

Teo, T. (2011, August). Discussant. In L. K. W. Sundararajan and A. J. Marsella (Co-chairs), Reclaiming world and culture: Indigenous psychology in the globalizing era. Symposium conducted at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

Comment

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Instead of addressing each paper individually I try to identify some general problems and lacunae. In doing so, let me first take the role of a historical-theoretical psychologist and then the role of a critical psychologist.

(a) Tradition is important (so Gadamer) and I take an interest in Immanuel Kant (my own indigenous background) despite his striking ethnocentrism and racism that can be found in his anthropological writings. But his epistemological writings still provide tools for a critique of indigenous reason. With Kant, I would ask: What are the conditions of the possibility of indigenous psychologies?

My argument is that indigenous psychologies need to work with abstractions of dehistoricization and dehybridization. I am sure that many indigenous or cultural psychologists are aware of those issues -- indeed all the papers in this symposium address more or less these issues and would challenge this argument - my fear is that these assumptions are forgotten and that processes of essentializing take place, once one practices indigenous psychology.

By dehistoricization I mean that cultures, practices, and ideas develop and that a snapshot at a certain point of time is misleading in so far as it captures a moment that has been changed, is changing and will change in the future. Colonialism, migration, exchange, globalization, intermarriage, power, money, etc. have infused most psychologies with a variety of practices and ideas of which one needs to be aware at all times unless one is willing to dehistoricize theory and practice (see also Bhatia). In that sense there are no real indigenous psychologies but only various forms of hybrid psychologies that may or may not stabilize and adapt to local needs and traditions. Ignoring that fact is what I call dehybridization.[1]Anthony talks about Hawaiian psychologies and I believe that hybridity plays a central role in this context as well.

But there is also a critical function of the concept of indigenous psychology as Anthony and Kwang-Kuo point out so aptly: American psychologies are indigenous, in the sense that they privilege a particular culture and they have the power to do so. Kwang-Kuo and Richard emphasize that point by the notion of "weird samples" that are used in our discipline.

Another condition of the possibility of indigenous psychologies is the historical, context-specific emergence of academic disciplines. Staeuble reminded us that the disciplinary division of sciences is a product of modern society. Thus, the call for indigenous psychologies reproduces a Western practice that led to the establishment of academic disciplines. When Kwang-Kuo "sticks to the discipline of psychology" I hope he is aware that he reproduces a eurocentric and historically contingent model of science. Within Europe, before the 18th century, psychological, anthropological, social, historical, religious studies, etc. of human experience and mental life have been intertwined. [Smith's history of the human sciences instead of a history of psychology]

Kwang-Kuo and Richard also discuss the issue of universality versus particularity. Richard used the convincing slogan of a "universalism without uniformity." Given my own intellectual tradition, I have no problem with universalism, however, with Danziger and Gergen we have also learned to be careful with regard to such claims. If we use the classical distinction between "form and content" (Dilthey), we might conclude that forms have a higher probability of being universal whereas content has higher probability of being particular. But I would add that the question is not whether Kwang-Kuo's theory of the self is universal or not, the question is whether it is universally relevant. Relevance changes over time and locations and is subject to power.

(b) My words of caution are not meant deconstructively but constructively. I understand and agree with many of the intentions of indigenous psychologies.[2] Reflexivity, historical and theoretical works show that the categories and theories of psychology (if they are psychological and not physiological) may be highly culture-specific and time-specific. As pointed out by thoughtful critics (Danziger, Hacking, Sugarman, Martin, Gergen) the categories of the natural and human sciences are not the same, they do not have the same ontological character. Kwang-Kuo shows this for the category pair of individualism / collectivism and Louise warns us about the hegemony of mainstream categories.

But I would like to move away from epistemological or ontological or historical reflections to critical-constructive ones. I would like to address the issue of recognition versus redistribution - discussed in social theory - and its relevance to indigenous psychology -- topics not addressed by the papers in the symposium (maybe Anthony)

The project for indigenous psychology has ethical-political dimensions. Indigenous psychology looks for epistemological justice and, thus, struggles for recognition. Hegel was probably the first to understand that subjectivity depends on intersubjectivity, but more current reflections on this issue are expressed in the works of Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth. Hegel, probably best known in his exposition of the master-slave dialectic [bad translation], discussed social struggles as struggles for recognition (I assume we know who the master and who the slave is in psychology).

