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What is the Good Life? Positive Psychology and the Renaissance of Humanistic Psychology

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Positive and humanistic psychology overlap in thematic content and theoretical presuppositions, yet positive psychology explicitly distances itself as a new movement, despite the fact that its literature implicitly references its extensive historical grounding within humanistic psychology. Consequently, humanistic psychologists both celebrate diffusion of humanistic ideas furthered by positive psychology, and resent its disavowal of the humanistic tradition. The undeniably close alignment of these two schools of thought is demonstrated in the embracing of eudaimonic, in contrast to hedonic, conceptions of happiness by positive psychology. Eudaimonic happiness cannot be purely value-free, nor can it be completely studied without using both nomothetic and idiographic (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) methods in addressing problems of value, which identifies positive psychology clearly as a humanistic approach, despite its protestations.

In the late 1990s, positive psychology was conceptualized as having three major concerns: First, positive psychology takes an interest in positive subjective experiences, such as subjective well-being, flow, joy, optimism, and hope. Second, it has an interest in studying the personality traits of thriving individuals, with a particular focus on character strengths and virtues, such as courage, perseverance, open-mindedness, and wisdom. Finally, at the social psychological level, positive psychology is intent on identifying, studying, and enhancing those qualities of social institutions that sustain and enhance positive subjective experiences and adaptive personality traits of individuals (Gillham & Seligman, 1999; Seligman & Czikszentmihalyi, 2000).

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Positive psychologists have consistently credited humanistic psychology for pioneering the territory of positive psychological research and practice. For example, Martin Seligman (2005, p. 7) has acknowledged that Abraham Maslow (1971), Gordon Allport (1961), and other humanistic psychologists are “distinguished ancestors” of the movement he has championed as positive psychology. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and colleagues have noted that their concept of flow was, for a long time, ignored by mainstream psychology but, not surprisingly, was originally “assimilated within the humanistic tradition of Maslow and Rogers” (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005, p. 90). Today, the concept of flow is one of the most widely acknowledged constructs in positive psychology and is now fully embraced by the status quo.

P. Alex Linley and Stephen Joseph (2004b) have been very matter-of-fact in their acknowledgement that, although the humanistic and positive psychology movements have their differences and have had their share of debates, the “differences are far outweighed by their similarities” (p. xvi). Indeed, humanistic psychologists have been credited by positive psychologists for their pioneering work in a wide variety of areas of interest to positive psychology, including positive prevention and therapy (Bretherton & Orner, 2004; Linley & Joseph, 2004a; Ruini & Fava, 2004; Seligman, 2005), the identification and classification of positive human qualities (Peterson & Seligman, 2003), the critique of the medical model of mental illness (Jorgensen & Nafstad, 2004; Joseph & Linley, 2004, 2006; C. L. M. Keyes & Lopez, 2005; Maddux, 2005; Maddux, Snyder, & Lopez, 2004), happiness and life satisfaction (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2005), joy (Robbins, 2006a), creativity (Averill, 2005; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Simonton, 2005), personal control (Thompson, 2005), hope (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2005), wisdom (Baltes, Gluck, & Kunzmann, 2005), reality negotiation (Higgins, 2005), authenticity (Harter, 2005; Swann & Pelham, 2005), humility (Tangney, 2005), positive relationships (Berscheid, 2003; Harvey, Pauwels, & Zichmund, 2005), forgiveness (McCullough & Witvliet, 2005), gratitude (Emmons & Shelton, 2005), empathy and altruism (Batson, Ahmad, Lishner, & Tsang, 2005), adaptive coping (Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2005; Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 2005), meaningfulness in life (Baumeister & Vohs, 2005), posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004), humor (Lefcourt, 2005), the benefits of meditation (S. L. Shapiro, Schwartz, & Santerre, 2005), healthy self-regulation (Brown & Ryan, 2004), and balanced time perspective (Boniwell & Zimbardo, 2004).

Indeed, humanistic psychology for the past half-century has focused its attention on what it means to flourish as a human being. Abraham Maslow captured the dawning *zeitgeist* of the 1950s and early 1960s, with its yearning for something more than just the status quo. And so Maslow (1973) purposely set out to study those individuals who were extraordinary—who had, in one

way or another, come to approximate the fullest potentials of humanity. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that it was, in fact, Maslow (1987) who coined the phrase “positive psychology” (p. 354) more than four decades prior to Seligman’s use of the term for his own work and that of others. Not surprisingly, then, Peterson and Seligman (2004) credit Maslow as a pioneer in the study of character strengths and virtues, and they used Maslow’s descriptions of the self-actualized individual as a means to identify and validate their taxonomy of character strengths and virtues.

