

***The construction of culture-inclusive theories by multiple philosophical paradigms***  
**Kwang-Kuo Hwang, National Taiwan University**

**Abstract**

In his critical reply to my article, "Linking Science to Culture: Challenge to Psychologists" (Hwang 2013), Professor Allwood (2013) proposed a series of questions and queries about my strategies for the development of indigenous psychologies (IPs) in non-Western countries. In general, his questions and queries belong to three categories: (1) the different concepts of culture between the East and West; (2) the necessity of distinction between scientific microworlds and lifeworlds; (3) the philosophical ground for the construction of culture-inclusive theories. Since all those questions are crucial for mainstream psychologists (MPists) as well as indigenous psychologists (IPists) to understand how to construct culture-inclusive theories of psychology, I will deal with his questions one by one in terms of my approach of multiple philosophical paradigms.

Keywords: scientific microworld, lifeworld, culture-inclusive theories, multiple philosophical paradigms

Allwood (2011) claimed at the very beginning of our debates that his knowledge about IPs had been restricted by literatures published in English, it is very difficult for him to understand my abundant works published in both Chinese and English.

Fortunately, one of my major works, *Foundations of Chinese Psychology: Confucian Social Relations*, has been published in English recently (Hwang, 2012). In order to illustrate the difference between my approach to studying Chinese psychology *vis-à-vis* the previous ones, an international conference on "The Construction of Culture-inclusive Theories in Psychology" was held in Taipei from June 1-2, 2012, at National Taiwan University. Four selected papers presented at the conference along with other four invited articles will be published as a special issue for the *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* with a theme on "Cultural System vs. Pan-cultural Dimensions: Two Approaches to Studying Chinese Psychology". All those publications should be helpful for readers to understand my unique approach in dealing with the crucial issues for the development of IP.

**The Different Concepts of Culture**

*The different concepts of culture*

Let me start my discussion on related issues from the different concepts of culture between me and Allwood (2013), who argues that

[I]n modern societies much of the understanding currently circulating is not from a traditional cultural heritage of the society. Instead much of the current cultural understanding in societies around the world comes from abroad, for example from scientific research done abroad, films and television programs from the US and other countries and from the internet, etc. This would also seem to apply to the meaning content in Professor Hwang's lifeworlds (1).

### *One-Sidedness of Social Science*

Allwood's argument and his conjecture in this quotation are both correct. Nevertheless, it is impossible for any researcher to study culture of such conceptualization as a whole. One must be selective. As which aspect of culture is to be analyzed is determined by the researcher's interest and value judgment. Allwood might recall Weber's (1949) famous saying in his classical works on *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*:

All analyses of infinite reality which the finite human mind can conduct rests on the tacit assumption that only a finite portion of this reality constitutes the object of scientific investing, and that it is only "important" in the sense of being "worthy of being known."

Weber (1949, 71) argued that there are numerous cultural factors which may influence a social phenomenon. The attempt of making an exhaustive description of all the individual components of a social phenomenon without any presumption may say nothing of explaining it causally. It is impractical as well as meaningless to make exhaustive cause and effect analysis in scientific research. We may endow cultural meaning to the scientifically "essential" aspect of reality in the infinitely manifold stream of events which we believe are worthy of our reorganization. This is the so-called "one-sidedness" of social science.

### *Cultural Tradition and Social Change*

My concept of culture is determined by my research interest. As shown in the subtitle of my book, *Foundations of Chinese Psychology: Confucian Social Relations* (Hwang 2012), my research interest is the influence of Confucianism on Chinese social behaviors, but not messages from "films," "television programs" or "the internet."

Long before the publication of *Foundations of Chinese Psychology*, I had already analyzed Taoism, Confucianism, Legalism and Thoughts of Martial School by the same approach in my book, *Knowledge and Action: A Social Psychological Interpretation of Chinese Cultural Tradition* (Hwang 1995). Ideas from such a cultural tradition are prevailing in languages used in lifeworlds among ordinary people in China and other regions of East Asia. Therefore, I totally disagree with Allwood's (2013) speculation:

It seems that Hwang's approach may be most useful for societies with very little contact with neighboring societies and for societies that do not change, or only change very slowly over time (1).

Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, which one of them belongs to "societies that do not change, or only change very slowly over time?" Allwood might argue that China has had "little contact with neighboring societies" before the policy of reform and opening-up. But, which of his sayings can be applied to today's China?

Allwood (2013) stated that:

I find it hard to understand why and how Professor Hwang thinks that his approach to lifeworlds and culture can have any relevance in today's fast changing and globalizing societies (1).

