



[IP-- doing research in a yin-yang way by Michael Bond](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 30]

dear Peter,

thank you for this on-going conversation on indigenous inputs in our discipline! I have spent my academic career working from within Chinese culture and have always wondered if I am honoring the indigenous perspective. given my language limitations in Chinese, I have always tried to do so by consulting attentively with my Chinese collaborators, albeit in English.

i invariably ask them what we might be missing in studying the phenomena, where "missing" means to me some conceptualization that might enlarge our capacity to predict more of the variance in the phenomenon we are trying to address. to answer this question, we need measures. these measures need local inputs, so as to tap fully whatever phenomenon we are exploring, e.g., the behavioral manifestations for the maintenance aspect of leadership.

ideally then, we should proceed multi-culturally to test the processes in an open way, in each cultural group separately. then, we proceed to the comparative cross-cultural part of the study, asking about what we lose in detail when moving from the culture-specific to the culture general. some detail is always lost, of course, but how much and with what consequences for the phenomenon under investigation?

we tried this approach many years ago in:

Smith, P. B., Misumi, J., Tayeb, M., Peterson, M., & Bond, M. H. (1989). On the generality of leadership style measures. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 62, 97-109.

this seems to me to be a yin-yang approach. would you agree?

journals do not like this approach, because it is very space-intensive. in our press to get our collaborator grad students published, we often revert to the cross-cultural study, leaving the culture-specific analyses out of the article. i always regretted doing so with this early article on trust:

Zhang, J. X., & Bond, M. H. (1993). Target-based interpersonal trust: Cross-cultural comparison and its cognitive model. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 2, 164-172. (in Chinese with English abstract)

I wonder if you would countenance such a yin-yang approach in your new journal on trust? at least, ask for one culture-specific analysis before authors move to the culture-general? then readers could explore what is lost and what is gained by going cross-cultural...

just a thought for your consideration...

with my regards to you and to Werner,

michael bond, attaching a picture from Boston and from AoM

Michael Harris Bond, Ph. D.

 [Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 29]

Dear Michael:

Thanks a lot for your excellent input.

In my opinion, native language is a plus but not necessary and of course never sufficient. What really counts is the truly indigenous perspective. For example, if guanxi is the same as social capital or social tie (as so many Chinese scholars assume so), there is no need to study guanxi as indigenous. What guanxi research does contribute is to extend and expand the notion of social capital or social tie derived from the West by contributing something unique: guanxi is unique and indigenous because it is high on BOTH instrumental and sentimental dimensions in contrast to the typical Western ties that are high in EITHER instrumental OR sentimental. Guanxi is also unique in its structure (with multiple tiers or circles of differential associations) in contrast to the typical Western 2-tierd structure of in-group and out-group ties.

As for Michael's approach of single-cultural study first and then move on to cross-cultural study as a yin-yang approach, I agree in principle to the extent that cross-cultural study should follow single-cultural (indigenous) research. However, if all single-cultural studies are conducted from their own indigenous perspectives without the biased influence of the imposed perspectives from other cultures, and then they are integrated to highlight both differences and similarities, the latter approach is NO LONGER a simple cross-cultural approach, but a new approach that I call "geocentric approach". That is the ultimate goal of indigenous research.

To me, there are only two legitimate approaches to cultural research: indigenous and geocentric. I hope you will agree with me on this point.

In my journal on trust, I cannot impose my position too much. It takes time for the mainstream scholars to respect the indigenous approach from the non-Western perspective. As you well know, all social studies are indigenous in nature, even if the scholars do not admit or do not realize that.

Peter Ping Li

 [Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 29]

Dear Michael and All Other Colleagues:

I forgot to mention that Michael's fifth cultural dimension of time or Confucian Dynamics as the perfect example of what I refer to as the ultimate goal of indigenous research: from indigenous to geocentric.

Peter Ping Li

 [Comment by Dharm Bhawuk](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 29]

Namaste Peter and colleagues:

Aloha!