Why should we be surprised then that, 50 years later, contemporary positive psychologists are writing literature reviews brimming with the names of humanistic psychologists? As a result, contemporary psychology can finally reap the benefits of all those humanistic researchers who suffered the cold shoulder of mainstream psychology for so many years. Apparently, it took a Trojan horse like Seligman to finally sneak humanistic psychology through the front door with a different name and face so that the guardians of the status quo would not take notice that the barbarians were at the gate.

Now I can turn back to Carl Rogers (1961) with a new appreciation for his articulation of the “fully functioning person” (p. 122)—his term for the self-actualized individual who is flourishing in a state of Aristotelian *eudemonia*. Rogers held that optimal human development was in effect when the person’s self was fully aligned with his or her organism, including all of the sensory and visceral elements of experience, so that they could be represented and expressed symbolically and fully integrated into the self-concept. The fully functioning person was described by Rogers (1961) as having qualities such as being nondefensive and open to experience; fully living in the moment; having trust in his or her own bodily responses to the world; recognizing his or her freedom, as well as his or her responsibility for the consequences of that freedom; being creative, reliable and constructive; and living a rich, full life. In other words, he described many of those qualities later identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004) as character strengths and virtues. Moreover, he was able to adopt this theory of optimal human development and apply it to psychotherapeutic practice in the form of client-centered psychotherapy, which long anticipated recent attempts to formulate a *positive therapy* (Bretherton & Orner, 2004; Joseph & Linley, 2004; C. L. M. Keyes & Lopez, 2005; Linley & Joseph, 2004a; Maddux et al., 2004; Ruini & Fava, 2004; Seligman, 2005).

A MOSTLY COLD RECEPTION

Given the common ground between positive and humanistic psychology, it is not surprising that many humanistic psychologists have warmly embraced the movement of positive psychology. For example, Resnick, Warmoth, and

Serlin (2001) congratulate positive psychology for its affirmation of humanistic principles, especially its emphasis on happiness and optimal experience. Nevertheless, considering the shared interests and goals of humanistic and positive psychology, positive psychology has received a much colder reception from humanistic psychologists than might be expected (e.g., Bohart & Greening, 2001; Held, 2004; S. B. Shapiro, 2001; Sugarman, 2007; Sundararajan, 2005; Taylor, 2001; Woolfolk & Wasserman, 2005). Why have humanistic psychologists not fully embraced the project of positive psychology?

Based on a review of the literature, I have identified at least three reasons why humanistic psychologists have taken issue with positive psychology: (a) the ungenerous remarks about humanistic psychology by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) in a special issue of *American Psychologist* on positive psychology; (b) a rejection of the hedonic version of positive psychology; and (c) claims that the epistemological, methodological, and ethical foundations of positive psychology are in need of more philosophical rigor and coherency.

In their introduction to positive psychology, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) only mentioned humanistic psychology's "generous vision" (p. 7) in passing, and they seemed to suggest strongly that humanistic psychology has been a corrupting influence on psychology. Namely, they faulted humanistic psychology for failing to develop a cumulative empirical base, bizarrely claimed that humanistic psychology was somehow responsible for the self-help movement, and accused at least some humanistic psychologists of promoting a self-centered, narcissistic philosophy of life. Not surprisingly, humanistic psychologists responded with mostly bitter remarks, and justifiably so. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi somehow managed, in the leading journal of our profession, to make bold accusations about humanistic psychology without providing evidence for their assertions—a major oversight for the reviewers of that prestigious journal.

Bohart and Greening (2001) wrote a reply in response to the article, lamenting that Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) had failed in their responsibility to provide an informed and scholarly perspective on the relationship between humanistic psychology and positive psychology. S. B. Shapiro (2001) pointed out that humanistic psychologists have, in fact, accumulated an impressive body of literature in journals such as *The Humanistic Psychologist* and the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.

