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***Dr. Lloyd Hawkeye Robertson** is a **Registered Doctoral Psychologist** with expertise in Counselling Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Human Resource Development. He earned qualifications in Social Work too. Duly note, he has five postsecondary degrees, of which 3 are undergraduate level. His research interests include memes as applied to self-knowledge, the evolution of religion and spirituality, the aboriginal self's structure, residential school syndrome, prior learning recognition and assessment, and the treatment of attention deficit disorder and suicide ideation. In addition, he works in anxiety and trauma, addictions, and psycho-educational assessment, and relationship, family, and group counselling.*

Here we talk about the web of life.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen: You [characterize life as a web](#). New weaves added while others removed or changed in the web of life. To a more general point, why does psychological writing

rely so heavily on metaphor? Does this reflect, in a way, the amount known while the huge amount not known about the human mind's dynamics while also the importance of immediate conveyance in meaning in spite of it? Do psychotherapy and counselling amount to controlled-environment, systematic rituals for clients with therapists?

Dr. Lloyd Hawkey Robertson: Metaphor is a kind of mental scaffolding that allows us to explore new concepts using more established, well understood ones. Metaphor predominates in psychology because it is a new science playing catch-up. We might blame Rene Descartes and his Faustian bargain with the Roman Catholic Church for this. Cartesian dualism held that the natural world could be understood by science and reason, but the mind or soul could only be understood from divine revelation. This dualism likely contributed to Descartes avoiding the censorship and imprisonment faced by his contemporary, Galileo, but the notion that the study of mind was beyond the ken of science set back psychology by about 200 years.

In the newspaper column you cited I said each of us builds a mental structure of significant others that supports our self definition as a person. This structure can be compared to a spider's web with each foundational thread representing a significant other. When a foundational person dies, our mental web collapses and we must re-weave it in accordance with this new reality. Such a metaphor is useful in understanding the purpose and task of grieving, but it is not as useful in understanding who we are in other contexts. In mapping the self more recently ([Robertson, 2016](#); [Robertson and McFadden, 2018](#)), I have shown that who we are is more than the relationships we have established. I have also shown how complexes of memes that initially exist outside our selves can appropriate our resources after becoming attached ([mind virus](#); [woke virus](#)). Metaphor helps us to understanding new phenomena by scaffolding new information on concepts that are already understood, but we need to be cognizant of the probability that the new phenomena also differ from the metaphoric concept in

some ways. While mind viruses are like physical viruses in that they can only propagate from inside a host, as non-physical agents they avoid the limitations of proximity required by their natural world cousins.

With respect to your second question, I hope that psychologists do not descend to prescribing set piece rituals. While I believe that we as human beings benefit from ritual, and we may suggest clients consider enacting a meaningful ritual in a given situation, it would be unethical to prescribe any specific ritual. Grieving, in this example, is not the ritual; it is the culturally mandated practices associated with grieving that are ritualized. Psychologists need to be able to transcend such practices. For example, I have helped individuals who have been unable, for psychological reasons, to attend funerals of loved one by assisting them to identify individualized alternatives. Our project is to transcend both ritual and culture where necessary for the well-being of the individual by helping our clients choose from menus of new possibilities.

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

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