

Epistemic Modesty

From: [Thomas Teo](#)

Louise,

I thought this might interest you:

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Incoming Co-Editor: [Review of General Psychology](#)

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Author, 2018: [Outline of Theoretical Psychology](#)

[Teo2019 Modesty.pdf](#)

From: **Ajmarsella** <ajmarsella@gmail.com>

Dr. Teo: excellent article. Would offer a few ideas: (1) there is no mention of “doubt” as an adjunct to “modesty;” (2) the emphasis on empiricism as somehow scientific. Given the topics chosen, the methods used, and the nuanced interpretations, it is critical psychology examine its assumptions from a multicultural, multiracial, multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral, multi-method perspectives.

Humility, modesty, doubt, and epistemological orientations. APA is creating myths for purposes of ascendancy, power, and privilege. It is unwarranted! APA’s history keeps it captive to error, faults, flaws, and mistakes. Modesty indeed! Humility obviously. Doubt essential! Move from a business model to a model of inquiry for the sheer delight of knowing.

Issues: identity, power, arrogance, purpose, hubris.

Thank you, Dr Teo. Regards, tony

See attached:

<https://anthonyjmarsella.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Abuses-of-Psychology-3.pdf>

Remember: western psychology carries ideological forces, and can be weaponized against indigenous groups, low income nations and cultures, and privileged empowered groups. En garde!

Anthony J. Marsella, Ph.D.,
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[Abuses-of-Psychology-3.pdf](#)

From: [Maureen O'Hara](#)

Sent: Saturday, September 28, 2019 7:00 PM

Of interest indeed. A much needed contribution.

In the latest edition of *Dancing at the Edge: Competence, Culture and Organization in the 21st Century*, Maureen O'Hara & Graham Leicester 2019 Triarchy Press, Axminster, UK., we identify "epistemic literacy" (along with psychological and cultural literacies as a key capacity for life in these times. Our colleague Edgar Schein who wrote the forward makes an urgent plea for educational contexts where adaptive learning can be facilitated and urges a deep dive into other worlds as humble students of individual and collective ways of knowing and being. Though aimed at a practitioner audience and not nearly as erudite as Teo's discussion, we concur that epistemic modesty (great term) should be a core aim of a 21st century education. Here's a quote (p.80,)

The third important literacy is epistemic literacy (or knowledge literacy if you prefer). Epistemic literacy is the capacity to read the deeper frames underpinning knowledge in any situation, recognising there are many perspectives on what counts as 'truth' and that we are as likely to see what we believe as believe what we see.

Ubiquitous in the 21st century organizational conversation is the ideal of "evidence based" decision making. Increasingly, however, we face the challenge of reconciling different views of what counts as "evidence". Whose evidence? Gathered and assembled in what way and by what measures? We need to be aware of how knowledge is created in diverse knowledge landscapes and disciplines – economics, botany, psychology, poetry, politics, gardening – and how difficult it is to weigh any one against the measures of the others. Many of us when asked 'what is the meaning of life?' automatically answer '42'. Douglas Adams' famous joke has penetrated deep into popular culture. It turns precisely on our innate awareness of different ways of knowing which, while complete and reliable in themselves, are fundamentally incommensurable.

Epistemic awareness allows us to recognise these multiple systems of arriving at truth, to make the commitment to our own 'truths' more tentative and therefore open to new knowledge. It reminds us fundamentally that 'objective' knowledge derived from abstraction and reasoning is

no more or less 'valid' than 'subjective' knowledge gained from our own unique lived experience.

I wish I had seen Teo's piece before went to press. Glad to read it now.

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From: **Ajmarsella** <ajmarsella@gmail.com>

For our list.....

The push for a unified, homogenized psychology poses severe threats to diversity, cultural variational, and the reality each psychology system is a function of the historical, situational, intellectual, and cultural contexts in which it arises.

MEfforts to impose uniformity by hegemonic powers (e.g., North American nation's and organizations) represents a destructive force As Octavio Paz, note "Life is diversity; death is uniformity!"

Each psychology system is unique and embodies values, standards of acceptance, and ideological implications, including epistemological, ontological, and praxiological assumptions within it creative context

Efforts after homogenization represent an unwarranted threat to different sources of thought including indigenous groups, gender preferences, ethnic/racial minority groups, national identities, and socio-political status markers.

The constant insistence on uniform standards of "truth" using the cultures of "science" as an arbiter must recognize science itself is a culture, often subject to power distributions to selected groups with invested values and preferences - the politics of science.

Insistence on "empiricism" as a standard fails to recognize the inherent limitations in problem selection, hypotheses, sampling, measurement, analysis, and conclusions associated with "objectification" of reality. Yet, too often we proceed to act accepting empirical studies with their limitations.