Perhaps the **ULTIMATE GOAL** of indigenous research should be plurality of goals, and each researcher should follow what in his or her wisdom is appropriate in the context. Some of us may like to build theory, others may like to solve problems, and yet others may like to develop measurements (or innovate methodologically). Clinicians would like to solve indigenous problems using indigenous psychological principles and tools, and are also free to adapt ideas from global psychology. What is not useful is to run to western psychology without looking around in the indigenous literature (oral tradition is also literature), for that often leads to **NOT REALLY SOLVING THE PROBLEM**. The field of economic development is replete with examples of how western solutions don't work, and yet are continuously sold like over the counter drugs as readymade solutions.

Search for etics is a perspective that needs to be seriously examined, and not viewed as the *raison d'etre* of research. I support those who pursue etics, but I would like them to offer the same courtesy to those who do not. I can see my short life getting spent in building models from scriptures, and would appreciate if the etic-hunters do not despise it (I would send metta in return anyway!). I would also like to remind those among us who are gung ho (extremely enthusiastic) about being scientists (for them psychology is science or social science) that humanists like me also have value in understanding human psychology. I think sometimes we forget that humanists are also capable of logical, abstract, and mathematical thinking. Our goal is to address human issues, not to do science for the sake of science. Science might have done as much damage as religion, to be provocative. Etic-hunters seem to have a strong scientist-identity, and that naturally creates a hierarchical world in which scientists are on the top.

We need to get away from creating a hierarchy in research tradition. Replacing one hierarchy with another does not sound like a solution to me.

Indigenous for the sake of indigenous may be as valuable as attempting to go from indigenous to geocentric. Perhaps, we also need plurality of values.

My apology, Peter. I know you did not mean anything like this. I thought I should clarify.

And Michael (Bond), you know I respect you and your work, and love you as a friend. Your contribution to the study of Chinese values stands on its own ground. It seems less important to me that it should be considered the 5th Dimension. To distill all Chinese values into time orientation or future orientation sounds a bit too much of a simplification; but it is a valid perspective in the reductionist domain.

Have a wonderful week everybody.

Bhawuk

 [Comment by Louise S.](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 01]

Dear Michael,

You raised some very important issues concerning the perennial question of the local versus the universal in the study of culture. I like especially the way you frame your questions: What's lost, and what's gained. I would like to pursue these questions along the line of the yin and yang polarity.

Let the local be yin, and the universal be yang. You mentioned the incompatibility of the two tracks of research: Journals tend to take the either/or approach. You mentioned the need to leave out the cultural specific analysis in order to be published. You also mentioned the costly and impractical attempts to combine both thick description and abstract analysis in one article. I think one way out is to write two separate articles for two different journals, but cross reference them. Another way out is to have different chapters devoted to each in an edited volume. But a more fundamental solution is to follow one important principle of the yin and yang polarity, namely that yin has an element of yang in it, and vice versa. Translated into the present context, this means that there is no need to do the cultural specific first, then move to the universal, as you suggested, because the local has an element of the universal in it. If it weren't the case, translation between different cultures wouldn't be possible. Let me give one humble example. I once wrote a paper on the Chinese Buddhist notion of emptiness (Kong):

Sundararajan, L. (2008). Kong (Emptiness): A Chinese

Buddhist emotion. In W. Lemmens, & W. Van Herck (Eds.), *Religious Emotions/Some Philosophical Explorations*(pp. 183-197). Cambridge, UK : Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

The other day I was delighted to hear from a well respected researcher on religion, John Corrigan, who wrote: "I have made good use of your understanding of kong in a book I am writing (*EMPTINESS: AN ESSAY ON CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA*). I argue that emptiness is a feeling and an ideal for American Christians (it is for others as well), and that they invent many ways to cultivate it." Wow!

At a more grand level, I believe one time tested way of getting from the cultural

specific to the universal is to delve deeply into the local. Examples abound: Fiske's model of relational cognition is developed on the basis of his field work among the Moose in West Africa. K. K. Hwang's guanxi matrix is universally applicable, as it is perfectly compatible with Fiske's model of relational thinking. Shweder's autonomy-community-divinity model of morality is developed out of his field work in India. One advantage of this approach is that it is more appropriate to talk about gains rather than losses—one gains insight into the local, which in turn sheds light on something universal.

