Indian Psychology in the Inter-Cultural Context: From Assimilation to Integration and Beyond

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Abstract This chapter addresses Sinha's clarion call for "the integration of modern psychology with Indian thought" (Sinha in Journal of Humanistic Psychology 5:6–17, 1965). It discusses the distinctive features of psychology in Indian thought, often called "Indian psychology" on the one hand, and those of modern psychology on the other. In addition, it clarifies what "integration" means. In this context, it first explores the main features of Indian psychology and place them in the current international context. This chapter is divided into four sections. In the *first* section, a conceptual model for the understanding of the concept of "integration" is proposed by adapting John Berry's model for interactions between immigrant and host cultures to suit the relationships between Indian and Western approaches to psychology within their respective knowledge systems. In the *second* section, an attempt is made to sketch out historical background which has shaped the relations between Indian and Western psychology. In the *third* section, three different ways in which Indian and Western approaches have been combined in studies of emotion are discussed. The *fourth* and final section is devoted to a discussion of a set of relevant issues.

Keywords Inter-cultural relations model · Indian versus Western Psychologies · Integration · Cross-cultural psychology · Indigenous psychology · Emotions

Adapting Inter-Cultural Relations Model to Relations Between Indian and Western Psychologies

Indian and Western psychologies in the inter-cultural context

There should be no doubt anymore that there is a treasure trove of psychological insights, theories, and techniques handed down to us in the long and rich intellectual and spiritual traditions of India. This legacy has been eclipsed by the Western models imported into India starting a hundred years ago with the founding of the first psychology laboratory in Kolkata. The indigenous legacy has been less obvious

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than it should be since it has been pushed into a corner, so to speak, concealed under the labels of philosophy, spirituality, and even religion. This situation is a historical product of the British rule, which involved a conflict between Indian and Western cultures. Insofar as psychology in India today is a product of inter-cultural relations, it can be understood within the larger context of the ways in which cultures tend to interact. The Canadian psychologist Berry (2001) has presented a conceptual model that delineates four major patterns in which immigrant individuals and communities tend to deal with each other when caught into an encounter between ancestral and adopted cultures (Fig. 1).

The schematic diagram in this figure is a version of Berry's (2001, p. 618) schematic representation in two circles containing two 2 × 2 tables. Each circle represents four logical alternatives for maintaining or rejecting indigenous or adopted cultures. While the circle on the left deals with choices open mainly for individuals and groups of *immigrants* in connecting with either or both of the ancestral and adopted cultures. The second circle is a similar analysis of the *policies* a society and its government may adopt in dealing with immigrant and native cultures. In this essay, however, I am concerned with Indian and Western models of psychology as *knowledge systems*, and *not* with immigrant communities or policies concerning inter-cultural relations, which are the subject matter of Berry's analysis. Nevertheless, the concept of "integration" applies, in some (rather modified) form to relationships among systems of psychology also. Other conceptual categories used by Berry are also relevant to some extent, but they need to be modified as appropriate to systems of psychology that have developed in differing cultural contexts.

In Fig. 2, I have tried to represent in four quadrangles the four possible alternatives for choosing *either* Western or Indian approaches to psychology, or *both*, or *neither*.

