

 [IP--Reflections on IP by Tony Marsella](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 12]

Dear All,

Tony Marsella's reflections on IP is published in Psychology International, see attached below. (for the original article, click on the link <http://www.apa.org/international/pi/2013/12/reflections.aspx>)

I post the following discussions on this article, in the hope that you will join the discussion.

Let's share our thoughts on IP.

Louise

 [All psychologies are indigenous psychologies](#)

 [Comment by Paul TP Wong](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 12]

I am just wondering whether this position will impede the development of indigenous psychology as unique sub-discipline of mainstream psychology.

[www.drpaulwong.com](http://www.drpaulwong.com)

 [Comment by Anthony J. Marsella](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 12]

No. It will help. It places the emphasis on understanding all psychologies are cultural constructions and must be acknowledged as that. Western dominates because of economic and political clout! See the works by Kim and Bhawuk and Hwang Kwang Kuo.

We must address the problem of homogenization of psychology. Ip has emerged as a stronger position in favor of that.

Luv, tony.

Anthony J. Marsella, Ph.D.

 [Comment by Louise Sundararaan](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 12]

Yes, it will impede "the development of indigenous psychology as unique sub-discipline of mainstream psychology." And that is a good thing, because IP should not be subsumed under mainstream as its sub-discipline. That's what's called self-colonization.

Louise

 [Comment by K. K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 12]

Dear All:

I do believe that Tony Marsella's reflections on IP is a very important document  
For the future development of psychology.

I strongly agree with his declaration that it is time to accept the view  
That all psychologies are indigenous to the cultural context.

He explicitly indicates the 10 basic assumptions of Western psychology,  
Which are heritage of scientific or causal psychology founded by W. Wundt,  
We should remember Vygotsky's works which advocated for 'intentional psychology' In  
addition to 'psychology'.

I want to echo his argument that it is possible to speak of unity within diversity  
Without sacrificing the legitimacy of psychology' roots,

Because we are able to construct culture-inclusive theories of psychology  
To incorporate both scientific psychology and intentional psychology  
Based on the principle of cultural psychology: 'One mind, Many mentalities'  
(Shweder, et al., 1998).

We are going to elaborate the aforementioned argument by publishing  
A special issue of Journal for the Social Behaviour in this coming year.

Best regards,

K. K. Hwang

 [Comment by Wang Xuefu](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 12]

Meaningful discussions and great insights. I resonate deeply!

Wang Xuefu

 [Comment by Maureen O'Hara](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 13]

Tony says: It will help. It places the emphasis on understanding all psychologies are cultural  
constructions and must be acknowledged as that. Western dominates because of economic  
and political clout! " "

I am with Tony here, and I would add increasingly the West dominates through cultural and  
technological clout.

To effectively make the case that all knowledge is culturally situated and (inevitably) carries  
cultural narratives is an act of cultural leadership. It adds perspectives to our collective  
knowledge of ourselves that can lead to changes in the global meta-psychological narratives  
that tacitly guide collective actions.

For me IP as a site for unfreezing reifications that in the past have served particular ruling

elites but are increasingly inadequate to the task before us as a species. IP aims at not only technical knowledge but at emancipatory knowledge--knowledge that can open up a way forward for the creation of social processes that encourage us to reclaim the project of human evolution . The more perspectives on this in dialogue, when held with humility and conscious reflexivity, the better are our chances of making it through what faces us as a species.

I am learning a lot just by participating.

Thank you.

Maureen O'Hara Ph. D.

Professor of Psychology

National University

11255 N. Torrey Pines Road

La Jolla, CA 92037

 [Comment by Anthony Marsella](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 13]

Dear Maureen:

Thank you for your eloquent and sagacious comments, and especially for your recognition of the far-reaching ideological and moral consequences inherent in every psychology. These consequences assume pernicious outcomes when the economic, political, social, and historical determinants of the psychology are accepted as the foundations for its “truth,” and are used to justify its imposition upon others as universally applicable with no self-reflexive analysis of its ethno-centric and nation-centric biases. What occurs as one psychology is pushed as dogma is a colonization of mind and behavior, even in the absence of military and other forms of conquest. It is still violence. It is still immoral! It is still nothing more than a hegemonic effort to homogenize the world.

Resistance to this oppression must begin with recognition that realities are culturally constructed, as I suggested in my prior remarks. All psychologies are indigenous to the context in which they evolve and are sustained. When assumed to be universal in their assumptions and applications, they become sources of power. If power, in all senses of the word (i.e., wealth, position, person, military), is vested in those capable of abusing their privileged position, then we have the opportunity for imposition on others who do not share their view. This is not “science” as arbiter, but rather “socio-political ideology” as arbiter, with all of its consequences. “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely” (supposedly coined by Sir John Edward Dahlberg-Acton, a 19th Century British politician, writer, and commentator). There is wisdom in these words uttered in Victorian England as endless empire was pursued under the guise of noblesse oblige and the need to bring civilization to the world’s people. What irony!