I have strong confidence that my approach to lifeworlds and culture can be applied to China. Is today's China a fast changing and globalizing society?

### *WEIRD Psychology*

... Hwang seems to find it plausible that there are cultures that are individualistic — the Western cultures. To me, as an adherer of a culture concept that stresses the possibility of heterogeneity and variability within cultures, this feels blunt and unsophisticated. The paper by Cross and Madson (1997) arguing, convincingly I think, that women in the US might be just as collective as most Non-westerners are, is an inspiration for doubting an approach that classifies cultures as either individualistic or collectivistic (Allwood 2013, 4).

I am not really concerned whether Western culture is actually individualistic or collectivistic. It seems to me that all human subjects are relational beings (Gergen, 2009). My real concern is the widely recognized fact that most theories of MP have been constructed on the basis of some particular groups with cultures of individualism. For instance, Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan (2010, a, b) indicated that 96% samples of psychological research published in the world's top journals from 2003 to 2007 were drawn from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies, which house just 12% of the world's population. They reviewed the comparative database from the behavioral sciences and found that the WEIRD subjects are particularly unusual compared with the rest of the species across diverse domains including visual perception, fairness, cooperation, spatial reasoning, moral reasoning, reasoning styles, self-concepts and related motivations, and the heritability of IQ. They concluded that there are no obvious *a priori* ground for claiming that such a particular psychological phenomenon is universal based on sampling from such a single subpopulation.

If theories of MP had been constructed and validated with such a WEIRD subpopulation, how can we apply them to women in the US who might be just "as collective as most non-Westerners are?" How can we apply them to people in non-Western societies?

### **The Necessity of Distinction between Scientific Microworlds and Lifeworlds**

As an IPist, my ultimate concern reveals why we have to make a clear distinction between lifeworlds and scientific microworlds. Allwood (2013) is correct in assuming that I am not just writing metaphorically about this issue but literally intend what I write. But, he argues that

... [I]t is more likely that understanding used in the everyday world overlaps to some, maybe substantial, extent with researchers' theories and that this is especially likely to be the case in the social sciences where theories are often about phenomena at the same level of granularity as those considered in everyday life (2-3).

#### *Scientific Microworld as a Culture*

His argument is also correct here. But he neglects the necessity for a non-Western IPist to make a clear distinction between these two worlds. As Allwood might remember, historian Danziger (2006) commented on his international survey on origins and development of IP and indicated that:

Scientific knowledge is regarded as the only legitimate kind of knowledge in a disciplinary context, though in other life contexts individual psychologists may well appreciate the values of other kinds of (illegitimate) knowledge (271).

His distinction between the *disciplinary context and other life contexts* exactly corresponds to my distinction between scientific microworld and lifeworlds. All non-Western societies have their own psychologies based on their cultural traditions, which are viewed as "other kinds of knowledge" from the perspective of "scientific knowledge."

When modern psychology was transplanted from its countries of origin to other regions of the world, not only specific items of knowledge and specific instruments travelled; certain norms for the conduct of psychological inquiry, and certain criteria for assessing the legitimacy of forms of psychological knowledge, travelled too (Danziger 2006, 271-272).

For me, the whole package of a well-established psychological theory, including the specific content of that theory, the instruments for conducting research with that theory, as well as the "norms for the conduct of psychological inquiry," constitutes a scientific

microworld with its own specific culture, just as Allwood (2013, 3) argues with a quotation from de Laet's (2012, 424) eloquent formulation: "Science is a culture in culture."

### *Norms for Constructing Scientific Microworlds*

For Allwood, it might be unnecessary to separate scientific microworld from lifeworld, but for other scholars, science as a culture is completely different from cultures of their lifeworlds. Language is the carrier of culture. Various forms of cultural tradition may be transmitted into an individual's consciousness or unconsciousness via the process of language acquisition and cultural learning. Nevertheless, the languages used by scientists in constructing their scientific microworlds are very different from that used by ordinary people in their lifeworlds.

Every term used for the construction of a scientific microworld must be clearly defined, while the language games we use in our lifeworlds are flexible, sometimes ambiguous, and always changing from time to time (Wittgenstein, 1945/1953). The idiosyncratic features of scientific microworld have attracted earnest attention from a group of outstanding philosophers. They tried not only to describe its features from various perspectives, but also to examine the "norms" for its construction. Their diligent works have constituted the academic tradition called philosophy of science.

For non-Westerners, science is something imported from the West, which is alien to their own cultural tradition. Non-Western countries certainly have their own science, but they are not "modern science" in the Western sense. For instance, China has its unique tradition of *organic science* (Needham, 1969, 1970), but it is essentially different from the Western *mechanic science*, thus cannot be easily understood by most Westerners.