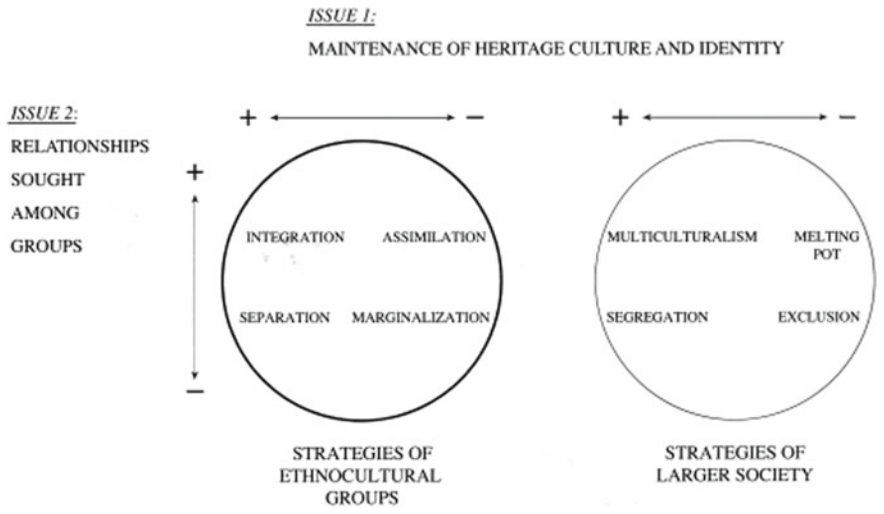

Fig. 1 John Berry's model for maintenance of heritage culture

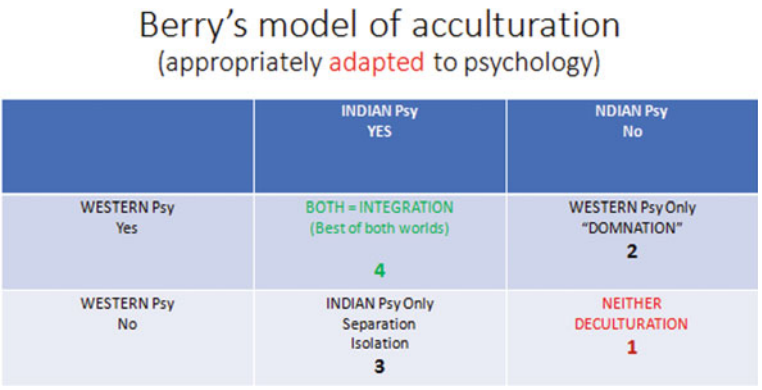

Fig. 2 Berry's model of acculturation adapted to psychology

Quadrant #1 on the lower right corner represents a situation where one chooses *neither* Western *nor* Indian perspectives in psychology. Admittedly, it is very difficult to make sense of such a situation, since no system of thinking can exist without a cultural context, whether Eastern, Western, or whatever. In an attempt to make sense of this alternative let me make a suggestion. It seems to me that, in cultural terms, it implies cutting off one's psychological thinking from its cultural roots. It is like getting "de-culturated" as it were. Now what would de-culturation mean in psychology? In my view, it means rejecting any connection between psychology and culture. Since no one can stand in a cultural vacuum, it implies that one may ignore, or deny off hand, the cultural roots from which one's thinking has evolved. Insofar as values constitute the principal aspect of culture that provide direction to the development of knowledge within its orbit, a "value-free" approach to psychology indicates its de-culturation. Carnap's (1932–33/1959) idea of "psychology in physical language" would fit perfectly in the melting pot of his grand scheme called the Unity of Science (Carnap, 1938/1949). Let me note in this context that, from a Carnapian logical positivist viewpoint, "ought" statements that are suggestive of values (such as one ought not kill or fornicate) are not empirically verifiable and are therefore meaningless. Psychology that follows a Carnapian model aims to formulate *universal* laws that control behaviour that apply equally across cultures. Like physics it admits no cultural or regional variations. One way in which de-culturation was brought about was bring psychology into a laboratory, a specially created zone where contamination by culture and its values can be kept away like a quarantine to keep away from an undesirable disease. Without denying the benefits of keeping values away to avoid unwanted bias and other advantages of experimental methodology, the excessive reactions against negative effects of culture cannot be denied off hand. Indeed, back in the seventies when I started to publicly propose the study of psychology informed by the intellectual and cultural traditions of India, I was told that psychology is a "science", and therefore speaking of Indian or European psychology is nonsense.

Let me not enter here into a discussion of logical positivism, which aspired to a form of psychology modelled after physics. It has been fully dismantled piece by piece by Popper, Quine, and other philosophers. Indeed, the demise of logical positivism was declared back in the mid-sixties by Passmore (1967). Against this background, it is to the great credit of John Berry that right from his seminal paper back in 1969 he admits to the inevitable cultural impact on all approaches to psychology. So, we can now safely go back to Berry's model here modified with a focus on knowledge systems shaped by Indian and Western cultural traditions.

Quadrant #2 represents the situation where psychologists stick with only Western models and have nothing to do with traditional Indian insights in psychological matters. Needless to say, Indian universities have been following Western models to a near total exclusion of indigenous Indian perspectives. This situation is *not* analogous either to the "Assimilation" of immigrant individuals and groups within the host culture, or to a cultural "Melting pot" as in the case of the USA where immigrants are supposed to adopt a Pan-American culture, by suppressing their ethnic cultural roots. In regard to the major part of psychology as commonly practised and taught in India today, I would prefer to call it a case of a near total "Domination" of Western models. This situation is clearly a product of the continuing effects of the British colonial rule. In this context, it would be useful to take a quick look at history of the relationship between Indian and Western knowledge systems during and after the British rule. I shall return to this issue later on in this essay.

Quadrant#3 represents an alternative where one remains within the orbit of traditional systems of knowledge with little if anything to do with Western insights. Indeed, notwithstanding the domination of Western systems, Indian systems of knowledge have continued to survive, if only in isolation and in penury. It should be clear that traditionally the *gurukul* system was the core of the propagation of the traditional knowledge systems, and of Sanskrit the language in which much of that knowledge was expressed along with Pali and Prakrit. This system continues to exist in the form of a few Sanskrit *pāṭhśālā*s and universities (*vidyāpīṭh*s). Traditional perspective on psychology has been part of this system. Although there was no separate discipline called psychology, mind (*citta/manas*) was the focus of Patañjali's Yoga, and quietening the disturbances in the mind by controlling the mental processes was the goal of this system. It is interesting to note in this context that a set of CDs describing the ways for quietening the disturbed mind (*manaḥpraśamanopāyaḥ*) was presented by Kotemane(2013).