We are at this point in time faced with a global context of “interdependency” in which we must learn to share power and to distribute power preserve diversity and differences -- the

fundamental characteristic and nature of life. While many individuals and nations may be inclined resist doubt and uncertainty amidst the chaos of our global era, we must be careful that we do not impose homogenization through direct and indirect force. Psychologists must assert the wisdom of preserving individual and collective differences and diversity. We must not yield to the siren call that we are right, and others are wrong, because of the illusion of our power.

It is apparent that the concentration of wealth, power, position, and person in the hands of a small number of individuals and groups determined to maintain their position constitutes the major challenge of our times, especially as the myriad of national and private acronymic agencies seek complete control of our lives via surveillance, monitoring, and archiving our data. The excuse of “security” is nothing more than a useful ploy for mass domination via homogenization. Across the world, the concentration of power is resulting in homogenization of all sectors of our lives via monopolization (e.g., Big Ag, Big Energy, Big Pharm, Big Med, Big Transportation). This threatens survival of all forms of life.

To use the study of “psychology” as a means for supporting these efforts by insisting on Western psychology as the “absolute” is a risk. All psychologies are indigenous! Efforts by privileged groups within and without psychology to consolidate knowledge under the auspices of one universal “psychology,” as is occurring at this time, merely reveals and exposes the strategy of colonization of mind. We will soon have “Big Psychology” as national associations of psychologists are contributing to this as they buy in to the myth.

Western nations, societies, and institutional social formations are in need of healing from the very forces that created them, and that now continue to distribute their destructive seeds. There is so much that can be said to be “glorious” in Western cultural creations and contributions. Prodigious advances have been made. But this must not be used as a rationalization for imposing a psychology Western psychology tradition. Psychologists have an opportunity within their limited sphere of influence, to act against the broader socio-political forces pursuing control by acknowledging “the importance and virtue of defining psychology as indigenous to the contexts of its creation and construction.” When individuals and organizations become affiliated with “politicized” governmental, military, and private agendas driven by domination, we have an obligation to resist. Rabbi Tarphon (circa 200 AD), stated: “While the task is not upon us to complete, neither are we free to desist from doing our part.”

All psychologies are indigenous psychologies. Proceed from that assumption, tolerate the uncertainty and doubt, and recognize it as a virtue that preserves diversity – the essence of life itself.

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

Show, by your actions, that you choose peace over war, freedom over oppression, voice over silence, service over self-interest, respect over advantage, courage over fear, cooperation over competition, action over passivity, diversity over uniformity, and justice over all.

Adapted from Bessie Anderson Stanley (1905): To laugh often and love much, To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, To appreciate beauty, To find the best in others, To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden path, or a redeemed social condition, To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded. [Monument inscription, Lincoln, Kansas. I found the quotation, as written, posted in a Quaker Meeting House. There are many versions -- the words differ, but the sentiment and wisdom are the same]

 [Comment by Akbar Waseem Alladin](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 23]

Dear Tony

Thank you for your forthright and enlightening comments in your reply to Maureen, which I heartily endorse.

Best wishes to all

Akbar Waseem Alladin

 [Comment by Juliet Rohde-Brown](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 14]

What an inspiring group! Much gratitude!

Juliet

Juliet Rohde-Brown, Ph.D.

Interim Chair  
Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology  
Antioch University Santa Barbara  
602 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

(805) 962-8179, ext. 5167

jrohde@antioch.edu

 [Comment by K.K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 16]

Dear all:

I am very impressed by Tony's warning that it is a hegemonic effort to homogenize the world by accepting the economic, political, social determinants of the psychology as the foundations for its "truth". In a special issue to be published this year in the Journal for Theory of Social Behaviour, we indicated that this is very popular in the practice of contemporary mainstream psychology, and called it "pan-cultural dimensional approach", which adopts a positivistic view of scientism to justify the imposition of Western models of psychology upon people of non-Western society without self-reflection analysis of its ethic-centric biases.

In order to be liberated from the state of being colonized or being self-colonized, I also endorse Maureen's comment that IP should aim at emancipatory knowledge. We argue that this goal can be attained by the so-called "cultural system approach" in our special issues which contains eight articles as following:

1. "Cultural System vs Pan-cultural Dimensions: Philosophical Reflection on Approaches for studying Indigenous Psychology"

by Dr. Kwang-Kuo Hwang, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

2. "How I am Constructing Culture-Inclusive Theories of Social-Psychological Process in our Age of Globalization"

by Dr. Michael Harris Bond, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

3. "Culture-Inclusive Theories of Self and Social Interaction: The Approach of Multiple Philosophical Paradigms"

by Dr. Kwang-Kuo Hwang, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

4. "Indigenous Psychology: Grounding Science in Culture, Why and How?"

by Dr. Louise Sundararajan, Rochester Psychiatric Center, U. S. A.

5. "Globalizing Indigenous psychology: an East Asian Form of Hierarchical

Relationalism with Worldwide Implications”

by Dr. James Liu, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

6. “Cultural Inclusive Psychology from a Constructionist Standpoint”

by Kenneth J. Gergen, Department of Psychology, Swarthmore College, U. S. A.