### *In Expectation of Scientific Revolution*

When modern psychology was transplanted from its countries of origin to other regions of the world, many non-Western psychologists found the imported knowledge of psychology to be irreverent, inappropriate, and cannot be applied to their home countries. Such dissatisfaction led to the indigenization movement of psychology in different regions all over the world since the 1980s (Allwood & Berry, 2006).

Viewing from Kuhn's (1969) philosophy, the emergence of the indigenization movement in psychology implies that the implantation of Western paradigms into non-Western countries has encountered numerous anomalies waiting for a scientific revolution.

However, "norms for the conduct of psychological inquiry" may have various implications for different psychologists. Most researchers of IP advocated for the bottom-up approach of developing theories on the basis of local phenomena, findings, and experiences by the research methods appropriate in their cultural and social contexts. They have conducted numerous empirical researches, accumulated a lot of empirical data,

and constructed many substantial theoretical models. But, the idiosyncratic findings of IPs are too fragmentary to be understood by outsiders of a particular culture, needless to say their lack of competitiveness with the dominant Western paradigms of psychology.

### *Philosophy of Science*

As an IPist who has decided to establish autonomous social sciences for non-Western countries (particularly for China), "norms for the conduct of psychological inquiry" mean various philosophies of science for constructing scientific microworlds to me. When I was interviewed by two representatives from *Social Epistemology* (Evenden & Sandstrom, 2011), I mentioned that the fundamental barrier for Chinese social scientists to make a genuine breakthrough in their research works is a shortage of comprehensive understanding on the progress of Western philosophy of science which is the essential ethos of Western civilization.

All knowledge sought and taught in colleges in the West has been constructed on the grounds of Western philosophy. In order to help Chinese young scholars understand the progress of the Western philosophy of science, I spent more than 10 years writing a book entitled *Logics of Social Science* (Hwang, 2009, 2013). In the book, I tackled different perspectives on crucial issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology which had been proposed by 18 representative Western philosophers in the 20th century. The first half of the book addressed the switch in the philosophy of natural science from positivism to post-positivism. The second half expounded the philosophy of social science including structuralism, hermeneutic and critical science.

### **Multiple Philosophical Paradigms**

Allwood (2013) is correct in his conjecture:

It seems that Professor Hwang has constructed his own microworld of the research theories and models he writes about. However, the similarity between the features of Hwang's microworlds and researchers' theories and models of the world in actual research, seems as argued above, at best, very weak (3).

### *The Uniqueness of my Approach*

I think I am the only psychologist in this world who has developed the approach to construct culture-inclusive theories for studying Confucian cultural system as evident in my book, *Foundations of Chinese Psychology* (Hwang, 2013). The uniqueness of my approach might be difficult for Allwood to understand. He proposed a series of questions that must be answered seriously and point by point for the sake of understanding my unique approach.

I object to this characterization of my culture concept because the *lifeworld* is a phenomenological concept deriving from the philosophy of Edmund Husserl to whom professor Hwang also gives reference in other texts (e.g., Hwang 2006). The aim of Husserl's philosophy was, at least initially, to a large extent to find apodictic knowledge (necessary knowledge that cannot be doubted since it cannot be otherwise) (original emphasis, 3).

Here Allwood is correct in saying that the lifeworld in a phenomenological concept is derived from Edmund Husserl's philosophy. My concept of scientific microworld is also derived from Husserl's (1936) concept of microworld. I modified it and elaborated on it in my previous work (e.g., Hwang, 2006) as Allwood mentioned, but I do not stick to *phenomenology* or any single philosophy. In my long-term struggle to overcome the difficulties encountered by most non-Western IPist in promoting the IP movement, I found it necessary to use various philosophies of science to deal with different issues. Therefore, I initiated and advocate my own strategy of *multiple philosophical paradigms* (Hwang, 2013).