Teo has spoken of the need for "epistemic modesty." To this arbiter can be added tolerance for doubt and uncertainty, humility, and Ciofalo's call for "epistemic justice."

"Good intentions are not enough!" Power assertions in the hands of specific nations, organizations, and groups does not mean "truth." Rather, power brings with it, not authoritarian control, but rather the wisdom to be self-reflexive, and to create opportunities for inquiry for the sheer delight of knowing, and the acknowledgement of limitations.

In a world desperate for certainty, especially for purposes of professional stature and economic profit, it takes wisdom, character, and integrity to attach modesty, justice, doubt, humility, and relativity to conclusions. This is true for this commentary.

Tony

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2018/04/homogenization-of-psychotherapy-and-counseling-scientific-professional-ethical-moral-issues-risks-and-directions/>

Anthony J. Marsella, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Keri Lawson-Te Aho](#)

Sent: Sunday, October 06, 2019 12:21 AM

Ngā mihi Tony Marsella

Thank you. Tautoko.

Keri

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Māori and Indigenous Suicidologist

Researcher, Te Roopu Rangahau Hauora ā Eru Pōmare

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NZ Representative on the World Dignity University (Nobel Peace Prize Group Nominee 2015-2017)

International Taskforce of Indigenous Psychologists

Allied Health Professional, Doctors without Borders

Certified Indigenous Entrepreneurship Educator (NFTE, New York)

From: [Marc Pilisuk](#)

Sent: Sunday, October 06, 2019 6:11 PM

Tony

thanks for writing so lucidly on diversity. You capture my thoughts and values and humility.

The images we professionals create often appear to us absolutely valid, rather than a construction of a privileged elite.

With my limited energy I am working on a project of re-envisioning the practice of psychology so that settings, training and compensation may move closer to the goal of recognizing diverse voices and incorporating advocacy on their behalf.

thanks for all you do.

Peace,

Marc
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The Hidden Structure of Violence: Who Benefits From Global Violence and War by Marc Pilisuk and Jennifer Achord Rountree. New York, NY: New York Monthly Review, 2015. Released July 2015. [Order the book here.](#)

Peace Movements Worldwide (3 Volumes) by Marc Pilisuk and Michael Nagler (Eds). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/ABC-CLIO, 2011.

From: [Francesco Palmirotta](#)

Sent: Sunday, October 06, 2019 8:09 PM

I am the Ontosophy (wisdom of being) because I know that Ontosophy is not only mine.

From: [Maureen O'Hara](#)

Sent: Monday, October 07, 2019 7:45 PM

While deeply aligned with Tony's eloquent championing of the inescapable and glorious situatedness of human knowledge and as an educator and therapist committed to creating conditions in which our existential vulnerability can be borne, I am wondering (and I mean that) if we are to act to make a difference we should add three other dimensions--creativity, courage and community. Creativity to see the world afresh with its never-before seen possibilities, courage to act on our best sense of things even knowing we might be wrong and a community to tell us when we are and offer us another view. Tony writes, "it takes wisdom, character, and integrity to attach modesty, justice, doubt, humility, and relativity to conclusions. This is true for this commentary." Yes, and this is true of this response 😊

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From: [Paul T. P. Wong](#)

Sent: Monday, October 07, 2019 9:40 PM

I think my existential positive psychology view (PP2.0 <http://www.drpaulwong.com/second-wave-positive-psychologys-contribution-to-counselling-psychology/>)

is also alligned with Tony's view. I believe that psychology should study our common humanity in existence (ontological knowledge), and our cultural diversity in experience and expression of wellbeing (indigenous knowledge).

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President, [International Network on Personal Meaning](#)

President, [Meaning-Centered Counselling Institute Inc.](#)

From: [Marc Pilisuk](#)

Sent: Tuesday, October 08, 2019 1:35 AM

As necessary as as creativity and courage may to appreciation of the human potential for change, these characteristics are also used to destroy people and the planet.. somewhere in the equation for a shared humanity there is a need to address voices of the disposed and the inordinate power in a sructure that protects the most priviledged at the expense of everyone else. again suggested with the hubris Tpony put forth.

Peace,

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From: [Maureen O'Hara](#)

Sent: Tuesday, October 08, 2019 12:01 PM

No argument from me Marc. The qualities we are each trying to articulate are not separate (or complete) but part of a dynamic whole and function within patterns and structures that can enhance justice or the opposite. If we lose sight of the whole those who are voiceless or silenced become invisible. Calling out injustice in a world that denies it takes courage and imagining structures that will enhance justice and wellbeing as core aspirations requires creativity to see beyond the current horizons.

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