Indeed, indigenous psychologies struggle for recognition. Three of the four papers in this symposium show that (it is not a problem for Richard who comes from a different tradition). Recognition demands that psychologists acknowledge the endeavors of different cultures in psychology, and that American psychology, which often enough presents itself as a universal and not as an indigenous psychology, acknowledges the existence of other indigenous approaches. Indigenous psychologists hope that the master allows them to communicate in their own language. Indeed, language is a significant source and hindrance in the recognition of indigenous psychologies as Louise argues so well [translation issues; I have experiences as an editor with this problem].

The master might decide that there is the master's way of preparing food -- and then there are ethnic restaurants; there is one group of people -- and then there are ethnics; there is one psychology -- and then there is indigenous psychology. Even if enlightened liberal or progressive minds understand the limitations of such an ethnocentric approach to the problem, and call for full recognition of indigenous psychologies, in which the communicative power differential and the right to define are challenged, the question remains: Is recognition sufficient for the development of indigenous psychologies? I would add the assumption "recognition is sufficient" to Anthony's list of Western psychology's assumptions. With Nancy Fraser I argue that we not only need recognition as an approach to epistemological justice, but redistribution as well. Whereas recognition is embedded in a hermeneutic tradition, redistribution takes Hegel's master slave dialectic and challenges the political-economic conditions that led to a master-slave division.

Redistribution was discussed in socialist but also in liberal theories (John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin). For Marx it is not about recognizing the slave but to change the ownership of the means of production so that slavery and mastery as such are abandoned. Even if such rhetoric may appear outdated, the issue remains that the problem is not only whether the master acknowledges the slave, the problem is whether the master accepts that there should be no master or slave. This is the crucial point: Western psychologists may not have a problem with the recognition of indigenous psychologies but what about redistribution based on the notion that the master should not be a master at all?

Lessons from affirmative action programs in the US show that people recognize that Blacks have been mistreated (in the past and present). But what support does the notion of financial reparations for slavery receive? What about attitudes when it comes to affirmative action regarding employment or university admissions? What about not only arguing for acknowledging indigenous psychologies in psychology departments - and I understand how difficult this process can be - but also affirmative action for them? What about employment equity for indigenous psychologists, with dedicated numbers for faculty positions, journal space that is reserved for them, program space that is allocated in each division, and a significant percentage of financial support in granting agencies that goes to indigenous psychologists? Recognition is easier than redistribution.

Redistribution is not about charity work, which is based on a paternalistic attitude of recognition.[3] Redistribution would mean that some of the fundamental organizing and funding principles of American psychology need to be changed rather than providing handouts of recognition. The question is how many of us would support such a program? But doing justice to indigenous psychologies requires this redistribution, which is difficult as it affects "my" privileges.

One last note on the future of indigenous psychology. Can we assume that with the economic fall of the master, Chinese or Indian psychologies will be open to include more indigenous psychologies outside of their contexts? I hope so but I would not count on it. The call for recognition and redistribution and an awareness of these problems does not make the slave inherently a better or a just person.

[1] Let me use an example from music. What is indigenous Austrian music? The answer is different if one takes the 18th century or the beginning of the 21st century into account, or rural versus urban Austria, or Eastern versus Western Austria, etc. Is it Mozart, yodeling, or is Hubert von Goisern with his combination of traditional Austrian country music with modern rock, influenced by British and American sources? What is now considered contemporary Austrian music, probably only successful within Austria, is a hybrid form of music, that changes on an ongoing basis. If we move to religion and use Zen Buddhism as an example we know that it draws on Indian, Chinese, and Japanese ideas and practices and materialities of certain times. Martin Baro's liberation psychology, often considered indigenous to Latin America, is a hybrid of liberation theology, itself a combination of Catholicism and liberation theory, psychology, social work and socialist ideas from Latin America.

[2] I also understand that the denial or repression of culturecentrism leads to achieving excellence (the assumption that one's ideas are universal, in religion or science).

[3] Such as: "I recognize your hardship and here is my tax-deductible contribution to your worthwhile efforts."