

## **Navigating the Multidisciplinary Landscape of Clinical Psychology**

*Emanuele Maria Merlo*<sup>1\*</sup>, *Liam Alexander MacKenzie Myles*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Biomedical, Dental Science and Morphological and Functional Images, University of Messina, Messina, Italy

<sup>2</sup> Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

E-mail corresponding author: [emerlo@unime.it](mailto:emerlo@unime.it)



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The foundations of clinical psychology are diverse, and its multidisciplinary approach is a significant strength of the field (Benjamin, 2023; Davey, 2021). It is important to recognize that etiological research in clinical psychology originates from various sciences. The integration of these disciplines forms the core of the field and presents an ongoing challenge for scholars to stay updated with the latest scientific developments (Di Giuseppe, 2024; Lilienfeld & Basterfield, 2020a; Merlo, 2023; Ricciardi et al., 2023; Warner et al., 2016; Wertheimer & Puente, 2020).

This network of researchers expands the body of knowledge required for clinical practice by incorporating findings from clinical research and other scientific fields. The field of psychopathology is particularly noteworthy and an enduring area of psychological research (Davey, 2021). Despite its immense and enduring value, this discipline remains a cornerstone of clinical psychology, although its importance has been somewhat overshadowed by nosography in recent years (Costello & Angold, 2000; Fuchs, 2002; Heckers, 2014; Helzer & Hudziak, 2008; Maddux & Winstead, 2004; Millon, 2009; Musalek et al., 2010; Pintaudi et al., 2021; Schultze-Lutter et al., 2018).

Considering psychopathology from both clinical and historiographical perspectives is essential for understanding the individual phenomena that shape the experiences of patients with various conditions. Indeed, it is necessary to consider the psychological factors that contribute to the progression of purely organic diseases, those that underlie the aetiology of complex clinical cases, and those that influence the onset, maintenance, and outcomes of pathological conditions (Békés et al., 2023; Caputo et al., 2022; Casula et al., 2023; Gangemi et al., 2021; Garay-Sevilla et al., 1999; Giorgianni et al., 2024; Johnson, 2023; Marchini et al., 2021; Masci et al., 2022; Merlo et al., 2024a, 2024b; Momen et al., 2020; Silvestro et al., 2023; Vicario et al., 2023).

In this context, the persistent use of the inconsistent distinction between "psychological" and "organic" often evokes a conflict akin to that between organic and inorganic, physical and metaphysical, or hard and soft sciences. This discrepancy is deeply rooted in significant epistemological issues, where the Cartesian dilemma remains unresolved (Chamberlain, 2015; Mascolo & Kallio, 2020; Merlo, 2024; Motofei & Rowland, 2015, 2018; Ward et al., 2024).

From this perspective, which frames the debate as an opposition between physics and metaphysics, the concept and legacy of "substance" (e.g., Leibniz; Jolley, 2023; Shim, 2006) still seem to emerge in contrast to the immaterial, as if mental functioning were distinct from the system that enables it, or as if the system itself were disconnected from its manifestations (e.g., see Wittgenstein's approach to sensory experience as discussed by Smit, 2024).

The term "substance" and its etymology do not adequately describe a system that is dynamic and fundamentally different from the static notion of "substance." Therefore, alongside the expanding power of knowledge, it is crucial to consider what, in light of scientific advances, should yield to empirical evidence (Guyon et al., 2018; Lilienfeld & Basterfield, 2020b; Merlo et al., 2022; Sergi et al., 2023a, 2023b). Moreover, it is necessary to consider the sociopolitical factors determining what is deemed 'empirical evidence,' and whether such factors are underpinned by Cartesian narratives (Merlo et al., 2022; Myles & Johnson, 2023).

Epistemology plays a crucial role, particularly in the advances enabled by the collaboration between theoretical and experimental sciences. This partnership paves the way for new models of understanding phenomena (e.g., Myles & Jones, 2024). Thus, it is essential to consider questions concerning the origin of psychopathological difficulties in relation to the various biological, social and psychology contributory facets (e.g., Blanken et al., 2021; Crocq, 2018; Myles, 2021; Spitzer & Kammer, 1996).

Indeed, the latest scientific contributions often reflect the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach. This is evident not only in educational objectives, work commitment, and outcomes but also in the dissemination of knowledge (Green et al., 2015; Mertens, 2023; Sergi, 2016, 2021; York et al., 2019).

Certain terms and issues that are particularly significant in classical research on psychopathology remain fundamentally important. Specifically, the challenges posed by conditions that are often chronic—or inherently so—represent a highly interesting area of study for clinical psychology. Chronic conditions, both within other scientific disciplines and those closely related to psychology, psychopathology, and psychiatry, continue to present significant challenges (Cobham et al., 2020; Conversano, 2019; Di Giuseppe & Conversano, 2022; Martino et al., 2021; Pel-Littel et al., 2021; Pinguart, 2020; Puşcaşu et al., 2022; Stanton et al., 2007).

These challenges are particularly intriguing in some difficulties, such as those culminating in a diagnosis of psychosis (Myles et al., 2023), given the absence of a clear etiological agent (in the broad sense) that can fully explain the onset and progression of such phenomena.

A deep understanding of the lexicon and phenomenology should always accompany the study of recent contributions and guide the adoption of models that claim to be atheoretical (e.g., nosography), yet rely on the terminology of psychopathology, psychoanalysis, and other scientific disciplines. The use of diagnostic manuals is a strong trend in the clinical application of psychology and related fields. However, it is unsustainable to adopt methods that incorporate the lexicon and phenomenology of other sciences without a solid grounding in the basic sciences.

In conclusion, the multidisciplinary nature of clinical psychology underscores its strength, as the integration of insights from various scientific disciplines, including biology, neuroscience, and psychopathology, is crucial for developing a comprehensive approach to clinical practice. Addressing the persistent dichotomy between "psychological" and "organic" perspectives reveals deeper epistemological issues and the need for a nuanced understanding of the dynamic nature of mental and physiological processes. As the field evolves, it is essential to balance the adoption of new models and diagnostic tools with a robust understanding of classical concepts and methodologies. Moreover, recognizing the value of classical psychopathological terms and concepts, while integrating them with contemporary scientific findings, ensures a more holistic and effective approach to understanding and addressing chronic and complex conditions. As we continue to refine our models and practices, a critical engagement with epistemological issues and an appreciation for the interplay between diverse scientific perspectives will be key to advancing the field of clinical psychology.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any potential conflict of interest.

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