#### *Anti-Positivism*

*Taking Foundations of Chinese Psychology* (Hwang, 2012) as an example, I can illustrate my approach and answer Allwood's questions in a most clear way:

In (2006) he suggests that the philosophy of constructive realism should be used by the IPs and I have earlier critically discussed some tenets of Hwang's version of *constructive realism* (Allwood 2011b). In his 2010 article, which repeats much of what was said in 2006, Hwang argues that Popper's *deductive approach* to science, in contrast to what he calls an *inductive approach*, is what is needed for the indigenous psychologies to attain the goal of a universal psychology. He charges that many of the major approaches in the indigenous psychologies utilizes an inductive approach which he, in different places of the article, describes as having a "dubious" feasibility (2010, 3, with respect to Berry's "derived etic approach"), "subject to the dilemma of the inductive approach" (3, with respect to Enriquez "cross-indigenous method"), "His approach also implies the potential difficulty of using an inductive approach" (4, with respect to Ho's "meta-theory approach"), and "His approach is very similar to the derived etic approach advocated by Berry" (2010, 4, with respect to the approach of K.S. Yang). For example, with respect to Ho's approach, Hwang asks "To what extent should the target universe of such a mini-metatheory be expanded to include all known cultures in the world?" (4). (original emphasis, 8)

Allwood is correct that my posit of anti-positivism in promoting IP is firm and consistent.

In brief, it seems that professor Hwang has the same worry as Popper had about verificationism, namely that we can never verify a theory since there is no guaranty that the next culture we examine in the future ("the next swan", or item) will follow our theory about the universal mind (or whatever is proposed in our theory). For example in (2006, 79) Hwang argues, "Strictly speaking, indigenous psychologists cannot attain the goal of building theoretical models for a global psychology through an inductive approach". (8)

Though I advocate for a posit of post-positivism, my approach of multiple philosophical paradigm has never ended up with deductive falsification (Hwang 2012 a, b):

By giving up inductionism (a "positivistic" approach), Popper and Hempel attempted to keep the (positivistic) ambition to come close to a fully decidable science. However, Popper's deductive falsification approach has been heavily criticised in different ways (for example, experiments that seem to falsify a theory may themselves be defective in one way or another) and falsificationism and deductivism does not seem to be a realistic way to save us from the possibility of being wrong in the empirical sciences (Allwood 2013, 8).

#### *Face and Favor Model*

I admire Popper's (1972) philosophy of evolutionary epistemology and use it frequently to explain my anti-positivist position. Nevertheless, giving up the positivistic approach of inductionism does not imply that I embrace only his deductive falsificationism. Allwood is correct in saying that my recommendation for the IPists is:

What they can do is use their creative imagination or critical rationality to construct a formal theory on the psychological mechanisms of the universal human mind that apply to various cultures, and then use it as a framework for analyzing the specific mentalities of given cultures. (2006, 79)

In accordance with the principle of cultural psychology: "one mind, many mentalities" (Shweder et al., 1998), in my book, *Foundations of Chinese Psychology*, I advocated that the epistemological goal of indigenous psychology is to construct a series of theories that represent not only the universal mind of human beings but also the particular mentality of people within a given society. On the basis of this premise, in Chapter 4 of my book, I explained how I constructed the theoretical model of "Face and Favor" that was supposed to represent the universal mechanism for social interaction.

In Chapter 1 of another book, *A Proposal for Scientific Revolution in Psychology* (Hwang, 2011a), I also proposed a "Mandala Model of Self" (unfortunately, this book is only in

Chinese, but a short version of the Mandala Model is available in English, see Hwang, 2011b).

### *Texts of Confucian Classics*

Both of those two models had been constructed by creative imagination. The four kinds of interpersonal relationships in Figure 1, namely, expressive tie, mixed tie, instrumental tie, and the relationship between petitioner and resource allocator, are isomorphic to the four elementary forms of social behaviors which had been revealed by Fisk (1991) through his intensive review over previous literatures of psychology, anthropology, and sociology (Sundararajan, 2012). Thus we may conclude that both my "Face and Favor" model (Hwang 1987) and Fiske's (1991) classification system represent universal mind of human beings for social interaction. The difference between our works lies in the fact that Fiske's classification system provides an excellent taxonomy of elementary forms of social behaviors, while my "Face and Favor" model represents a universal mechanism for social interaction; its significance should be understood in the context of Critical Realism (Bhaskar, 1975).

Epistemological uncertainty may be unescapable in this context and may be a condition that is characteristic of Mankind's epistemological position. However, this conclusion does not mean that we need to end up in "historical-hermeneutic science" as Professor Hwang seems to fear. (Allwood 2013, 8)

I don't think historical-hermeneutic science is something which should be "feared" by any social scientist. My approach of multiple philosophical paradigms argues that IPists must utilize adequate philosophical paradigm to deal with the specific issue they face. In Chapter 5 of my book, *Foundations of Chinese Psychology*, I used my "Face and Favor" model as a framework to analyze the texts of pre-Qin Confucian classics by the method of hermeneutic.