This could have been predicted by the yin yang dialectic.

Onward,

Louise

 [Comment by K.K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 12]

Dear Peter, Michael, and Louise,

I have paid close attention to your exchanges about yin/yang and different approaches to studying indigenous psychology. I agree that yin/yang is a very important “root metaphor” in Chinese culture, but we must be very careful in using it to understand different approaches of IP.

In the 2nd Chapter of my book, Foundations of Chinese Psychology: Confucian Social Relations, I differentiated scientific microworld/lifeworld from five aspects and argued that the construction of scientific world is a product of Western civilization. Yin/Yang is a very important root metaphor which had been utilized by Chinese people as a language game to understand the operation of many entities in their lifeworld. But, I doubt if we can apply such metaphor to understand different approaches for constructing scientific microworlds as discussed by Michael and Louise.

Insofar as the latter issue is concerned, I suggest that you read the attached article. In it, two approaches are defined in studying Chinese OB: “The first—developing a theory of Chinese management—focuses on applying and refining theories developed elsewhere in a Chinese context. The second—developing a Chinese theory of management—focuses on creating explanations for the existence of Chinese management phenomena that are uniquely Chinese.”

These two approaches can be used to define Theory of Chinese Psychology as well as Chinese Theory of Psychology. Barney and Zhang (2009) argued that it is unlikely for a single scholar to tread both roads. Do you really believe that the yin/yang metaphor can be utilized to understand these two approaches?

Best,

K. K. Hwang  [The future of Chinese Management research](#)

 [Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 12]

Dear KK:

Thanks for your interest in the discussion regarding the role of yin-yang thinking.

I think that the frame of yin-yang is capable of handling both lifeworld AND scientific microworld. My effort is to bring the frame of yin-yang closer to the scientific microworld.

If you define scientific microworld narrowly as the typical method developed in the West, you seem to imply that there has been no science in the history of the East. However, the Chinese history is full of excellent examples of great scientific discoveries in the past. The only problem China suffers in the recent past is the lack of modern science. However, is modern science is the only form of science in the world? I doubt it.

My research on "Wu" as intuitive imagination reveals that the frame of yin-yang is more powerful than the Western either-or logic in managing complexity, ambiguity and dynamics in the science today and tomorrow. In particular, the Western scientific microworld is incapable of explaining anything related to life beyond non-life physics and chemistry. Please refer to the distinctions between the Western and Eastern medicines.

Peter Ping Li
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Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Trust Research (Routledge)
<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjtr20/1/1>

 [Comment by Louise S.](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 12]

Great question, K. K. Hwang! Let me apply the yin yang dialectics to comment on the paper by Barney and Zhang (2009). The authors mentioned two approaches: a. applying Western theory to the Chinese context; b. developing a Chinese theory of management, usually not meant for consumption outside the Chinese context, hence generally published in Chinese. The first option a) is what's known as cross cultural psychology; the second approach b) is some type of indigenous psychology, although not the type I practice. The third option c) is a combination of both a) and b), consistent with the both-and logic of yin and yang—this is the type of IP that I identify with. There are advantages in integrating a) and b), since the two approaches complement each other (as yin and yang dialectics would say), with a) long on theory, and short on phenomenology or the lived world, while b) being the other way around. One way of combining the two is to use the indigenous model b) to critique the Western theory in a), on the one hand; and on the other, revise the Western theory in a) to accommodate the indigenous model in b), resulting in a new development in theory. This is what I did with my colleague Nico Frijda (2007), attached:

Frijda, N. H. & Sundararajan, L. (2007). Emotion refinement: a

theory inspired by Chinese poetics. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2, 227-241.

In this paper, We used the Chinese notion of savoring to challenge the psychological theory of emotions, and in order to accommodate the Chinese data, we arrived at a theory of aesthetic emotions, a model of emotions which researchers who study music, etc. have found useful.