Beyond such *gurukula*s, independent scholars groomed within the cultural tradition have continued to publish works expounding Patañjali's Yoga as the main indigenous system of psychology. For instance, Kolhatkar published sometime back in the 1940s a book called the *Bharatīya Mānasaśastra* (exactly meaning Indian psychology), which is a detailed exposition in Marathi of Patañjali's Yoga system.

Although Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras are at the core of the traditional Indian system of psychology, it is not the only system of its kind. Concepts and theories of psychology have been integral part of Indian systems of knowledge within the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions. A survey of the traditional views of cognition, emotion, and will spread across an exhaustive array of texts was published by Sinha (1934/1958,

1961). Ramachandra Rao (1962) presented a historical overview of the development of psychological thought in India, and a few textbooks of Indian psychology have also been published (Kuppuswamy, 1985; Safaya, 1976; Srivastava, 2001). Indeed, aside from such academic exercises, Indian psychology continues to produce new original and high-level contributions to psychology. The case in point is the work of the sage Sri Aurobindo; an overview of his contributions to psychology may be found in Sen (1986).

It should be clear that notwithstanding the continued existence (and even continued—if only slow—growth), it has not made a significant dent on teaching and research in psychology in Indian universities. All the work just cited remains sequestered in isolation from the academic "mainstream" of psychology in India. It presents the separation and isolation of traditional psychology as represented in Quadrant #3.

Quadrant#4 in the schematic table represents a situation in which both Indian and Western models are included, and to some extent at least, an attempt is made to get the "best of both worlds", so to speak, leading to a broader and richer perspective on given issues. This approach, it seems to me, was suggested by the late Professor Durganand Sinha back in 1965 using the very word "integration." This situation is *analogous* to that of immigrants who, faced with two cultures, one of their land of origin and another of the adopted country, pick and choose element, of both cultures and fabricate a composite personal lifestyle. It is understandable how and why Berry considers this pattern of "acculturation" to be the *most desirable* among the four alternatives.

Integration: Examples, Problems, Alternatives

It would be relevant to cite some examples of integration, or bringing together, of Indian and Western perspectives in psychology. One example comes from the Department of Psychology from Allahabad University: Pande and Naidu (1992) did interesting studies integrating the indigenous spiritual concept of *Anasakti,* or nonattachment, with modern methods of scientific psychological investigation. They derived hypotheses from the doctrine of *karma* and from the perspective of *karma yoga* in the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* and tested them empirically by means of psychometric methods. Their approach shows the advantages of combining complementary features of differing cultural traditions. Then there are instances where attempt has been made to straddle across Indian and Western traditions and present their perspectives side-by-side. Rao (2002) brings together in one book perspectives on consciousness from the Western and Indian traditions and shows where the two meet. In my earlier work (Paranjpe, 1984), I have similarly brought together Indian and Western perspectives on consciousness. In my later work (Paranjpe, 1998) I pointed out some complementary features of Indian and Western views on cognition, emotion, and volition. The purpose of citing such efforts is not to provide a survey of a multitude

of such works, but to indicate the efforts in the direction of integrating perspectives across cultures.

Here it will be useful to point out certain revisions and criticisms of Berry's four-fold model that have been suggested in light of some research done in India.

Co-existence as a Fifth Category Added by R. C. Mishra to Berry Model

It is interesting that in his studies of acculturation of tribal communities in Bihar, Mishra et al. (1996) have pointed out that there is a need to add "co-existence" as a distinct category to Berry's four distinct patterns of dealing with differences in culture. In his study of two tribal communities in Bihar, which came in close contact with urban cultures different from their ancestral way of life in the jungles, they chose neither assimilation into the urban culture, nor to remain isolated from it. Instead, they chose to live in a relationship of *co-existence* with urban folks. Mishra's finding thus suggests that "co-existence" may be added as a fifth category, thus extending Berry's four-fold model.

Mishra's work, like John Berry's, is concerned with the relationship *between* two different cultures, suggesting that the two may co-exist. Sinha and Tripathi (1994) point out in one of their papers how mutually contradictory tendencies can co-exist *within the same* culture. Co-existence is an important principle which is at the root of the fundamental principles of Indian psychology, as it is of the traditional Indian world view and culture at large. This issue deserves discussion at some depth, and I wish to get back to it towards the end of this essay. Given my focus here on Indian psychology as a system thought in the context of the conflict of Indian and Western systems of knowledge, it would be useful to identify some important landmarks in the history of interaction between Indian and Western systems of knowledge.