### *Two Naturalistic Objects*

Instead I suggest (in line with Gadamer) that a text provides cues for interpreters of meaning, such as humans (and maybe computers). The interpreter then uses the cues from the text to construct an interpretation of the text. This interpretation can vary depending on the preunderstanding (categories, concepts) available to the interpreter. Thus, in this example both the text (seen here as systematically organized print on paper) and for example a brain, are needed as "substrates for meaning". In brief, there was no ambiguity in my fourth assumption, the problem was that Professor Hwang did not see that, understood on a more abstract level, both brains and texts have something in common, namely that they can both be seen as naturalistic objects. (Allwood 2013, 9)

I agree with Allwood's argument that both the "text" and the "brain" are needed as "subtracts for meaning." In my research works, I used "the cues from the text" of Confucian classics to construct an interpretation of the text, while the preunderstanding for my interpretation is the "Face and Favor" model. In other words, my "Face and Favor" model represents the "*brain*" (universal mind) for social interaction, while the Confucian ethics for ordinary people represents the "*text*" of pre-Qin Confucian classics to be analyzed. Both of them are isomorphic and can be seen as *naturalistic objects*.

Allwood's fourth assumption is the most important and most difficult for me to overcome in my career of constructing culture-inclusive theories for Chinese psychology. I strongly agree with his argument that "both brains and texts have something in common." Nevertheless, his assumption has been my conviction to developing Chinese psychology for more than thirty years.

### *Deep Structure of Confucianism*

Viewing from the perspective of analytical dualism (Archer, 1995), reinterpreting texts of pre-Qin Confucian classics may enable us to understand the cultural system or the morphostasis of Confucianism. Its derivatives as a consequence of socio-cultural interaction at different historical stages of China or in other East Asian regions constitute its morphogenesis.

The inner structure of Confucianism thus obtained and detailed in Chapter 5 of my book is what I mean by the "deep structure" of a cultural tradition. Unfortunately, this concept seems to escape Allwood's attention:

Cultures, according to Hwang, have a deep-structure. For example, he "strongly agrees" with Greenfield (2000) when she argues for "the idea of a deep structure of culture" (2006, 90-91). Moreover, Hwang (e.g., 2011) also argues that "cultures" have "formative" periods. Thus, put together, it seems that when Professor Hwang "theorizes about culture" he constructs a microworld where cultures are seen as consisting of a core of idea elements ("tradition", "cultural heritage") that have a deep-structure and that tend to exist over long time periods and often in a specific geographical place (2013, 4).

This is exactly what I have accomplished and what I want to present in my book, *Foundations of Chinese Psychology*. The importance of my contribution can be understood by a senior IPist, John Berry (2000). The coauthor of Allwood's international survey on the IP movement (Allwood & Berry, 2006), Berry has keenly indicated the most significant trend of the IP movement all over the world:

In the 1970s, a move was afoot to emphasize more the symbolic view, in which culture was to be found within and between individuals in their shared meanings and practices ... This emergent view (in anthropology) of

culture as 'an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols' (Geertz, 1973, p. 89) and as 'a conceptual structure or system of ideas' (Geertz, 1984, p.8) has given rise to a more cognitive emphasis in psychology on the intersubjective, interpretive conception of culture, now broadly adopted by those who identify with 'cultural psychology' (Cole, 1996; Shweder, 1990) (Berry 2000, 199).

### **Conclusion: Culture-Inclusive Theories of Psychology**

My long-term efforts to "theorize about culture" have been exerted to actualize the dream of IPists by the disciplinary tradition of scientific psychology. Through my unique approach of multiple philosophical paradigms, I was able to construct a series of culture-inclusive theories of social psychology on the presumption of relationalism, which had been utilized to integrate previous empirical research findings on the topics of social exchange, face, achievement motivation, organizational behaviors, and conflict resolution in Confucian society in *Foundations of Chinese Psychology* (Hwang, 2012).

I agree with Allwood's argument that "epistemological uncertainty" may be a "condition that is characteristic of mankind's epistemological position." With an examination of my previous works which had been published in English, Allwood stated that:

It remains an open question how large proportion of the current meaning content of a society's culture that derives from the "cultural heritage" of the society. It also remains an open empirical question as to which extent the cultures of societies have deep structures that exist in relatively stable form over long time periods and, if so, how important such structures are for people's conduct (2013, 4).

I have strong confidence that my theoretical construction as well as my empirical works serve to reduce the epistemological uncertainty in the aforementioned domains of research to a great extent. With my book as an exemplar and with an interpretation of my approach of multiple philosophical paradigms (Hwang 2013), I await eagerly again Allwood's responses to my answers to his open questions.

**Contact details: [kkhwang@ntu.edu.tw](mailto:kkhwang@ntu.edu.tw)**

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