Moral of the story: The task of the third option c) does not have to be accomplished by one single brain—team work of scholars from a) and b) would be ideal.

Thanks for the stimulating questions,

Louise  [Emotion refinement](#)

 [Comment by Peter](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 16]

Dear Louise:

Thanks for your response to KK's question. I want to add that the attempt to sharply separate scientific microworld and life world is detrimental to our effort to understand the actually inseparable our life and the context of our life, especially our psychological life.

However, the frame of yin-yang balancing is NOT both-and because both-and denies the inherent tension or conflict between two opposite elements. The frame of yin-yang balancing is "either-and" in the sense that it not only accepts the inherent tension between opposite elements but also embraces the inherent synergy between opposite elements. The way the frame does both is to treat both tension and synergy as partial in a relative term rather than fully in an absolute term. That is the unique value of yin-yang balancing as best illustrated by the yin-yang symbol. Anyone looks at the symbol for a whole can figure out the profound implications of the frame as compared to Aristotle's either-or logic and Hegel's dialectic logic.

For more details, please refer to my 2011 paper in *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*.

Peter

 [Comment by K. K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 16]

Dear Peter,

Thanks for your comments on my perspective of yin-yang. Attached please find an article in which I elaborated on the necessity of distinction between scientific microworlds and lifeworlds for the development of IP. Here I'd like to emphasize that the construction of scientific microworld is a product of Western civilization, particularly after the Renaissance.

China certainly has its own science. The traditional Chinese science includes Chinese medicine, agriculture, astronomy, architecture, etc., all of which have been constructed on the cosmology of yin-yang while widely used by Chinese people in their lifeworlds until today. However, the traditional Chinese science is essentially different from modern Western science. In his study of Science and Civilization in China, Needham distinguished these two kinds of science as organic science and mechanic science, respectively.

If Chinese people are able to learn the Western philosophy of science in constructing scientific microworlds, it is very likely for Chinese culture to incorporate the best of Western civilization. But, I don't think that anyone can develop modern mechanic science from the cosmology of yin-yang.

I'm expecting to hear more discussions on this topic from you all.

All best,

K. K. Hwang  [Merit or Mistake](#)

 [Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 16]

Dear KK:

You are right that the scientific approaches of the West and the East differ from each other. The modern science was born only in the West due to its historical and cultural contexts.

However, the emerging scientific paradigm since the quantum physics (with Niels Bohr in Denmark as a key figure in this shift) is shifting away from the mechanical scientific tradition of the West toward a mix of the Western and Eastern approaches. This is a good news for the East: the revival of organic approach to science.

I admit that the Eastern approach alone is NOT sufficient for the emerging new science, but the Western scientific tradition is NOT sufficient either. We need a good balance of the two for the future. This mix or balance applies to all fields of research, including psychology.

The best indigenous research is one that contributes to the geocentric body of literature beyond its narrow application to the local phenomena in the local context. I am in support of Louise's approach to indigenous research.

Peter Ping Li

 [Comment by Louise S.](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 16]

Dear K. K., Peter, and All,

Let me first respond to Peter's statement that

>the frame of yin-yang balancing is NOT both-and because both-and denies the inherent tension or conflict between two opposite elements. The frame of yin-yang balancing is “either-and” in the sense that it not only accepts the inherent tension between opposite elements but also embraces the inherent synergy between opposite elements.

Peter’s point is well taken, however “not only... but also” is encompassed by “both and” in English. I prefer to use standard English for two reasons: a. it has wider circulation than any newly coined terminology; and b. the problem of simplistic interpretation of cultural terms lies much deeper than can be solved at the semantic level. More on the simplistic interpretations of culture later.

Now I attempt to answer K. K. Hwang’s questions concerning the relationship between the scientific microworlds and lifeworlds. Applying the yin yang logic, I first examine the intrinsic conflict or incommensurability between main stream psychology and culture, and then explore ways of creating a synergy between the two.

