Preserving Cultural Identity and Subjectivity for a Psychology of Multiculturalism
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Abstract

Language is the most important carrier of cultural heritage, but it is a common sense of social science that language doesn't equal to culture. All cultural traditions that can be transmitted from generation to generation must serve some function of helping people in a certain situation of lifeworld. The construction of scientific microworld for culture-inclusive theories enables indigenous social scientists to recognize the cultural traditions in an objective way that may preserve cultural identity and subjectivity of non-Western countries in the context of multiculturalism.

I was preparing this rejoinder to Prof. Allwood's article entitled "What type of culture will help indigenous psychologies and why?" when guest lecturing at a training seminar in Harbin, China, between July 20-27, 2014. This extraordinary experience helped me to answer and to clarify many questions raised in his article, which cited some of my sayings as the following:

> Thus, he, to a large extent, seems to equate culture with the language spoken by the people in the cultural community, and thus to a large extent, for example, to equate Chinese culture with the Chinese language (Allwood 2014, 46).

Language and Culture

The relationship between language and culture is the most serious misunderstanding that, I am afraid, distorted my arguments about culture and psychology. While I did claim that language is "the most important carrier of culture" in an interview conducted by Evenden and Sandstrom (2011), I never "equate" culture with "the language spoken by the people in the cultural community." On the contrary, I don't believe that anyone with some common sense of social science would "equate" Chinese culture with the Chinese language. Unfortunately, Prof. Allwood seemed to make the same distortion again and again in his article. He even asked a strange question along this line of reasoning in the Final Conclusions:

> Finally, Prof. Hwang seems to argue for the near identity of culture and language, but his arguments for this conception of the relation between culture and language are unclear. For example, it seems that Prof. Hwang would need to clarify if he thinks that learning to speak Chinese will also make you a follower of Confucianism, and learning to speak English will make you some type of Christian (or a Hindu?). In contrast to Prof. Hwang's conception it would seem that languages and cultures are best seen as separate (Allwood 2014, 49).

Followers of Confucianism

A simple fact may answer Prof. Allwood's strange question of whether "learning to speak Chinese will make you a follower of Confucianism." In our training seminar co-sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Science and TRAVIS Research Institute, Fuller Graduate School of Psychology, we discussed five major religions in contemporary China, namely, Taoism, Buddhism, Muslim, Christianity, and Catholicism. Followers of those religions all speak Chinese. They may or may not identify themselves as followers of Confucianism. Does this serve as a clarification?

In my rejoinder to his last article, "All Roads Lead to Rome (Hwang 2014c)," I emphasized that my research interests have been concentrated on Chinese cultural tradition, namely, Taoism, Confucianism, Legalism and Thoughts of Martial School. All these cultural heritages have been carried by Chinese language, but no one would say that any of them equates with Chinese language.

In my debates with Prof. Allwood, I explained how I had constructed culture-inclusive theories by multiple philosophical paradigms (Hwang, 2013a) and used them to conduct empirical researches in Chinese societies. Findings of those researches had been published in my book*, Foundations of Chinese Psychology: Confucian Social Relations* (Hwang, 2012). Regarding my research interests, Prof. Allwood argued that:

> Apart from its language basis, Prof. Hwang's culture concept does not seem to aim at capturing the understanding of the society's members in question. Instead, it seems to be mostly focused on the part of people's understanding made up by tradition (i.e. the part of the current understanding in the society made up of the understanding held by previous generations living in the geographical area of the society; or should it be, held by previous generations ascribing to the same ethnical identity as the members argued to make up the members of the culture?) (Allwood 2014, 46-47).

Understanding Contemporary Chinese People

I agree that my research interests are highly selective. But, I disagree that my culture concept does not aim at capturing the understanding of the society's members in question. As Prof. Allwood might know, Confucianism and Taoism are the most important cultural heritages originated from ancient China. Buddhism had been imported into China during Emperor Ming of the Han dynasty (1st century), it then mixed up with Confucianism and Taoism to become the Chinese folk religion of *sanjiaoheyi* (Unification of three religions). As a consequence of rapid economic development since China adopted the Open and Reform Policy in 1979, Christianity and Catholicism have been revived in recent years. All those religions are important for us to understand contemporary Chinese people. But, Prof. Allwood seemed to disagree with this simple fact:

> As I have argued throughout this debate, such a culture concept, given its greater realism, is more likely to be useful both for helping, and improving

our knowledge about, the people in the IP researchers' own societies and for contributing to our understanding about the human being in large, compared with culture concepts that, without regards for facts on the ground, assume shared understanding, traditions, cultural heritage, core values and the existence of a cultural deep-structure, etc. (Allwood 2014, 47).

