent the archaic remnants of agricultural and mythological splits in experience.
- Manifestations of human psychic life, including patterns, symbols, and metaphors, link to correlates and correspondences in the natural world across perpetually interactive fields and through complex systems. In other words, geological, geographical, ecological, meteorological etc. forces are psychological forces too.
- Jung, Corbin, Hillman, and others have posed the question of which archetypal-mythic position provides our lens: From which altar do we conduct our researches? To say it in Greek, post/positivism favors Procrustes, Organic Inquiry Demeter, and Alchemical Hermeneutics Orpheus. TI

is Terra-centric, beginning with the ground from which all “gods” spring, but that ground finds itself situated in turn in Anima Mundi, the philosophic-mythic soul of an animated cosmos.

### **Epistemological Observations of Terrapsychology**

Terrapsychological work—whether carried out as research, prose, poetry, art, wisdom practice or some other way into the animate field—grounds itself in these core observations about how we know the world:

- Research methodologies that assume up front, as positivism, postpositivism, and “realism” do, that human selves are separate from the world until proven otherwise (cf. Whitehead’s Doctrine of Vacuous Actuality) remain saddled with an entrenched dualism that either nullifies their efforts or restricts them to relatively surface findings (e.g., how temperature incrementally changes mood). Positivism reduces subject to object, postpositivism to conjecture, constructionism to discourse. To understand the whole fish we must abandon at least two habits of thought: the search for how its tail causes its head, and the solipsistic conclusion that the fish is our own projection.
- Because we are always situated somewhere, whatever we know, we know from right *here*. Knowledge transported around the world still carries the flavor of its origins, places of interpretation, and transit points. We *begin* connected--to nature, place, region, planet--and the quality of our knowing always reflects those connections for the same reason that a branch implies the tree on which it grows.
- Facts of environment translate into motifs operative within the human mind and body. From the perspective of unconscious psychic life, everything around us shimmers as potential symbol. Your home has a front door, and one fine day it flies open and can’t be shut. What in your life can’t be kept outside any longer? What if we interpreted “outer” facts and events like images in our dreams? Metals would then be metaphors, landscapes inscapes, crowded parking lots holding up our drive, meandering tributaries tributarrying through our complex moods.
- Movements of mind and body parallel movements of nature, surround, and place. Those moods and our dramas, symptoms, conflicts, and troubles often, perhaps always, reflect those going on all around us: bulging waistlines and urban sprawl, spiritual epiphanies and sacred sites. Not only do we harbor within us the same earthly patterns that twist and curve around us, we think, feel, live, and die by them as well.
- Ignoring these connections between self and world pathologizes them and us. Although we now possess piles of research evidence that chronic disconnection from the natural world makes us physically, socially, and psychologically ill, we are only beginning to explore subtler disturbances resulting from what we ignore around us. Broken cities and barren rainforests wreak havoc in our psyches, diminishing us below and beyond the range of measurable illness as interiorized droughts and deserts encroach upon what remains of human sanity.
- We can include the facts, units, and quantities gathered by third-person or mixed-methods research by taking care to uncover their underlying forms, images, and reconnective motifs, highlighting the story in which the data are embedded. That a ranch in northern San Diego County was sold in the late 1800s to American settlers for \$666.66 means little beyond the numbers until we know an important cultural context: that the ranch was named Rincon del Diablo.

- Working consciously with deep connections between self and world heals the split driving environmental crisis and collective self-alienation and invites new delight in the complexity of our ties to nature, place, creatures, and things.

### **Axiological Commitments of Terrapsychology**

We do our work in the light of these values and priorities, some of which will receive more emphasis than others in a given piece of research:

- **Homecoming:** the felt sense of belonging consciously to place, planet, and cosmos. This includes welcoming home those voices, persons, impulses, and even places repressed to the margins of culture and consciousness.
- **Diversity:** respect for and delight in diversity at all levels, including those normally subdivided into “nature” and “culture.”
- **Agency:** the right and privilege of forms and combinations of life, whether human or nonhuman, to flourish and direct themselves according to their own schemas of self-organization.
- **Ecoliteracy:** toward a basic global awareness of ecology, nature, and environmental science.
- **Sustainability:** living as lightly as we can in the places we inhabit, and replenishing living systems where possible and appropriate.
- **Ecojustice:** using our work to highlight and give voice to those oppressed by industries and political systems that damage their environments. This includes alignment with the Environmental Justice Movement, ecofeminism, animal rights, and other collective efforts toward liberation, sovereignty, and justice.
- **Appreciation:** the aesthetic capacity for awe and love of what remains of Earth’s natural beauty. We won’t protect and cherish what we do not love and appreciate.
- **Exploration:** willingness to investigate the unknown even without a clear cause: the spontaneous and creative joy of finding out for its own sake.
- **Collaboration:** with all due respect to lone geniuses, recognition that our understanding of the world and our relations with it grows richer with every perspective added by researchers humbly committed to weaving a web of terrapsychological knowledge and practice.
- **Responsibility:** clarity about our obligations to do work that enhances the lives of our participants, their communities, the places we investigate, and the natural world itself. These obligations include alignment with indigenous rights.
- **Integrity:** the commitment to working as a whole researcher, conscious and unconscious, mental and physical, heartfelt and soulful and spiritual.
- **Terrania:** a nickname or symbol for the just, sustainable, integral, and delightful world community of abundance, belonging, and truly international culture we will have to construct, network by planetary network and experiment by community experiment, if we expect to remain on this planet for longer than our extinct protohuman forbears.

### **Methodology - Terrapsychological Inquiry**

Types of Terrapsychological Inquiry as originally laid out in the book *Terrapsychology*:

- Psychocartography (Chapter 8, “Beyond This Point”): charting the psyche of place. Includes studying the protostories and ecological complexes of a specific site (Chapters 4 and 5) as well as the significances of one’s journey from site to site and toward Earth as a whole.
- Archetypal geography (Chapter 6): the study of the relationship between locale and its animate mythology.
- Dialogical alchemy (Chapter 7): a continuation of the alchemist’s search for the sense of animation in matter.
- Lorecasting (Chapter 8): the hermeneutic investigation of natural events like epidemics and earthquakes in terms of their symbolic or “inner” dynamics.

Although the book *Terrapsychology* gave examples of animal behavior, weather, and even chunks of matter interpreted as metaphors similar to those that animate dream, the primary three-phase methodology--Preparation, Assessment, and Placehosting--focused on human interactions with specific geographic sites. (For guidance with this kind of research, see *Terrapsychology*.) However, TI can study any deep connection with matter, nature, place, weather, animals (including interspecies communication), insects, plants, elements, or even Earth or travels around the globe. It can be used as a formal research methodology (master’s or doctoral level), a framework for less method-focused work (master’s or doctoral), or even a genre or style of expression (see the anthology *Rebearths: Conversations with a World Ensouled* for examples). It can involve groups, entire communities, silenced voices, or solitary work.

The following twelve steps include the original methodology while broadening its scope to assist studies that do not focus on place. To counter the novice researcher’s habit of mashing together methodologies--“I’m doing a bit of heuristics and a touch of phenomenology”--without trying to integrate their differing ontologies, epistemologies, and basic assumptions, TI incorporates frequently used methods from a range of methodologies while tending its own basic assumptions, practices, and values.

#### PHASE 1: PREPARE for the work

1. Engage the topic:  
Call in the object of research as an imaginal entity while rendering yourself transparent to what it asks of you. Look for its signature in synchronicity, fantasy, and unexpected encounter. Think of it as a partner to be in dialogue with throughout the entire project.
2. Engage the transmarginal:  
Ask for dreams and other promptings from the psychic depths to guide you along your way. In TI the unconscious too is a project-long partner.
3. Research the topic:  
Do your homework on the topic, including its history, cultural background, ecology, geography (where relevant), previous studies, documentation, interview material, and whatever helps you triangulate on it with multiple sources of knowledge.
4. Inventory yourself:  
Take careful note of both the preunderstandings you bring to the topic (along with potential blind spots) and delimitations: deliberate limits in the scope and method of your explorations. Share what you discover with research partners or interested parties inside and outside the field of your work. Expect to uncover more biases and blind spots as the work proceeds.

#### PHASE 2: INVESTIGATE the topic

5. Gather the tools:  
Gather up what you will need for your work. Some of this might be equipment: cameras, recorders,

writing pads, computers, etc., but some of the tools will be internal or attitudinal. Example: cultivate a *sophisticated innocence* that moves back and forth between what you know of the topic and a freshness of mind and body able to receive whatever plays across your senses, moods, thoughts, associations, and dreams. The night before you begin, consider setting up an opening ritual to continue calling in the topic and whatever helpful influences surround it.

