

June 4, 2021

Interviewer: Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Interviewee: Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson

Numbering: Issue 5: The Age of Experts

Place of Publication: Langley, British Columbia, Canada

Title: Question Time

Web Domain: <http://www.in-sightjournal.com>

Individual Publication Date: June 4, 2021

Issue Publication Date: January 1, 2022

Name of Publisher: In-Sight Publishing

Frequency: One Time Per Year

Words: 728

Keywords: counselling psychology, Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson, psychology, self-esteem.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: We have commented briefly on “[The Age of Psychology](#),” “[Epidemic of Low Self-Esteem](#),” “[Crazy Making in Our Communities](#),” “[schizophrenia](#),” “[From Lloydminster to Leningrad](#),” and [religious fundamentalism](#). It has been a small bit since the commentary. What are some developments on the views there for you?

Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson: You certainly delved into my personal ancient history for this question, Scott. “The Age of Psychology” was the first column I wrote prior to the millennium for the now defunct newspaper *The Northerner*. My intent was to show how pervasive applied psychology is in our lives, for both good and ill. I do not think that has fundamentally changed in the intervening decades. You have actually linked six articles I wrote from that era, and I am guessing that you see them connected in some way. I think they all relate to how we interpret the world, creating and maintaining our worldviews.

My views on the “epidemic” of self-esteem have become more nuanced since I wrote that article. While low self-esteem continues to be an issue often confronted

by counselling psychologists, and I continue to recommend that parents find the good and positive in their children, the “epidemic” label has led people to become afraid of giving balanced and constructive feedback. This has resulted in a disconnect between subjective and objective reality. For example, U.S. students typically score higher on measures of mathematical self-concept as compared to Chinese students but the Chinese students score higher on measures of mathematical achievement. The result is that many U.S. Americans do not know what they do not know, but they think they are doing just fine - not cognisant that they are being outclassed by the Chinese.

In North America we have witnessed grade inflation to maintain student self-esteem. In an example of this, I case-conferenced with a teacher to discuss reading problems with his adult upgrading class in a northern community college. “But they all have marks in language arts above 80%,” I said. “I know,” he replied, “I helped them get good marks by reading the questions to them and by helping them with their answers”

The teacher said that about a third of his students were functionally illiterate, and he wanted to know what he could do to help them. I suggested he could begin by giving honest feedback. Students need to know their strengths and weaknesses so that they can dedicate their efforts to overcoming those weaknesses. This unfortunate teacher sensed that for these students it was already too late – that they did not have the skills to handle such constructive feedback.

The flip-side of the over-zealous application of the self-esteem movement is mental fragility. Students have been taught that they can be whatever they want to be, but the self that is then created is fragile. Sooner or later reality impinges on illusions. We now have the word “micro-aggression” to describe and defend against that experience. When someone, usually inadvertently, says or does something to challenge a fragile worldview, the fragile self at the core is taught to feel the experience as a micro-aggression. Lashing out with defensive anger and hatred, they demand apologies, community censorship, even firings. If these demands are met they feel vindicated with their fragile selves affirmed.

The other four articles you referenced, Scott, all have to do with how people create and enforce dysfunctional realities. “Crazy making” describes a woman who, after being convinced by an abusive family and community that she was crazy, began displaying symptoms of schizophrenia. “Schizophrenia” describes a common reverse process – people who actually suffer from the disease refusing to take their medication because they believe that they no longer have the condition. “Lloydminster to Leningrad” describes the ways two racists, separated by distance and time, held on to their anti-Semitic beliefs in the face of evidence. “Fundamentalism” describes how a religious congregation attempted to shut down La Ronge’s only bookstore for carrying the wrong kind of books.

As a society we made considerable progress in combating racism, supporting people with mental health problems, and in promoting free speech and the diversity of ideas. I fear a new dark age where society is being re-racialized through identity politics, gaslighting is occurring at a societal scale to challenge

our ability to think objectively, and authors and academics are being “de-platformed” so their ideas cannot be heard.

Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Dr. Robertson, again.

Robertson:

Image Credit: Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen founded ***In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal*** and ***In-Sight Publishing***. He authored/co-authored some **e-books**, free or low-cost. If you want to contact Scott: **Scott.D.Jacobsen@Gmail.com**.