Historical Background of the Relations Between Indian and Western Psychologies

Historical landmarks in India–West encounter in psychology: pre-Independence

Clearly, the first major encounter between Indian and Western systems of knowledge occurred when Thomas Macaulay presented his famous (or notorious) *Minute* to a committee of the British East Indian Company in Calcutta in 1835—some 180 years ago. Many of us lament the extraordinary success of this British strategy. Macaulay's denigration of Indian systems of knowledge is too well known to need any comment here. One way in which the British rubbed salt in this injury was to employ learned Sanskrit scholars only to pay them insultingly low wages and thereby

to "put them in their place" while paying huge amounts to ignoramus young British officers disproportionately huge salaries.

The implications and consequences of the educational policy guided by Macaulay's Minute were not lost on several leaders of the independence movement under the Congress Party. In the early years of the twentieth century, the National Education Movement emerged, especially in Bengal. In 1905, the Bengal National College was founded in Calcutta with Sri Aurobindo Gosh as its first principal. Its very purpose was to promote education founded on traditional Indian systems of knowledge, rather than imparting purely Western education promoted by the colonial rule. As is well known, it is in 1915 that N. N. Sengupta started the first psychology laboratory at Calcutta University; its centenary was celebrated not long ago. It is not so well known and recognized, however, that it is about the same time—in 1916, to be precise—that Sri Aurobindo published his essay titled "Psychology of social development" based on traditional Indian systems of knowledge. This essay was further developed into a book titled *The Human Cycle* (see Purani, 1978). Sri Aurobindo is clearly the greatest and the latest in the long tradition of Indian psychology going back to the Upaniṣhads and Patañjali. Interestingly, it is also in 1915 that Lokamanya Tilak (1915/1956), a friend and colleague of Sri Aurobindo in the freedom movement, published his *Bhagavadgītā-rahasya.* As is well known, this monumental work provides an exposition of *karma-yoga*, a pathway to spiritual development based on principles governing human action. The common perception of this work as only a work in philosophy—or even an ideological tome—hides the fine principles of psychology on which it is based.

The spirit of turning to Indian systems of knowledge continued to flourish in Bengal through the 1930s. It was in 1931 that Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (1931/1954) delivered his famous lecture titled *Swaraj in ideas*. The main point of the talk was that it will be no use to earn a political independence from the British Raj if it involves adopting a completely Western world view at the expense of traditional Indian knowledge systems. In his voluminous work called *Studies in Vedāntism,* Bhattacharyya (1907/1983) explained in detail the philosophy of the Advaita Vedānta and showed how it is superior to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher who was then viewed as the greatest in Western philosophy.

Historical Landmarks in India–West Encounter in Knowledge: Post-Independence

Although Swaraj was earned in India 1947, Bhattacharya's call for "Swaraj in ideas" seems to have been forgotten. Psychology as taught in Indian universities has continued to follow the Western model implanted a hundred years ago by N. N. Sen Gupta. During the decades that followed this early start, more and more of Western models were imported by numerous Indian scholars who were trained in the UK and the USA. That a bulk of psychology in India has followed Western models,

and that it has been imitative and largely irrelevant to the ethos and life in India has been noted so many times. This criticism does not need any adumbration here.

The late Professor Durganand Sinha was perhaps the most articulate critic of the excessive Westernization of psychology in India. Half a century has now passed since he gave a clarion call for the integration of psychology in Indian thought (Sinha, 1965). Sinha was deeply involved in the international scene of psychology, primarily in the affairs of the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology, of which he became the President with Prof. Janak Pandey following him in that position. He has made interesting and important observations about psychology in India particularly within the forum of cross-cultural psychology. I will return to some of these observations later on in this essay while comparing the cross-cultural context with two other forums, namely cross-cultural psychology and conversations of Western psychologists with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Before turning to that international context, let me note two landmarks for the development of Indian psychology within India.

It is by this time about 15 years since an assembly of about 150 psychologists from across India got together and unanimously proclaimed the "Pondicherry Manifesto"[1] of Indian psychology. This manifesto is a significant landmark suggesting that there is an increasing recognition of the contemporary relevance of traditional Indian insights, concepts, and techniques. Indeed, during the recent few years the significance of yoga and various forms of meditation are recognized in many parts of the world. A small but dedicated group of colleagues has pursued the goals set for research and promotion within the field of Indian psychology. Several conferences and seminars have been held, and number of papers, book chapters, and books have been published on various topics in Indian psychology. These developments virtually constitute a "movement" for Indian psychology. There is no place for a survey or overview of these efforts within the scope of this presentation. Just a few publications may be mentioned as notable landmarks: *The handbook of Indian psychology* published about eight years ago (Rao et al., 2008); *Foundations of Indian psychology* (Cornelissen et al., 2011), and *Psychology in the Indian tradition* (Rao & Paranjpe, 2016).

Three Different Approaches to the Study of Emotion

In this section, I wish to discuss three different perspectives on research on a single issue, namely emotion. As we shall see, they will allow a discussion of the methodological and theoretical issues underlying the different perspectives and indicate the different ways in which Indian and Western approaches have been coming together. Here are the three perspectives:

(1) Cross-cultural psychology,
(2) Cultural psychology, and
(3) Dialogue between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Paul Ekman.