7. “Integrating the Emic (Indigenous) with the Etic (Universal)-A case of squaring

the Circle or of Changing the perspective?”

by Dr. Lutz H. Eckensberger, German Institute for International Educational Research (Berlin) and Johan Wolfgang Goethe Universitt (Frankfurt), Germany

8. “Filial Obligation in Contemporary China: Evolution of the Culture-System”

by Dr. Xiaoying Qi, School of Humanities and Communication Arts, University of Western Sydney, Australia

 [Comment by Paul TP Wong](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 16]

Thanks Kwang-Kuo, Tony, and Louise for your leadership in IP. I am so proud of those actively involved in developing IP through their creative research and publication. But APA and CPA are still carrying on business as usual, as if the psychology developed in North American represents universal truth. Is there any idea how we can make an impact on APA?

Paul

 [Comment by Anthony Marsella](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 23]

Dear Colleagues:

Our recent discussions on the critical importance of indigenous psychology, not as a subspecialty of psychology, but as an ideological visions and orientation for grasping the abuses inherent in ignoring the contexts (i.e., time, place, person, history) of differences in the development of psychologies raises even more compelling questions and issues. These questions and issues are related to the socio-political implications of all psychologies as implicit and explicit sources of (1) knowing the world (i.e., epistemology), (2) defining human nature (i.e., ontology), and (3) acting according to certain conventions (i.e., praxiology).

Professor Maureen O’Hara has stated the situation clearly in her response to my article. She writes:

For me IP as a site for unfreezing reifications that in the past have served particular ruling elites but are increasingly inadequate to the task before us as a species. IP aims at not only technical knowledge but at emancipatory knowledge--knowledge that can open up a way forward for the creation of social processes that encourage us to reclaim the project of human evolution . The more perspectives on this in dialogue, when held with humility and conscious reflexivity, the better are our chances of making it through what faces us as a species (O'Hara, 2014, reply on listserv).

Western and Eurocentric psychologies have acquired global presence and dominance in their use and acceptability. But within their assumptions and methods reside associated ideological values and implications, and in the presence of Western military, political, and economic dominance, there is the risk global cultural homogenization. Homogenization is occurring at a rapid pace across the world in all areas of our lives, and this represents a threat to cultural and biological diversity and to the survival of life. Diversity is the expression of the life force itself. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that homogenization is control, and when this control resides in a limited and restricted number of powerful cultures and nations, the goal of hegemony is obvious and transparent.

Globalization, as the process and product of change, is inevitable, but "hegemonic" globalization is not, and efforts must be made to grasp the insidious powers within the exportation of North American and Eurocentric psychologies as universals, thus colonizing mind and behavior, and promoting dominance and exploitation. This must be resisted, and it can be by recognizing the assumptions, methods, and consequences of all psychologies as being indigenous.

At this point in time, many Western values and institutions have been exposed as myths designed to concentrate wealth, power, and position. Countries have been invaded, people have died, cultures have been destroyed under the guises of promoting democracy (i.e., installing cooperative dictators), development (i.e., exploiting resources, human rights (i.e., militarization of society), and humanitarian aid (i.e., well-intentioned promises followed too often by occupation). Are there exceptions? Yes, but we cannot ignore the reality that global problems remain as Western political, financial, and cultural agendas continue to assert themselves and to concentrate wealth, power, and position in the hands of a few. Within this approach, we have "hegemonic globalization," not a globalization rooted in a consideration and sensitivity to the lives of all human beings and to all forms of life.

I am attaching an article written almost a decade ago on hegemonic globalization. The article discusses some of my major concerns about the risks of homogenization. We need to rethink what we are doing as citizens of the world, professionals, and as expressions and carriers of life in our existence. In fact, we should not separate these roles and identities any longer. We are in need of integrated and connected ways of being that respect differences and seek to promote diversity.

It is essential we recognize that collective professional and scientific organizations have

specific agenda to promote their goals and objectives. The current American Psychological Association is functioning according to a corporate model that has worked well in the business world, and certainly has worked work well in the DC area amidst the emphasis on lobbyists and promotion of organization interests. I prefer to work within the APA via divisions to inform and to share the hard won knowledge that participation, transparency, and accountability constitute the best agenda for ethical growth and the promotion of human welfare and wellbeing. APA has enormous control over the profession and science of psychology. It can shape the image and functions of psychology via PR and regulations. But we not forget, the agendas of those in the power hierarchy must be subject to discussion and to debate as a member organization. The best leadership is ethical, courageous, visionary, and effective management. We have witnessed moments of exceptional leadership and moments of abuse. Act within and outside of APA and all organizations.

See attached document

Anthony J. Marsella, Ph.D.  
Emeritus Professor  
University of Hawaii,  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
marsella@hawaii.edu

 [Hegemonic Globalization Australian...](#)

 [Comment by Paul TP Wong](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jan 16]

Thanks for your eloquent articulation of IP. I can see what you are trying to do by working behind the scene in APA. Why don't you run for President for APA? That may be the best way to make an impact for IP. We will support you if you run.

Paul  
www.drpaulwong.com