With regard to the other two issues—that humanistic psychology promoted the self-help movement and that humanistic psychology encourages self-centeredness—they are both common assumptions made about humanistic psychology. However, these assumptions can be easily discredited based on a reading of the literature in humanistic psychology over the past decades. Clearly, humanistic psychologists have placed a great emphasis upon the adaptive and healing qualities of empathy and self-transcendence

(Bozarth, 1984; Cain, 2007; Frankl, 1966; Freire, 2007; Jacobs & Williams, 1983; Levant, 1978). Indeed, humanistic psychotherapies can be seen as a corrective to what some social critics (e.g., Cushman, 1996) have suggested is a trend in which psychotherapies have colluded with the dominant culture to promote the status quo of an empty self and consumerism.

The particularities of these arguments are perhaps less important than the question of why Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) went to the trouble of distancing their agenda for a positive psychology from the humanistic psychology movement. I cannot speak for them, but I suspect that it has to do with humanistic psychology's marginalization within the academy. If they had fully and publicly endorsed humanistic psychology, many in the academy would have rejected their ideas without giving them full consideration. To gain acceptance among the status quo, they may have felt the need to take the old wine of humanistic psychology and package it in the new bottle of positive psychology—albeit, with some new innovations in methodology and a renewed interest in virtue theory's roots in a neo-Aristotelian ethical perspective. If this was, indeed, their strategy, it seems to have worked famously.

For humanistic psychologists, this rhetorical move by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) has been a bitter pill to swallow. However, now that positive psychology has been embraced by the academic community, that rhetorical tactic is no longer necessary. As I have already demonstrated, positive psychologists seem to be increasingly coming to the point where they feel secure enough to credit and endorse the idea that positive psychology is an heir to the humanistic vision of psychology. I believe this trend will continue and that, over time, we will see an increasingly more sophisticated and scholarly appreciation for the role of humanistic psychological principles as they apply to positive psychology.

REJECTION OF THE HEDONIC VISION OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

One of the trends in positive psychology that we have already seen is a decided shift in emphasis from a more hedonic vision of a positive psychology to an alternative vision grounded in the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia* (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Whereas hedonic well-being is defined in terms of the ratio of pleasure to pain in one's life (Diener, 2000; Kahnemann, Diener, & Schwartz, 1999), eudaimonic well-being is understood to be a reflection of a person who is flourishing in terms of his or her character strengths and virtues, including among other things: autonomy, mastery of the environment, personal growth, positive interpersonal relationships, purpose in

life, and self-acceptance (C. L. Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Ryff, 1989). The concept of eudaimonic well-being derives from Aristotelian virtue theory. Aristotle (2004) and his followers conceptualized well-being as composed of an individual's virtuous traits, and only a happiness that flows from legitimate harmony of the virtues was thought to be a genuine happiness. All other forms of happiness were understood to be superficial and fleeting.

Because positive psychology was originally identified by many psychologists as a hedonic approach to psychology, it was subject to quite a bit of criticism for being too "Pollyanna," for succumbing to our culture's tyranny of the positive attitude, and for failing to appreciate the adaptive and constructive aspects of unpleasant states of mind (Held, 2002; Lazarus, 2003; Woolfolk, 2002). Research, nevertheless, has suggested quite strongly that hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being, when measured quantitatively, are independent even if moderately correlated constructs (Compton, Smith, Cornish, & Qualls, 1996; King & Napa, 1998; McGregor & Little, 1998). To be subjectively well does not necessarily mean one has cultivated those characteristics and qualities that enable a person to live an authentically good life. If one is living an authentically good life, however, one enhances the capacity for deep, enduring and mature expressions of happiness and joy (Robbins, 2006a).

If we look to the empirical evidence, the findings suggest that the motivation to maximize pleasure and avoid pain is, at best, a very weak predictor of well-being, whereas being engaged and immersed in one's projects and finding meaning in one's life are relatively much better at predicting well-being (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005; Vella-Brodrick, 2007). To be engaged, to find meaning in that engagement, and to find pleasure through the fulfillment of that meaning and engagement is to live a "full life" rather than an "empty" one, according to Peterson et al. Indeed, it is.