(1a) *Cross-Cultural psychology: Assumptive foundations*

In the latest edition of their textbook of cross-cultural psychology, Berry et al. (2011) have clearly stated that "No emotion component has received more attention than facial expressions" (p. 174). In his contribution on emotion in the first edition of the *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology,* Izard (1980) echoes the same view of the predominant focus on facial expressions, and further clarifies that such focus is "particularly well suited to cross-cultural research" (p. 185). That focus on facial expression of emotions continues in the field is affirmed by Mesquita et al. (1997, p. 282) in their chapter on emotion in the second edition of the *Handbook*. It is equally well recognized that Ekman's work is the most definitive contribution to the study of facial expressions of emotion. Against this background, I have chosen to focus mainly on Ekman's work as representative of a cross-cultural perspective on the study of emotions.

The inspiration for the focus on facial expressions of emotion comes from Darwin's classic work on the expression of emotions in humans and other animals, which was first published in 1872. Paul Ekman has a towering presence in this field with extensive studies and numerous publications over decades. Excellent overviews of his work are available in edited volumes published to commemorate a century after the publication Darwin's book (Ekman, 1973), and then again thirty years later (Ekman et al., 2003). Ekman's approach within the cross-cultural framework is based on the assumption that facial expressions are *universal* across the species, and are *innate.* Against this background, the main thrust of emotion within the cross-cultural field is to test the degree of commonality of the patterns of emotion expression in cultures around the world. Ekman's search for universal aspects of the expression of emotions clearly coincides with a similar search that is at the core of cross-cultural psychology.

(1b) *Cross-Cultural psychology: Issues in methodology*

Here it will be useful to take a close look at the commonly used methodology in cross-cultural studies generally, and in emotion studies in particular. John Berry (1980) points out that "cross-cultural psychology is defined primarily by its *method*" (p. 1, emphasis original). The method most commonly used in cross-cultural studies of emotional expression involves a variation of technique originally used by Darwin. As Ekman (2003) explains, the method involves showing pictures and asking subject to name the emotion they express. Since naming an emotion is obviously a problem for very young children and for subjects in preliterate societies, Ekman and his associates used the technique of asking the subjects to choose among two or three pictures that most closely match the emotion supposed to be experienced in the story they were told (Ekman, 1973, p. 210). This method was based on the work of Dashiell (1927), an early behaviourist, and has become known as the "Dashiell Method." The point of this method is to reach out to individuals, young children, and preliterates who may be expected to be least affected by the effects of culture. The idea here is that the "variable" of culture can thus be controlled, and the results can be attributed to universal innate causes. Ekman and a host of other investigators

in the field of cross-cultural psychology have devised a number of intricate methods geared to address several specific issues, which may also be noted here. In their extensive survey of cross-cultural studies of emotion, Mesquita et al. (1997) list the following as the methods commonly used: (a) checking out one of a small set (6–10) of emotion words, which they call the "standard method", (b) rating each expression on a small set of emotion scales, (c) having subjects produce their own label for each expression, and (d) matching the expressions with a small set of brief stories describing an emotional event which, they clarify, is the "Dashiell method" described above (Mesquita et al., 1997, p. 283).

It should be clear that in the methods just mentioned, attempt is made to minimize the use of language, which is a most crucial aspect of cultures. In spite of the use of such studies devised to study emotions, the use of words could not be avoided in cross-cultural psychology. Indeed, there is widespread use of questionnaires and psychometric tests that use sentences as "items" which naturally involve words in one language or other. Quite often, such research instruments are composed in English, and when translated in other languages, difficulties of nonequivalence of terms noted by Wierzbicka (1999) arise. In response, back translations are used to overcome this difficulty. How effective is the method of back translations in minimizing, let alone eliminating, the issue of nontranslatability of emotion words is another question which need not detain us here. On the whole, language is thought of as an obstacle in advancing scientific research across cultures. This attitude is particularly problematic in emotion research insofar as how one *feels* often depends on what one *thinks* about a given situation, which in turn is deeply shaped by the language one uses. This implies, in turn, that what the words we use *mean* to us is important. As we shall presently see, studies of emotion in cultural psychology address precisely this issue of *meanings* of words in shaping of the experience of emotion by language and other aspects of culture.

(2) *Emotion studies in Cultural Psychology: R. Shweder* et al.

While in cross-cultural psychology language is viewed as an obstacle in discovering the *universal* features of emotion based on innate factors, cultural psychology aims a studying the cultural *variations* in the experience of emotion, and emphasizes use and analysis of language. Indeed, the differences between cultural and cross-cultural approaches to emotion are more deeply grounded in the very notion of culture adopted by cultural psychologists. In cultural psychology, culture is not a mere "variable" to be quantified and inserted into a formula; it implies a lot more. According to Richard Shweder, a leader in the field of cultural psychology, culture involves a set of "community-specific ideas about what is true, good, beautiful and efficient". To this he adds Isiah Berlin's words saying that culture involves "goals, values, and pictures of the world" that are "manifest in the speech, laws, and routine practices of some self-monitoring group" (Shweder, 2000, p. 162). Noting that Shweder includes *ideas* about what is true and good as integral part of culture, I would add continual development of knowledge systems as part of cultures. As we shall soon see, in his studies of emotion in India, Shweder and his associates explore not only the values implicit in the meaning of emotion, but also the classical Indian *theories* of emotion.