In the training seminar, Dr. Qimin He, a professor from College of Philosophy and Religion, Central Ethnic University, provided numerous empirical evidences to show that all foreign religious have been modified to a certain extent by local culture when they were implanted into China. How can we know why and how the modification happened if we don't have adequate culture-inclusive theories to tell what traditional Chinese culture is?

Helping Chinese People

Based on our long-term debate, I sense that Prof. Allwood might have got a wrong impression about my culture concept, as he stated in the very beginning of his article:

> From this, and other texts, it seems that Prof. Hwang is less interested in helping people in the IP researchers' society than in helping the IP researchers, as such, to push "forward the third wave of psychology" (Allwood 2014, 44).

To clarify, first, I would like to recommend a special issue on Counseling Chinese: Indigenous and Multicultural Perspectives published in The Counseling Psychologist. As a guest editor for this special volume of five articles, my contributions included:

> 1. The development of indigenous counseling in contemporary Confucian communities, and
> 2. Self-cultivation: Culturally sensitive psychotherapies in Confucian societies.

In the second of my articles, a series of cultural sensitive psychotherapy had been developed to help people (in the IP researchers' society) on the philosophical ground of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. It is very hard for me to imagine how anyone can argue that IP researchers attempted to develop those techniques of psychotherapies for helping themselves only.

Christian Psychology

In addition, I also suggest a book co-authored by Dueck and Reimer (2009) *A Peaceable Psychology: Christian Therapy in a World of Many Cultures.* In particular, special attention should be paid to the subtitle of that book for the consequence of Christian psychology in a world of many cultures. Prof. Allwood might recall that I mentioned a famous term coined by Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan (2010, a, b) in my article,

"Science as a Culture in Culture with Deep–Structure Across Empirical Studies in Psychology":

> Almost all conceptions used by mainstream psychologists originated from samples of the WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic) social group (i.e. college students in Western countries), and most psychologists assume that theories of Western psychology are universal and can be applied everywhere in the world (Hwang 2013b, 44).

What I mean by Christian psychology here is equivalent to WEIRD psychology. Let me give you an example of the consequence of imposing WEIRD psychology or Christian psychology on Chinese people.

Pan-Cultural Dimensions

Michael Bond is a pioneer psychologist who has opened up the field of Chinese psychology by organizing psychologists from around the world. He published the first English book on Chinese psychology (Bond, 1986), followed by two volumes of *Handbook of Chinese Psychology* (Bond, 1996, 2010), which successfully brought the term Chinese Psychology to the attention of the international psychological community. The *Oxford Handbook of Chinese Psychology* contains 41 chapters by 87 authors who had intensively reviewed previous works on a variety of topics related to Chinese psychology.

Nonetheless, with his careful review of this book, Lee (2011) indicated that he:

> Was somewhat puzzled and bothered by the fact that the book does not have a clear structure … It is thus difficult for readers to learn quickly about what is included in the book and to identify the chapter on a specific topic unless they go through the whole table of contents carefully. There is a general lack of theory in the whole handbook…The topic-oriented chapters have done a great job in reviewing and reporting extensively empirical findings in the field regarding the Chinese people However, very few chapters offer indigenous theories of Chinese psychology (e.g. the chapter of Hwang and Han). Most of them stay at the level of confirming/ disconfirming Western findings, referring to well-known cultural dimensions such as collectivism and power distance to explain the variation found, despite the openly stated effort to push for indigenous research. Moreover, most of the studies cited in the book simply dichotomized their findings as Chinese vs. Western, failing to capture the much more refined complexity of the world (271-272).

Culture System Approach

As an old friend of Michael Bond, he has always invited me to contribute a chapter when editing books on Chinese psychology. And I did so either as an author or co-author of a chapter that offers indigenous theories of Chinese psychology.

In contrast to the pan-cultural dimensional approach of *Christian Psychology* or WEIRD psychology, my culture system approach emphasizes the construction of culture-inclusive theories of psychology which provides a holistic picture for us to understand people in non-Western cultures (Hwang, 2014a).

