

# An interview with Tod Sloan<sup>1</sup>

Wayne Dykstra and Tod Sloan

**SUMMARY:** This article presents an interview with Tod Sloan by Wayne Dykstra, conducted in early 2013. It is wide ranging but focuses on Tod Sloan's contribution to the development of liberation psychology outside of Latin America.

**KEY WORDS:** liberation psychology, engaged scholarship, Habermas, colonization of the lifeworld, OccuPsy, activism, dialogue.

During the first months of 2013 I conducted interviews with seventeen liberation psychologists for my dissertation on the emergence, transfer, and development of liberation psychology outside Latin America, with attention to the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942-1989). Each participant had contributed to liberation and critical psychology scholarship and practice. Prior to doctoral work, I worked as a psychotherapist in Seattle, Washington. Frustrated by systemic concerns in the community mental health sector, I searched for critical perspectives that might echo my concerns. I quickly came upon a presentation by Dr. Tod Sloan on the notion of the 'colonization of the lifeworld', a concept developed by Jurgen Habermas; one Tod used as a central analytic tool in his book *A Damaged Life* (Sloan, 1996). Tod's analysis of contemporary life and attendant psychological distress, alongside a yearning for healing practices and spaces, spoke directly to my clinical experience. Tod and I began corresponding and continued intermittently over the coming years. At the outset, Tod opened the interview with, "It is so nice to hear your voice". Until then we had never spoken directly. He approached me with the familiarity of an old friend. His warmth and genuine interest were immediate and remain a vital memory of our conversation.

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1. Permission to publish was given on behalf of Tod Sloan by Daniel Sloan, Tod's son, as Tod himself was deceased at the time of publication.