6. Explore the terrain:

This can be a site, an object, weather, Earth, animal, plant, or insect behavior, myths in certain locations, yourself in relation to nature, a particular place, its ecology or geology, a cross-place investigation, the elements, environmental wounding, relationships between people or cultures and locales, travels or pilgrimages, visits to sacred sites, urban spaces... the possibilities are wide, but be focused on your own before you embark. To bring in an existential motif, attend lived space, body, time, or relationships. For depth work focus on recurring symbols, images, motifs, stories (legends, fairy tales, emplaced or free-floating myths), or *ecological complexes* (referred to as “placefield syndromes” in *Terrapsychology*): thematic knots or junctures where human and ecological wounding combine.

7. Collect the data:

Do this through all your senses, including somatic responses, moods and emotions, dreams on site or after, intuitions, ordinary and nonordinary states of consciousness, and analytic and nonlinear ways of working with data. Go back and forth between tending movements around you and watching for movements within; deploy a “nomadic awareness” (Cochran and Mitchell) that takes up the topic and relinquishes it, takes it up and relinquishes it, non-possessively. If you interview, try informal personal or group conversations (attend to group discourse, performance, and metaphor); in community settings, determine beforehand how your research can benefit the people you talk to and strengthen your relationships with them. Consider using co-researchers as full partners and Collaborative Inquiry groups to pool knowledge. Other tools include direct participation and observation, journaling and thick description, video, art (personal or group or performative), disciplined reminiscence, empathic identification, countertransference (see 8. below), public art, signage, memorials, and infrastructure, and prior documentation (milestone official papers, letters, essays, programs, news articles, etc.). Screen data you collect through your research question: keep what’s relevant, look for gaps. Attend Jung’s four functions of consciousness: feeling, intuition, sensation, and thinking: know which you favor and which you must focus most carefully on.

8. Receiving feedback:

Check in regularly with a panel of thoughtful listeners (a formal or informal research committee) outside the field you are working. Ask for dreams throughout, and keep track of moods and free associations to aspects of what you explore. Go over interview material (if any) with participants to check their version of what they gave you. In TI countertransference--ecotransference--arises from environmental damage, places under exploration, or other types of topic in whose style or discourse our work begins to move as the content we examine becomes the process by which we examine it. Bear constantly in mind that fully aroused topics will speak to you through your personal wounding.

PHASE 3: INTEGRATE the findings

9. Revise the frame (modify initial lenses):

Return to the preunderstandings you collected during the preparation phase and close the hermeneutic circle by modifying them with what you have learned, building in some new theory where needed and returning to the field for fresh data over and over where possible (constant comparative method). Clear inward space for heuristic “indwelling,” incubating new learnings

while elaborating the research question and working out core themes and images. Tend intuitive breakthroughs as patterns in the material reveal themselves. Horizontalize by temporarily dropping the focus on what's been figural and tending more or less spontaneously to what rises from the background. Fit what arises into your growing picture of your topic.

10. Analyze the data:

After selecting some of your findings--stories, key images, dreams, interview transcripts--and staying with them in reflection to let them awaken and work on your psyche, consider them from different angles through different sensory modalities and psychic functions (thinking, feeling, etc.), imagining which aspects of them seem essential to their being ("eidetic reduction") and which seem incidental. Allow the primary themes, symbols, patterns, ideas, images, etc. to arise gradually from the materials you've collected. Allow them to connect with each other. These motifs or images are not objects or generalizations, but knots in the weave of the interactive field between you and your terrain of investigation: as Van Manen puts it, "Themes are the stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through. By the light of these themes we can navigate and explore such universes." This thematic data can be further analyzed narratively (as dramatic plot structures), heuristically, intuitively, or even quantitatively, the while drawing on different states of consciousness.