In an earlier publication, Shweder (1990) clearly articulates his view of how culturally transmitted meanings shape psychological phenomena. He makes a strong argument against the idea implicit in the mainstream of general psychology that there is a "central processor" lodged into the brains of individuals which functions according to universal laws of nature so as to bring about uniformity in behaviours across the human species. His work with Menon (Menon & Shweder, 1994) on the experience of *lajja* among people in Orissa presents an in-depth investigation of the ways in which the experience of emotion is shaped by a host of factors deeply embedded in the historical transmission of *meanings* through not only language, but also through icons and myths transmitted across generations. To help understand this view, it is necessary to take a closer look at this study.

The focus of the Menon and Shweder's study of *lajja* is an iconic image of the Goddess Kali, whose biting of the tongue is commonly viewed in certain communities of Orissa as a prototypical expression of the feeling of *lajja.*

The iconic picture of goddess Kali shows her dancing with her tongue sticking out. This icon is particularly popular in Orissa. The many variations of this image are based the story in which all male gods could not slay the demon Mahiṣāsura, who had become invincible due to boons he had attained. So, they approached Kali and asked her to kill him. In response, Kali transforms herself into a ferocious mode, slays the demon, and in a wanton dance accidentally steps on the chest of her consort Śiva. The biting of her tongue is believed to be an expression of *lajja*, a complex emotion involving shades of embarrassment mixed with shame and other feelings appropriate to her female role.

Menon and Shweder (1994) focus on this iconic representation of the emotion called *lajja* which implies a unique way in which emotional experience of people in the province of Orissa is shaped. They undertook an intensive exploration of the historical roots of the *meaning* of *lajja* as shaped by the story (or the "myth") of Kali's dance. Their inquiry was focused on finding out how the meanings of the term *lajja* are shared in the community all the way from learned men as well as unlettered village folks. To this end, Menon and Shweder examine the texts of Chandi, Devi Mahatmya, and Devi Bhagavata Puranas which narrate the story behind this image of Kali. Their examination of such texts shows that Kali's expression of biting her tongue does not simply indicate what is normally meant by embarrassment or shame in the English language. There are important shades of meaning of *lajja*, which include a distinctively Indian conception of the role of a woman who is expected to be respectful of her husband. Thus, her expression indicates her recognition of the inadvertent violation of the code of conduct prescribed in the Hindu tradition.

A woman's respectfulness towards men is not supposed to imply that women are weaker than men. Indeed, the fact that Kali was requested to kill a demon who could not be slain by male gods indicates the belief that women can be even more powerful than men. It is after demonstrating her superior power through killing the demon that Kali had experienced an uncontrollable rage. And yet, Kali had the power to *control* and override a powerful rage. Women as expected to exercise such self-control and behave in a courteous and graceful manner that befits cultured women. Thus, the image of Kali biting her tongue conveys a few important ideas: *first*, that even

the most powerful emotions can be controlled; *second*, that self-control is not only possible, but desirable; and *third*, iconic representations such as Kali's tongue can demonstrate the ways in which cultures can convey complex and important values and norms such as modesty and courteous behaviour expected of women.

Menon and Shweder's empirical study of *lajja* goes beyond the historical transmission of popular texts such as the Purāṇas. They explore how the stories get embedded in the minds of people in such a way that the culturally transmitted meanings become part of their lived experience, and shape their behaviours in daily life. To that end, Menon conducted extended interviews of a wide array of subjects, ranging from unlettered "ordinary" people, as well as educated members of the community, and even pandits who have expert knowledge of the religious tradition and its texts. To make sure that they reach out a wide range of exposure to cultural themes, Menon and Shweder use a psychometric device of the Guttman Scale to measure the degree of their respondents' knowledge about the meaning of *lajja* to help assess the range of the penetration of cultural meaning in the population at large.

Menon and Shweder's focus on meanings indicates their alliance with interpretive human sciences rather than natural sciences. This stands in contrast with Ekman's reliance on a "hard science" like biology. Menon and Shweder view emotions as an aspect of the *agentic* character of human beings, which militates the common view that emotions *happen* to people as the consequence of a chain of natural causes. In other words, humans are "patients" who must take what they get; one cannot *do* anything about how one feels! Menon and Shweder's agentic view of human beings is close to the traditional Indian notion of karma, which Ādi Śaṅkarācārya defines as the ability to do something, not to do it, or to do it in some other way (See Paranjpe, 1998, p. 327). Unlike the view of science as a "value-free" enterprise which avoids speaking of virtues, Shweder speaks explicitly about virtues such as modesty and self-control which Hindu women are expected to cultivate. Cultures are not simply a type of intervening variables; they are entities with a long history with capacity to shape experience and behaviour through stories and myths that convey core values.