By coming to this insight that eudaimonic well-being is key to any understanding of the good life, positive psychologists have more explicitly shifted to a humanistic frame of reference. What the neo-Aristotelians call "eudaimonic well-being," humanistic psychologists called "self-actualization" (e.g., Maslow, 1943, p. 375). And as humanistic psychologists have been noting for years, authentic well-being or self-actualization is far from anything resembling manic bliss or undifferentiated positive attitudes; on the contrary, it implies an individual's capacity to feel deeply the entire emotional spectrum so as to live life fully, vibrantly, and meaningfully. Or as Kirk Schneider (2004) has described it, self-actualized existence is a matter of having those qualities that enable one to fully take on both the anxieties and thrills of life, perhaps expressed most powerfully in those rare but unforgettable moments of awe before nature, in contemplation of the mystical, or at the birth of a child.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY IN POSITIVE AND HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Some may say, “Yes, it’s true—humanistic and positive psychology share a common vision of the good life, grounded in self-actualization or eudaimonic well-being. But what about epistemology and methodology? Is it true they are incompatible in that department?” A number of papers in this issue address this question more thoroughly than I (e.g., Friedman, this issue). However, a few statements on the matter are in order.

First, I do not believe that methodological considerations are a legitimate line of distinction between positive and humanistic psychology. Surely, many humanistic psychologists are qualitative researchers or champions of nonreductive, nonpositivist science—in fact, I am one of them—and certainly those who self-identify as positive psychologists are researchers who typically use very conventional, quantitative methods of investigation. But we need look no further than Carl Rogers to find a humanistic psychologist who used very conventional, quantitative methods of natural science as a sincere and quite humanistic means to address questions having to do with the essential ingredients of effective psychotherapy. For his efforts, the American Psychological Association granted him the 1956 Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology.

Second, if positive psychologists are sincere in their increasing emphasis on neo-Aristotelian approaches to understanding character strengths and virtues, they will have to face the inevitable methodological and epistemological implications of that commitment—at which point, I believe, positive psychology will predictably and inevitably come to the same insights that many humanistic psychologists happened upon years ago: that ethical questions, which are qualitative questions, demand qualitative solutions, and these qualitative solutions can be addressed through the integration of natural scientific and human scientific methods of investigation, in addition to philosophical work that explores the epistemological, ontological, and ethical ground of that integrated methodology. Of particular importance are the ethical assumptions of positive psychology which guide its research and practice.

Finally, the human science approach to psychology, which is the methodological and epistemological foundation for most contemporary humanistic psychology, is rooted in the tradition of phenomenological psychology. The founder of phenomenological psychology is the philosopher Edmund Husserl. Although some human science researchers in psychology may claim that phenomenology is an alternative paradigm to empirical research, this attitude appears to be based on a misreading of

Husserl's philosophy (e.g., Husserl, 1982/1950), according to some of the most well-respected scholars of Husserl (e.g., Kockelmans, 1987a). As Kockelmans (1987b) noted:

It is often said that phenomenological and hermeneutic psychology should eliminate all forms of empirical psychology. That this notion is a flagrant misinterpretation of genuine intention of these authors can be shown easily. First of all, no *leading* phenomenologist has ever made this claim. On the contrary, all of them have argued explicitly that what we call "psychology" is a complex of various disciplines, each with its own typical methods: empirical psychology uses empirical methods, eidetic phenomenology employs descriptive methods, and hermeneutic phenomenology uses interpretive methods. Thus in the view of the leading phenomenologists, empirical psychology is possible and necessary and no phenomenological or hermeneutic psychology can be substituted for it. (p. ix)

In short, descriptive, eidetic, and hermeneutic phenomenology are perhaps best viewed as complementary to, rather than a replacement for, traditional empirical psychological methods.

VIRTUE THEORY

Positive psychology has received much criticism for its sometimes incoherent and muddled considerations of its philosophical assumptions regarding the ethical foundations of its activity. Philosopher Mike W. Martin (2007) has written an especially astute commentary on the virtue hypothesis in positive psychology. The virtue hypothesis predicts that happiness is derived from the cultivation of virtue. Martin's primary concern is that Seligman's positive psychology appears to lack consistency in the way it articulates the virtue hypothesis: Sometimes positive psychologists claim value neutrality, but at other times, they seem to combine science with normative ethics. Positive psychology engages in the activity of normative ethics to the extent that it aspires to a eudaimonic concept of ethics, which identifies the state of happiness with the acquisition of virtue. By taking on a eudaimonic conception of ethics, positive psychology can no longer consider itself merely a *descriptive* and *predictive* science, but should also acknowledge that it is also engaged in the activity of *prescriptive* valuation.

