

 [Some more stimulating reads](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear All,

Congratulations to our Task Force members:

John Christopher, Dennis Wendt, Jeanne Marecek, and David M Goodman.

Their American Psychologist article is now available online:

Critical Cultural Awareness: Contributions to a Globalizing Psychology.

Christopher, John Chambers; Wendt, Dennis C.; Marecek, Jeanne; Goodman, David M.

doi: 10.1037/a0036851

I would like to introduce an intellectual companion to the AP article--an earlier publication by Michael Bond, attached. Below is my review:

Bond, M. H. (2003). Marrying the dragon to the phoenix: Twenty-eight years of doing a psychology of the Chinese people. *Journal of Psychology in Chinese Societies*, 4, (2), 269-283.

This paper by Bond should be required reading for all who aspire to do cross-cultural psychology (hereafter CCP). It will help to set a higher standard for CCP by emphasizing two requirements that are standard in anthropology but not so in CCP: a. Learning the local language, and b. learning about the local culture via immersion. The author adds a third quality which cannot be expected from the run of the mill researchers--a personal passion toward research as a spiritual quest. Because of this third quality, Bond's paper is written with a lucidity and candidness that are rare to find anywhere.

This paper makes a contribution to IP in many respects. First, it models for CCP how the two approaches to culture, CCP and IP, can be mutually complimentary if the researcher has both insight and humility, as evidenced by the concluding statement of Bond: "Cross-cultural psychologists will never get it culturally right, only cross-culturally right" (p. 81).

One important insight the author shares about CCP is that the cross-cultural comparisons are motivated by reasons related to IP--comparison to better understand one's own culture of origin. The author made the insightful observation that comparisons of culture tend to be done along the "axis of apprehended difference" (p. 276). This type of self-reflexive observations on the researcher's own methodology is very helpful, and need to be promoted.

Identifying the axis of comparison is very important. It will make a contribution to the field in a twofold ways: First, to expose one's own assumptions. Along this line, the author mentioned studies he has done to challenge the stereotype-based hypotheses in CCP. I would appreciate a list of references on these studies. Second, to determine which axes of comparison is more productive, since not all comparisons are created equal.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of axis for comparison: one based on surface structure, the other deep structure. Surface structure entails observed differences in behavior; whereas deep structure is theory driven. Comparison based on surface structure could be comparing cats with dogs, resulting in the observation that cats don't bark. I think most of CCP is the kind of psychology about how cats don't bark. Comparison based on the deep structure of DNA would compare cats with tigers, a comparison not possible if one is to be guided by common sense observations. For this theory-based comparison, an advocate is Edward Slingerland, who is known for his agenda of consilience. Check this out:

<http://edge.org/conversation/the-paradox-of-wu-wei>

CCP can learn a few things from Slingerland:

1. "there's got to be a recognition that when it comes to scientifically studying human phenomena, you need to have humanities expertise helping you out. The failure to do that often leads to some really silly looking work, and it turns off humanities scholars." This insight of Slingerland takes us farther than the latest version of CCP, the AP article on the Cultural Lens Approach:

The Cultural Lens Approach to Evaluating Cultural Validity of Psychological Theory. Hardin, Erin E.; Robitschek, Christine; Flores, Lisa Y.; Navarro, Rachel L.; Ashton, Matthew W. doi: 10.1037/a0036532

Typical of mainstream psychology, this approach seeks validation within the loop of hypothesis testing and does not bother to check with other scholars from the humanities.

2. "The people living today are only a small fraction of the people who have ever lived, and we don't even study a small fraction of that fraction, which just study this little weird part of that fraction." This insight of Slingerland challenges the obsession of CCP on contemporary practices of a population, practices which constitute not "a thin slice of life" so much as a sliver of an iceberg.

All of these insights are foreshadowed in Michael Bond's work. This makes Bond a nice bridge between CCP and IP, an ideal interface that we do well to take advantage of.

Looking forward to your comments,

Louise

 [JPCS article](#)

 [Comment by Meetu Khosla](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear Louise,

Hi. How are you?

Indeed a very powerful article, thought provoking and rebellious. The authors have been very courageous in stating the limitations of the western perspectives in counselling, highlighting

the need for broadening the vision of psychology, particularly giving importance to indigenous cultures, and the need for merging the understanding across cultures. Though I felt that it is moral obligation that drives the individual to behave in a particular way as ascribed by the society or culture one belongs to. Hence if moral vision determines one's future or way of life, its moral obligation that determines the path.

Warm Regards,  
Meetu

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 [Comment by Peter Ping Li](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear Louise:

Thanks a lot for sharing the link about the paradox of wuwei. I enjoyed reading it greatly. I strongly recommend it to anybody who is interested in a new perspective, especially a powerful Eastern perspective.

Peter Ping Li  
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 [Comment by K. K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear Louie and all,

In echoing to Louise's discussion on the dialectical relationship between CCP and IP, we just published a special issue in Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour.

As you can see from doi of those attached articles, the approach of IP advocating for a kind of cross-cultural comparison on the ground of deep structure of universal mind, which may provide a more fair and genuine cultural understanding for non-Western cultures.

Best Regards,  
K. K. Hwang  
kkhwang@ntu.edu.tw

 [Comment by Maureen O'Hara](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Wonderful collection of an important discussion. Thank you all.

mohara@nu.edu

 [Comment by Li, Wendy](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear colleagues

To reflect the dialectical relationship between CCP and IP, I will deliver a new subject entitled Intercultural Psychology next semester. I will report how it goes in the second part of the year. J

Regards  
Wendy

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 [Comment by Emmy van Deurzen](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

HI

Fascinating contributions. This group is certainly breaking new ground and pooling ideas and energy to make a difference to the way in which psychology is practised.

I hope very much that some of you may want to offer a symposium about these important ideas to the forthcoming First World Congress for Existential Therapy, which will take place in London in May 2015.

Several of you are on the scientific committee, but please note that proposals for a symposium or workshop will need to be submitted via our website before 1 July.

Early bird tickets will run out on 13 June, so if you intend to come, do book your ticket now.

The website is [www.existentialpsychotherapy.net](http://www.existentialpsychotherapy.net)

Looking forward to meeting some of you in London.

best  
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 [Comment by K.K. Hwang](#) by Louise S. [2014, Jun 02]

Dear Emmy:

Thank you for your encouragement and information.

I hope some of our members will interest in this symposium.

Anyway, thank you very much.

Best regards,  
K. K. Hwang