First, intrinsic conflict between psychological science and culture. A case in point is the list approach to culture, which is prevalent in cross cultural psychology, possibly due to the Western analytical way of thinking. The list approach decomposes cultural phenomena into an aggregate of components, such as cognitive attention, locus of control, self construal, etc. One major problem with this approach lies in its inadequate treatment of indigenous cultural categories. Cultural categories are tools for thinking, as Vygotsky points out; and as such serve a similar function as the proverbial hammer which brings about a unique mental world for the toddler, who thereby sees everything as a potential nail. When decomposed to a list of attributes, cultural categories lose their structural integrity to serve as the entry points to unique mental worlds, which, according to Shweder and other anthropologists, constitute the essential function of cultures.

For illustration of the intrinsic tension and conflict between mainstream psychology and culture, consider the treatment of Zhong Yong, the Chinese principle of the golden mean, in the following article:

Ji, L-J, Lam, Q., & Guo T. (2010). The thinking styles of Chinese people. In M. H. Bond (Ed.), *Handbook of Chinese psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This otherwise excellent paper misses out one major dimension of the Zhong Yong thinking, namely the inner versus outer distinction, probably because this distinction is not on the list of attributes in cognitive psychology. Of course, if the authors consulted the scholarship on the ancient text of Zhong Yong, they would have been advised by Tu (1989) of the Confucian gentleman’s cultivation of his inner self: “Since he is absolutely serious about the quality of his being, as it manifests itself in the innermost sphere of feelings and thoughts, he is extremely attentive to the real

world within” (pp. 19-20). Tu goes on to say that “Self-knowledge is a prerequisite for a fruitful encounter with the external world” (p. 20). Tu’s exegesis suggests that “emotional refinement” (Frijda & Sundararajan, 2007) would be a more appropriate term for the expression of “moderate” emotions that Ji et al. (2010) attribute to the Chinese notions of harmony and the golden mean. This raises the question as to whether emotion moderation of the Chinese results in more refined and differentiated experience or more blunted, less differentiated affect. A structural analysis of the Chinese notions of harmony (Sundararajan, in press) suggests the possibility that emotional refinement rather than blunting is a more likely outcome of the Zhong Yong legacy on Chinese emotions. But such fine distinctions in moderate emotions get lost when the cultural phenomena are processed through the grid of cognitive psychology and come out as a list of traits--holistic thinking, belief in change, belief in compromises, and so on. The result is that we know more intuitively how the toddler feels with a hammer in hand, than how the Chinese think and feel when “moderating” their emotions.

Next, how do we create a synergy of scientific psychology and culture? I can think of two possibilities: One is to ground existing science in culture; the other is to develop an alternative framework to the list approach to culture. First, grounding science in culture. I believe that the list approach in combination with the thin slice of life, another prevalent research approach in mainstream psychology, is a recipe for cherry picking the data. Remedy lies in approaches that foreground the complexity of culture, for instance the “thick description” of Geertz, the phenomenologically oriented approaches, and the “history of ideas” approach that pays special attention to the epistemology and intellectual history of a culture. My colleague and I have used the history of ideas approach in comparing emotions, East and West, attached:

Averill, J. R., & Sundararajan, L. (2006). Passion and Qing: Intellectual Histories of Emotion, West and East. In K. Pawlik & G. d'Ydewalle (Eds.), Psychological concepts: An international historical perspective (pp. 101-139). Hove, UK: Psychology Press.

The list approach needs not be abandoned. If the research is firmly grounded in the epistemology and intellectual history of a culture, it is harmless to make use of the list approach of cognitive psychology. I have made use of cognitive psychology to shed light on the differences between two collectivistic cultures: China and India:

Sundararajan, L. (2010). Two flavors of aesthetic tasting:

Rasa and savoring/A cross cultural study with implications for psychology of emotion. *Review of General Psychology*, 14, 22-30.

lastly, K. K. Hwang asked whether mainstream psychology can model the yin yang thinking. My answer is no, not within the confines of mainstream psychology. (However, there are compatible paradigms in Western thinking yet to be explored).