11. Create the report:

After conducting a closing ritual performed in gratitude for the topic and whatever forces helped you explore it, write up the final description- and theme-rich meta-story on your topic, including the meanings that emerged, their relations with each other, any important cultural, spiritual, autoethnographic, ecological, or psychological implications, and how they transformed your understanding of the topic. When writing a thesis or dissertation, consider organizing it thus: include whatever is relevant from the Preparation phase in the "Delimitations" and "Methods and Procedures" sections; outline what you did in steps 5. through 10. for the "Methods and Procedures"; and describe the actual work done in those steps in "Results and Findings," with the final meta-story writeup appearing in the "Discussion" section. In the "Conclusions" offer substantial and implementable suggestions for benefitting the terrain and your co-participants. Consider offering photography, video, art, drama, or other media, online or otherwise, alongside the final report.

12. Present and host:

The ways to present your results are endless: slideshows, videos, art projects, speeches, group presentations, articles, books, ceremonies.... Bear in mind a point made by Information Theory: all things being equal, sounds and pictures convey many more times the information content than words alone. For combined impact, mix the media and draw on many voices to converse with your audience instead of just reporting. Include evaluations and contact information to continue the discussion, and be sure that your final results are of direct benefit to the research participants and communities involved.

**Reliability and Validity** (the following applies only when TI is used as a full research methodology)

Our personal and cultural filters, agendas, and wounds inevitably bias how we view things. A key aim of the Scientific Method is to limit the error factor implicit in this inevitability. However, the traditional model of verifiability makes three problematic assumptions: that self and world are separate until joined, that inner knowings are accurate only when compared with some fixed outer reality, and that subjectivity is always a contaminant. If we ever invent a disembodied machine intelligence--call it Droidcrustes--its advocacy of such notions of "objectivity" shall not surprise us.

Because the intimate relations of self and world constitute the basic configuration for all experience, for even the possibility of experience, it should be clear by now that distortions of perception and of

judgment enter in because of insufficient, and not excessive, subjective participation in what we study. Subjectivity itself is not the problem: errors derive rather from remnants of primary narcissism (Freud) that distort what we study with projection, privilege, arrogance, idealization, splitting, repression, envy, uncritical conformity, obedience to tradition and authority, unanalyzed socialization, unresolved fear and hatred, selling out for money or fame, inner deadness, intellectualized disembodiment, addiction to ideology, institutional hierarchy, triviality of methods and goals, and sheer unconsciousness.

Traditionally and positivistically, *validity* refers to whether we study what we think we study, and *reliability* to whether we can repeat (*replicate*) our results.

To address reliability first:

Because TI research topics are complex and multifaceted, “reliability” as replicability or interjudge sameness of results is abandoned in single studies for the same reason it serves no purpose when evaluating psychotherapy: the presence of each therapist/researcher evokes different responses in the client/participant. The relational matrix constellated by each collaborative pair is unique to each. In multiple studies of the same place some form of inter-relationship could be implemented among investigators and peer reviewers.

For TI, reliability refers primarily to whether the work of different researchers combines to form a coherent, intelligible picture of the place, objects, weather, etc. under study. Generative reliability is the degree to which the study’s clarity, resonance, and attention to detail allow other researchers to use it as a point of departure. This includes the use of poetic and evocative “wild speech” noted and used by Laura Mitchell as appropriately descriptive of the world’s aliveness.

Validity in TI begins with work done in four innovative methodologies: Depth Inquiry, Intuitive Inquiry, Co-operative Inquiry, and Liberation Psychology.

In describing Depth Inquiry, Coppin and Nelson indirectly address the issue of validity by outlining the philosophical commitments of depth psychology research, which include the following in relation to the psyche: it is real, both personal and more than personal, fluid and protean, and multiple, relational, and dialectical. When the psyche’s natural fluidity and multidimensionality attempts to study itself, its least useful tools are those borrowed from natural science; instead, the topic should guide the consciousness of the researcher into ever deeper avenues of inquiry. The same applies to TI.

Rosemary Anderson’s Intuitive Inquiry draws on two types of validity procedures: *resonance validity* and *efficacy validity*. The first relies on the quality of emotional resonance within the participant, for whom the findings must have identifiable value and make sense of the participant’s experiences. “Research can function in a manner akin to poetry in its capacity for immediate apprehension and recognition of an experience spoken by another and yet be true for oneself, as well.” Resonance should occur not in just one domain, but across multiple domains of experience. Resonance validity also includes a “resonance panel” of peers who evaluate the research in progress.

The second criterion, efficacy validity, has to do with whether research fosters creative jumps and insights and “inspires, delights, and prods us into insight and action.” Taken together, both types of validity provide a qualitative measure of whether a study adds value to human life and promotes beneficial transformations in the participant’s consciousness.