As a cultural psychologist, Shweder goes well beyond culturally transmitted stories and values in his studies of emotion. In his study in collaboration with Haidt, Shweder delves further into the knowledge systems of the Indian tradition (Shweder & Haidt, 2000). To be specific, they focus on how the dramaturgical studies in the tradition of Bharata Muni *conceptualize* the nature of emotions. As is well known, in his dramaturgical treaties called the Natyaśāstra (literally meaning the science of drama), Bharata Muni speaks of, among many other things, how the expression of emotion is guided by social conventions. Shweder and Haidt (2000) explicitly recognize that this ancient Indian account of emotions "compares favourably any contemporary treatise on the symbolic character of emotional experience." They clarify that "It is through an analysis of this venerable text... that we address contemporary concerns" (p. 399).

It should be clear at this point that, unlike the cross-cultural approach to the studies of emotion that tends to ignore the meanings embedded in the experience of emotions, Shweder and his colleagues place meanings at its centre. They not only take the values to be at the core of cultures, they also take into account the knowledge

systems of the cultures and explore how they shape emotional experience. Clearly, the approach of cultural psychology involves a much deeper engagement between the cultural in which studies are conducted than does the cross-cultural approach. As we shall presently see, the dialogue between Ekman and His Holiness Dalai Lama manifests a still deeper level of mutual relation between cultures.

(3) *Dialogue between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Paul Ekman: Focus on emotions*

A new phase of close international exchange of ideas in psychology has begun with the founding of the Mind and Life Institute in 1990 with an office in Hadley, Massachusetts, in the USA and a major centre in His Holiness Dalai Lama's headquarters at Dharmasala in Himachal Pradesh. With its current location in India, and given deep roots of Tibetan Buddhism in the Madhyamika Buddhist tradition of India, HH Dalai Lama's Buddhist psychology may be reasonably included as part of traditional Indian approaches to psychology. With the focus on the psychology of emotion, it would be useful to take a look at the way in which Paul Ekman's work was influenced by his contact with HH Dalai Lama, and briefly examine the implications of this development to inter-cultural relations for research in psychology. The following discussion of this development is based mainly on Ekman's connection with Dalai Lama as described in Goleman's (2003) book titled *Destructive emotions,* and in Ekman's (2008) account of his conversation with HH Dalai Lama given in his book *Emotional awareness.*

The conversation between the two was as extensive as it was open. The format of this discussion gave a rare opportunity for exploring the nuances of terms used in Tibetan and their translations, which are often approximate and can be misleading. Such exploration allowed to significantly overcome the difficult problem of translations discussed by Wierzbicka (1999). There was a lot of attention paid to the discussion on the nuances of key terms such as emotion, mood, loving kindness (*karuṇā*) in English and Tibetan. An important feature of the discussion involved the frank admission by each of the strengths of the other. While HH Dalai Lama agreed that Buddhists can learn a lot about the physical world from science, Ekman agreed that science can learn from Buddhism about the nature of mind. The relationship between them was one of equality and respect. This stands in contrast with the "vertical" relationship that the late Prof. Sinha (1990) noted in much of cross-cultural research—a relationship in which the Western psychologist was in a "higher" position, and psychological knowledge passed in only one direction: from West to East.

Such mutual understanding and respect did not come about without difficulty. At one point, Ekman candidly notes that having heard about his interest in meeting with HH Dalai Lama, some of his fellow scientists warned him saying "Don't talk to Dalai Lama, he will ruin you as scientist. You will become spiritual." This "warning" indicates the deep-rooted enmity between science and religion in the West. It is interesting, however, that a woman scientist's misgivings were removed when she was given to understand that Buddhism does not believe in the concepts of "Creator" or "soul". This latter reaction shows that the scientists' opposition to religion stems

mainly from the Biblical view of Genesis—that God created the world in seven days out of nothing—is untenable in light of the geological estimates of the age of the earth and the Darwinian view of evolution. The idea of soul has deeply religious connotations in the West, and it is not observable, and both these things do not fit the paradigm of science. As Rao and Paranjpe (2016) have noted, religions of Indian origin such as Buddhism and Hinduism do not pose doctrinal difficulties in their relationship with science as do Abrahamic religions, particularly Christianity.