Martin (2007) seems to believe it possible to achieve scientific neutrality in positive psychology. This can be achieved, he argues, if positive psychologists restrict definitions of happiness to a hedonic definition—essentially, subjective well-being—and then seek to identify any relationships between hedonic happiness and various character strengths and virtues. By doing so, psychologists could test the virtue hypothesis and discover

whether there is a causal relationship between virtue and happiness. However, if eudaimonic happiness is used to define happiness, any suggested causal link between happiness and virtue would be tautological, because in that case virtue could not be said to be an independent variable distinct from happiness. Nevertheless, although it is true that virtue and subjective well-being can be identified as independent and related constructs, as we have already discussed, well-being itself cannot be reduced to hedonic well-being, for the reasons I have already cited.

In contrast to Martin (2007), most humanistic psychologists hold that a value neutral position is not a realistic aspiration for a researcher or therapist (e.g., Kottler & Hazler, 2001). Even if the researcher defines well-being in terms of hedonic well-being, the endorsement of hedonic well-being as a goal worth pursuing, and the decision as to whether hedonic well-being is essential to “the good life” cannot help but become a normative ethical stance. The point is not to exclude normative ethics as a background assumption of research endeavors, as if that were possible; on the contrary, the route of integrity is to make one’s ethical assumptions and codes as explicit as possible, which can serve as a means to alert colleagues and consumers of psychological science that they may exercise their own critical faculties to discern whether those normative ethics are justified. The failure to explicate one’s ethical assumptions, which I believe is the case in professed “morally neutral” positions, serves only to conceal one’s moral framework. And in the hands of influential professionals with status and power, this concealment can be tyrannical and even abusive in cases where groups are marginalized or persecuted as a result. If this sounds paranoid, consider what happened to homosexuality under the lens of the early diagnostic manuals of the American Psychiatric Association.

As it has been articulated by Seligman (2002) in his book *Authentic Happiness*, eudaimonic happiness is thought to derive from the identification and cultivation of signature strengths and virtues. As noted by Schwartz and Sharpe (2005), Seligman treats the virtues as if they were “logically independent” (p. 380). But, as they argue, a genuinely Aristotelian perspective demands that the virtues be understood holistically as interdependent constituents of the good life. One cannot pick and choose virtues as if from a menu; the activation of the virtues in the everyday circumstance of living requires the guidance of practical wisdom, or *phronesis*, the “master virtue, without which the other virtues will exist like well-intentioned, but unruly children” (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2005, p. 385). This holistic approach to the good life, which is more true to the Aristotelian roots of positive psychology, is a hallmark of humanistic psychology.

When Carl Rogers (1961) asked about what it means to be a good therapist, he was asking both an empirical and an ethical question. He

was asking, in effect, what it means to be a virtuous therapist—essentially, raising the question of optimal functioning within the specified practice of psychotherapy. However, he went about answering this question in an inductive, open-ended and empirical way, and by doing so, he long anticipated more contemporary insights that therapeutic interventions are less important than common factors, such as client-therapist rapport, across models of treatment (Frank & Frank, 1991; Miller, Duncan, & Hubble, 2005; Wampold, 2001). Rogers (1961) found that the virtuous therapist is one who cultivates a growth promoting climate through the acquisition of three essential traits: congruency, unconditional positive regard for the client, and empathic understanding. Notice that these virtues are interdependent. For example, empathic understanding can be used by psychopaths as a means to manipulate and control other people, but when coupled with unconditional positive regard, empathy becomes a benevolent and powerful conduit for interpersonal healing. A congruent therapist may have the integrity and honesty to confront a client about his or her faults, but without unconditional positive regard and empathy, these confrontations are likely to be harsh and damaging, rather than constructive avenues for therapeutic change. Although Rogers did not explicitly recognize his approach to therapy as grounded in a neo-Aristotelian conception of virtue, his work nevertheless provides a perfect example of its application.