Bond (2014) also acknowledged the importance of initiatives outside the mainstream WEIRD nations in extending the disciplinary compass of Western psychology. In the conclusion chapter of his 2010 handbook *Moving the Scientific Study of Chinese Psychology into Our Twenty-First Century: Some Ways Forward,* he quoted a paragraph from Arnett (2008):

> The role of indigenous theorizing, then, is to enlarge our repertoire of constructs and theories in describing and explaining the human condition using scientific best practice. Their ultimate function is to demonstrate how, "Within the four seas, all men are brothers". Non-mainstream cultural groups like the Chinese can enlarge our conceptual ambit, and ground psychology in the whole of human reality, not just their Western, usually American, versions (713).

Conclusion

The universal Mandala Model of Self (Hwang, 2011b) as well as the Face and Favor model for social interaction (Hwang, 1987, 2012) can be applied to any non-Western culture for constructing culture-inclusive theories of psychology (Hwang, 2014a,b). My approach represents efforts to preserve cultural identity and subjectivity for any non-Western culture. It advocates for a psychology of multiculturalism in the age of globalization. Perhaps as such, Prof. Allwood showed his sympathetic understanding to my approach after our long-term debate:

> [Hwang] proposed his own culture concept (and supposedly, the other features of his approach) in order to help IP researchers reach a psychology that is more inclusive than just covering specific local societies. This may, as I have repeatedly argued in this debate, have the unfortunate consequence that the people who were planned to be helped by the IP research, and to whose society the research was planned to be applied, may be lost out of sight (Allwood 2014, 45).

Notwithstanding, I believe this concern may be unnecessary. According to multiculturalism, "the people who were planned to help" and "whose society the research was planned to be applied" are the IP researcher's people, in their own society. My approach enables them to preserve their cultural identity and subjectivity. Hence, I don't believe that they will be lost out of the IP researcher's sight in the age of globalization.

For anyone who intends to know people in the IP researcher's society, s/he may learn the IP researcher's culture through culture-inclusive theories. Though most of them may be still at the under-developed stage.

> Although Prof. Hwang is to be commended for his openness in wanting to ground the IPs in a Western originated philosophy of science (Bhaskar, Wallner), this enterprise seems somewhat paradoxical in the context of the IPs' research program that proclaims that the IPs should be grounded in their own cultural framework (Allwood 2014, 48).

The Chinese cultural heritage has been manifested by many aspects of Chinese people in their lifeworlds. Nevertheless, the I-Ching indicates that:

> The successive movement of the yin and yan operations constitutes what is called the way (*Dao*).
> That which ensues as the result of their movement is goodness;
> That which shows it in its completeness is the nature of men (or things).
> The benevolent see it and call it benevolence.
> The wise see it and call it wisdom.
> The common people, acting daily according to it, yet have no knowledge of it.
> Thus it is that the way (*Dao*), as seen by the superior man (*juntze*), is seen by few.
> (*The Great Treatise* I)

Because most people act daily according to the cultural heritage without any knowledge of it, and because it might be interpreted by different scholars in a variety of way, it is necessary for social scientists in non-Western countries to construct the scientific microworld of culture-inclusive theories for recognizing their cultural traditions in an objective way. It seems to me that the philosophy of science for constructing scientific microworlds is a product of Western civilization after European Renaissance. It progresses most rapidly after the Enlightment. It seems to me that the most significant mission for the Chinese scholars to accomplish in the following decades is to learn how to construct scientific microworlds of culture-inclusive theories to recognize themselves and to preserve their own cultural identity.

> Although Prof. Hwang argues that IP researchers should use his culture concept and his preferred research philosophy in order to be able to compete with the researchers in mainstream psychology, there is a danger that this advice would change the IPs he intends to save, out of recognition (Allwood 2014, 48).

This worry may also be unnecessary, as I am trying to "save" Chinese indigenous psychology. It seems to me that after the Cultural Revolution, China is now going through a stage of Cultural Rehabilitation and moving towards the direction of Cultural Renaissance. If and only if China stays strong and prosperous, she certainly will attract more and more attention from people all over the world. In that case, why would Prof. Allwood worry that Chinese IP would be out of recognition?

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