The main problem is that the yin yang thinking concerns the relationship between terms-- such relations are rendered invisible when the cultural category that embodies them is decomposed into disparate terms by the list approach in psychology. Charles Sanders Peirce gave an example of what happens when the act of gift giving is decomposed into two disparate acts: “A giving B something C cannot be reduced to the dyadic fact of A’s giving up C and B’s receiving C, for the process of giving is not two linked acts but a single act, unlike the example, given by Peirce, in which A lays something down and then an hour later B comes by and picks it up” (Parmentier, 1994, p. 34).

Theories that can capture relationship between terms include mathematical models, structural analysis, dynamical systems approach, and semiotics, to name just a few. One seminal contribution to relational thinking is Fiske’s model of relational cognition. Unlike the one size fits all approach of Nisbett, Fiske’s relational models theory delineates the boundaries of relational cognition pertinent to affect, setting it apart from the non-affective cognition that cognitive psychology is more familiar with. Completely compatible with Fiske’s model is Hwang’s (2012) matrix of guanxi (affect-based connections). Let’s see what we can learn from Hwang:

How do the Chinese make compromises? Take the middle road, be moderate in what you say or do—this is the Zhong Yong way of thinking, according to Ji, et al. (2010). But doesn’t everybody compromise this way? You don’t need a long tradition of Zhong Yong to do that. Turn to Hwang’s matrix of guanxi, and we realize that it is the inner/outer distinction so central to the Zhong Yong thinking that makes the Chinese compromises unique: Conforming to conventions in one’s outer, public reality, while remaining a non-conformist in one’s inner reality, in one phrase, “obey publicly and defy privately” (Hwang, 2000, p. 172). The possible edge of advantage in cognitive flexibility and creativity conferred by this approach to harmony maintenance can be illustrated by the physicist Nobel laureate Hideki Yukawa (1973), who attributed his scientific creativity to his rebelliousness in a characteristically East Asian way--docile on the outside, but a rebel on the inside: “I can never work on a problem that I’ve been told to solve by someone else. My subconscious always rebels against being ordered to do something. Personally, I look on myself as a docile kind of man . . .” (p. 37, emphasis added).

Of course, not everybody is creative. There are plenty of people in China, as anywhere else, who compromise in an uncreative way. But a scientific theory should be capable of explaining the full scope of the cultural phenomena of harmony maintenance, ranging from the dull to the creative. Hwang’s matrix of guanxi has done that.

Thanks for the stimulating questions,

Louise

 [Passion & Qing](#)



[Comment by K.K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 22]

Dear Peter and Louise:

Thanks for your earnest discussion on the topic of yin-yang thinking.

I understand that yin-yang cosmology is the core for the formation of traditional Chinese culture. I agree that yin-yang thinking is very popular among Chinese people and may help them enhance creativity.

I would like to endorse Louise's arguments about the intrinsic conflict or incommensurability between mainstream psychology and culture. Yes, we have to explore ways of creating a synergy between the two. Bhaskar's philosophy of critical realism, my multiple philosophical paradigms and Louise's suggestions, are all possible ways of synergy.

However, I disagree with Peter's point that the attempt to sharply separate scientific microworld and lifeworld is detrimental to our effort to understand our psychological life. It seems to me that the construction of scientific microworld is the most significant achievement of Western civilization; it must follow (consciously or unconsciously) Western philosophy of science, which can be performed only by a few elites even in the West. This is the reason I believe that social scientists from non-Western countries have to learn Western philosophy of science in order to be creative in their academic career.

I'm now preparing to publish a new book entitled 《超越的本體：牟宗三的科學觀》. I will elaborate my arguments in that book for the audience of Chinese intellectuals.

Best,

K. K. Hwang



[Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 22]



Dear KK:

Thanks for your critical comment on my view on the power of yin-yang balancing for both lifeworld and scientific microworld.

As I said before, the mainstream scientific research has been shifting away from the old Newton mechanic scientific microworld toward a more organic (more toward lifeworld) scientific microworld as a balance between the West and the East as reflected in the quantum physics and the complex theories.