In addition, humanistic psychology has also been acutely aware of the importance of *idiographic* approaches to empirical and ethical questions, and has repeatedly warned against the dangers of an entirely *nomothetic* approach to human behavior and experience (Wertz, 2001). If we want to derive generalities about aggregates of people, if we wish to identify relationships among variables for the sake of reducing error in predictions, and if we wish to develop the ability to make causal inferences, we must rely on nomothetic, quantitative procedures, without which we would be lost. For this reason, humanistic psychology should embrace mainstream psychological research methodology. However, within the context of Aristotelian ethics, the identification of essential, interdependent virtues and their interrelationships is not enough: We also need the practical wisdom (*phronesis*) that will allow us to understand how to utilize those virtues in particular, concrete situations. Idiographic approaches, including case studies, biographies, discourse analysis of diaries, and other qualitative approaches to data analysis, are uniquely equipped to impart the practical wisdom necessary to exercise the virtues in a way that can account for the highly contextualized particularities of specific, concrete, human problems, such as those encountered daily by psychotherapists and other clinical practitioners.

When idiographic and qualitative methods of analysis are combined with nomothetic analysis, I believe we have a winning combination. When taken

in the abstract, and especially when accounting for all of the variation among cultures and individuals, any categorical description of the virtues runs a great risk of being so generic that it becomes anemic and bereft of practical use-value. Doing so, we are in danger of taking the wonderful richness and complexity of concrete human lives and reducing their meanings to overly simplified formulas (May, 1996), in effect confusing the map with the countryside (Merleau-Ponty, 1995). Yet, when we ground the science of psychology in a philosophy that gives ontological priority to the reality of concrete lives, and in their meanings and values within the contextual significance of those lives, we are able to preserve meaning and value from getting swallowed up in a reductive scientism (Robbins, 2006b). To carry out such a psychology, we must take great care to avoid the tendency to reduce *multiplicity* to *uniformity* (Bortoft, 1996, p. 147). For this reason, humanistic psychologists have articulated an approach to human phenomena that, through holistic seeing, is able to capture a *multiplicity in unity* rather than an *impoverished unity*: that is, an approach that has the capability to identify general, essential categories of understanding that, nevertheless, preserve the integrity of, and recognize their existential debt to, the concrete particularities which give rise to those categories.

Perhaps the greatest danger for positive psychology lies in its potential to misappropriate Aristotelian ethics within an epistemological framework that subtly and effectively undercuts the most fundamental presuppositions and requirements for a properly Aristotelian application of virtue theory for the human sciences. Humanistic psychology has much to offer positive psychologists if they are willing to more closely and seriously engage the expansive literature of humanistic psychologists in this area.

CONCLUSION

In summary, positive psychologists have been overwhelming in their implicit acknowledgement of their roots in humanistic psychology, and this kind of acknowledgement is most readily apparent with a glance through the references in any recently published work proclaiming itself to be within the realm of positive psychology. Although it is true that Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) took pains to distance positive psychology from the tradition of humanistic psychology, and given the lack of a strong scholarly argument behind their criticisms of humanistic psychology, I think it is safe to conclude that they were exaggerating the differences between positive and humanistic psychology for primarily rhetorical and political reasons. That these two prominent psychologists may have feared any association with humanistic psychology, despite the

obvious kinship of their ideas with the humanistic tradition, perhaps speaks volumes to what humanistic psychologists have been saying for decades: Humanistic psychology has often been the victim of irrational and unjust prejudice among those in our discipline who were, for whatever reason threatened, by our ideas. Positive psychology could have easily fallen victim to similar “straw man” arguments that may have destroyed its opportunity to flourish as a movement. The movement of positive psychology, for whatever reason or intention for its integration of humanistic ideas, is, indeed, a positive thing for humanistic psychology, because it has provided a renewed opportunity to reveal what humanistic psychology has long had to contribute to psychology. The emergence of positive psychology is a historic moment that humanistic psychologists can embrace with pride, knowing that its success is built upon the foundation of our tradition. Indeed, we still have much to contribute to its construction.

Those who perform research in the realm of positive psychology should, in turn, pay close attention to some of the lessons of history offered by humanistic psychology. First, positive psychology cannot be a value neutral endeavor, and it must take pains to examine its implicit values to make them as explicit as possible. Otherwise, positive psychologists risk becoming blind to the dark side of any normative ethic that goes unchecked by reason. Second, virtues cannot be studied in isolation, but must be approached holistically, or else those virtues risk falling into vice. And, finally, positive psychology will never live up to its promise of articulating the good life until it pays due respect to the central virtue of *phronesis*, or wisdom. Perhaps one sign that positive psychology has paid its respects to wisdom will appear to the extent that positive psychologists champion the integration of idiographic and nomothetic methods. With these new directions, we will move much more closely to what all parties may consider to be a genuine rapprochement between humanistic and positive psychology.

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