For Co-operative Inquiry (known in Europe as Collaborative Inquiry), the primary criterion for validity is *coherence*, a mutually enriching and informing influence developing between the research statements (which should also be coherent with each other), the inquirers’ experience (including intersubjective agreement), their “propositional” or conceptual understanding of the topic they explore, and any actions taken as a result of the study. Coherence also refers to the strength of real-world grasp provided by the research constructs and how successfully they are applied experientially and practically.

Liberation psychology research takes a critical participatory approach as its version of action science: research for social change. Its tests of validity include *contextual validity*, the fruitfulness of how the research effort and questions are framed and the relevancy of data collection to those involved in the research (in the case of a place studied with TI, relevancy to those who actually live there); *interpretive*

*validity*, which increases as people come together from various social locations and levels to discuss possible meanings of dominant social narratives and to propose alternative interpretations; and *catalytic validity*: whether the research leads to creative, liberatory transformation in the individuals who participate and in the world at large. To this TI might add: research that leads to transformations in the relationships of and with research participants.

TI can work well with all of the above (the more that are included, the higher its validity) while emphasizing additional dimensions of validity assessment unique to person/place/nature research.

The first dimension is *ecotransference resonance* exemplified by the researcher's "aha!": the deeply felt discovery of consciously or unconsciously enacting themes resonating in the place, object, animal, etc. under study. If resonance panel (in some cases a thesis or dissertation committee) and researcher pick up on similar resonant themes, this provides an indication that the researcher's detection of them is valid. Other responsibilities of the panel include the role of devil's advocate, generating possible disconfirming explanations and hypotheses, and assessing whether the researcher is projecting personal material onto the research site (see more about projection below).

In traditional research, criterion validity refers to whether one set of study results stands up against another, such as how effectively test grades match actual later performance. The consistency with which imaginal themes identified by the on-site researcher as manifestations of an ecological complex continue to resonate and develop during and after the study provides a TI version of criterion validity. Is San Diego really "defended," or do its borders, bases, outposts, and steep seaside cliffs fail somehow to line up with the researcher's constellated defensiveness, the jet patrols circling above La Jolla, or the paranoia found in local conservative politics?

*Construct validity* means how closely constructs like operational definitions mirror actual entities being studied. For example, do test scores really measure self-esteem? *Ecoreactivity*, the felt sense of impingement or invasion by the terrain under study, furnishes an ongoing check on construct validity by providing the researcher with dreams, ecotransference reactions, and other indicators of "fitness" between research constructs and the living presence of the research site. An example of this is how Orange County as an imaginal figure appeared in one researcher's dreams to criticize the researcher for omitting an important local motif. Construct validity is further strengthened by TI's use of cycles of reflection and action similar to those employed by Collaborative Inquiry.

*Transformation validity* refers to the depth of perceived transformation in the relationship between researcher and researched as a result of the research. This includes transformations in how the presence of the site manifests in the psychological field or relational matrix. For example, ecologically damaged sites tend to appear in initial on-site dreams as disturbed or violent personifications that gradually soften and mutate as the study continues.

*Intragroup validity* means that the more researchers, the better the validity, especially when the researchers have different backgrounds and typologies. So far most place studies have been done by individuals, but Craig Chalquist recently visited California's gold country with Kathryn Quick to try out a small team approach. Chalquist's Myers-Briggs typology is INFJ, whereas Quick has introverted sensation as her superior function and was familiar with the research site. Both discovered numerous examples of Norse mythology at play in Placerville, but their observations came through different channels (in Chalquist's case through extraverted feeling and sensation). Typology of the researcher(s) should be kept firmly in mind.

TI also adds the criterion of *community response validity* stated in the form of two key questions: How consistently do the people who live at the research site resonate to or recognize the findings, and to what degree does the study contribute to the aliveness, sustainability, and ecological integrity of the research site? Because TI does not split advocacy from bearing witness, very often the research itself can be seen as actively valid by changing the ecoreactive "feel," the researcher's relationship to the site, and the community's ways of thinking about where and how they live there. Research should also serve as an

opening in a conversation with the place about what it needs from the researcher and from its own community. The same applies to research work with entities other than places.

## Resources

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Terrapsych.com