Further, see the AMR paper on the unique value of yin-yang balancing for the solution to paradox. I also attach my recent submission regarding the Chinese notion

of "Wu" as intuitive imagination related to the notions of insight, metaphor, analogy, tacit knowledge, heuristics, and design thinking. In one word, the scientific microworld of creativity in the West is rooted in the Chinese philosophy of wisdom for the lifeworld.

Peter Ping Li  [Wu paper for ML SI 09-16-2012 submission](#)  [Smith and Lewis AMR 2011 with notes](#)

  [Comment by Scott Churchill](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 22]

Hi Louise,

I am reading early Heidegger lectures now in Denmark, and noticing he has similar complaints about how philosophy makes artificial distinctions between pre-reflective and reflective thought, and that deep understanding is a part of life and grows out of life itself - what he called the "hermeneutics of facticity" -- it is not only when the philosopher looks at factual life as the object or content; it is also referring to facticity's own hermeneutics: the self-interpretation that grows out of factual life itself..... and not a subsequent act of reflection upon a realm of experience otherwise devoid of interpretation. Your comment about not reducing Chinese concepts to our cognitive lists of concepts reminded me of this.

Scott

  [Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 22]

Dear Scott:

Thanks for your wonderful comment from Denmark. What a place for insightful ideas! Welcome to Denmark!

I agree that human thinking is never void of human interpretation of human experience and also the unique power of human mind to imagine beyond human experience. The Chinese notion of "Wu" as intuitive imagination captures that part of human cognitive capacity.

To further my argument with KK Hwang, social studies (I deliberately avoid using the term "social sciences" because I sharply distinguish social studies from natural sciences due to the very nature of inter-subjectivity of social studies) has been shifting much more than natural sciences from the scientific microworld to the lifeworld in terms of the shift from positivism to constructivism.

This paradigm shift is related to the debate over relevance and rigor as a duality or dualism. The scientific microworld overemphasizes rigor at the expense of relevance as the focus of the lifeworld. However, as Keynes once pointed out, we should prioritize relevance even we have sometimes sacrifice rigor; we would rather be vaguely right than clearly wrong. The lifeworld relevance should trump the scientific microworld rigor.

Having said the above, I agree that both scientific microworld and lifeworld have their due pros and cons, and none of them is sufficient, so the two should be integrated toward a meta-paradigm. My whole effort devoted to the Chinese indigenous research is in the direction and in the spirit of West-meeting-East, no more and no less.

Peter Ping Li



 [Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 22]

Dear KK and Louise:

I agree with KK about the need for the Chinese scholars and all non-Western scholars to have a solid training in the philosophy of science, and I fully admire KK's effort to promote it.

However, I do not think it is our time best spent on reinventing the wheel because there is a plenty, if not too much, of materials on the Western philosophy of science.

What is acutely missing is the counterpart on the side of the non-Western philosophies of non-science or wisdom as I call it. I think we ought to spend our limited time on adding the post-modern scientific microworld rigor (the positivist modern scientific microworld is too close-ended and close-minded to accommodate the non-Western lifeworld) to the lifeworld relevance of non-Western philosophies.

Peter Ping Li



 [Comment by K.K.Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2012, Sep 22]


Dear Scott, Peter, & Louise:

Welcome to our group, Scott! You raised an issue which is very crucial at the age of "East meets West." The solution seems very simple, though somehow very difficult to actualize.

For Westerners from a culture of individualism, they must know Heidegger's philosophy about the "hermeneutics of factuality" and return to their lifeworlds to look at the factual life. For Eastern intellectuals who are striving to survive in the academic community, they must learn how to construct scientific microworlds by Western philosophy of science. The Chinese notion of "Wu" (intuitive imagination), as mentioned by Peter, will be very helpful to their academic creativity. Please refer to my answer in an interview by Social Epistemology (attached, p.159).

With their yin-yang cosmology, the yin-yang thinking has already been widely used by ordinary Chinese people who are relational beings (Gergen, 2009) and beings-in-the-world (Heidegger).

Best,



K. K. Hwang

 [2011 Calling for Scientific Revolution in Psychology](#)