In India, psychology developed closely in relation to various denominations of Indian religions which commonly emphasize spirituality and personal transformation. In his book *Emotional awareness,* Ekman (2008) devotes a chapter to describe in some detail the deeply personal transformation that he had undergone since the time he first met Dalai Lama in the year 2000. He describes it as the "most dramatic change in my emotional life" (p. 227). He indicates that the change process began when HH Dalai Lama held Ekman's hand in his hand which felt warm. After much discussion of how he felt at that time, Ekman describes the experience saying: "I think that what I experienced was—a nonscientific term—'goodness'" (p. 233). When checked to see if other friends of his had a similar experience of feeling good in the presence of HH Dalai Lama, most of them affirmed. Ekman describes how, over the period of several months, his feelings of anger reduced, and he started experiencing "an intense, very unusual feeling, which felt very good; it felt as if it was radiating" (p. 230).

Such a description of profound personal transformation can be easily seen as alien to what studies of emotion in modern psychology, including Ekman's own studies extending over decades. Seen from an Indian point of view, however, such experiences are not unusual; they are commonly found in descriptions of being in the presence of highly spiritually advanced persons. Also common are instances of personal transformation brought about by gurus in their disciples. This issue of personal transformation is interesting when looked at from the standpoint of psychology in the Indian tradition, and it deserves discussion, to which I shall return in the next section.

Discussion

We may take a look once again at Fig. 3, which proposes four prototypical ways in which Western and Indian approaches to psychology may relate to each other. Let us start with quadrant in the upper right quadrant, which indicates "Yes" for Western psychology, and "No" for Indian psychology. It should be easy to understand how psychology as taught most commonly in Indian universities is almost completely Western, which indicates an unquestionable *dominance* of Western over Indian approaches to psychology. This situation is suggestive of a continuing domination of a colonial mind-set involving a sense of inferiority despite seven decades since the end of the British rule. This is quite odd for a country of one-and-a-quarter billion people now aspiring to be a super power.

Image of Goddess Kālī stepping on Śiva's chest

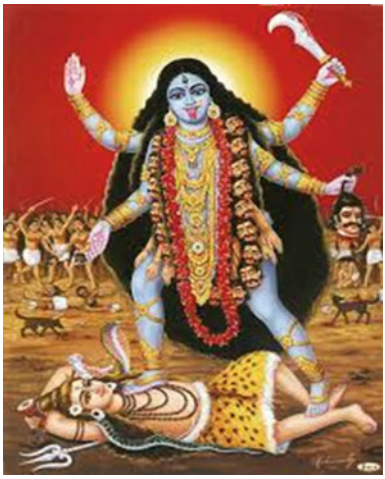

Fig. 3 Image of Goddess Kali stepping on Siva's chest

Part of the reason for the continuing prestige of Western models is their claim to be a "science." Without in any way disputing the intrinsic benefits of science as a valuable approach to knowledge, and while admitting to the stupendous benefits of applications of scientific knowledge through varied technologies, it is useful to note once again that psychology can ill afford to follow the model of physics. While physics can well afford to be neutral to the influence of culture, psychology cannot pretend to be free from the influence of culture by remaining within the sanitized zone of the laboratory. The influence of the surrounding culture cannot be completely avoided; *de-culturation* (see lower right quadrant in Fig. 3) is neither a meaningful nor viable option for psychology.

The side-lining of indigenous psychological insights originates in the denigration of all branches of knowledge in the Indian tradition, whether that be mathematics, astronomy, logic or poetics. Their marginalization has continued unabated as teaching in such areas most commonly occurs in *pathshala*s and Sanskrit universities in *isolation* (lower left quadrant in Fig. 3) from the mainstream educational system with the exception of perhaps philosophy and poetics.

As to *integration* (upper left quadrant in Fig. 3), it implies the amalgamation of mutually compatible elements of two (or more) systems, and in the India/West encounter it requires elements of knowledge systems of both sides. Within the growing field of Indian psychology, we find that initiative has come from both sides, Indian (e.g. Paranjpe, 1998; Rao, 2000), as well as Western (e.g., Miculas, 2008; Taylor, 2008). Among the examples of research discussed in this paper, both Shweder and Ekman are Westerners who have taken the initiative in turning to concepts of

indigenous Indian origin, and they present interesting examples of the ways in which integration is being done. A few observations in this context should be in order.

Shweder's work with Menon and Haidt has some distinctive features. First, they not only show that there are distinctively Indian psychological phenomena, such as the emotion called *lajja*, but also that there are distinctive psychological concepts and theories, such as the concept of *rasa* and a theory of emotion explained in the *Rasādhyāya* section of the *Nāṭyaśāstra.* As to Ekman, he is part of a group of Westerners like Goleman, Matthieu Ricard, B. Alan Wallace and many others, who have taken special efforts to learn from HH Dalai Lama. Ekman's encounter with HH Dalai Lama is particularly interesting in more ways than one. *First*, he is among the most well-known researchers in the field of emotion; he was aligned primarily with the cross-cultural approach. *Second*, initially he had been deeply committed to science and was disdainful about religion. *Third*, despite his strong emphasis on universal aspects of emotions, he got around to recognize the distinctive nature of the Buddhist view of compassion and its emotional underpinnings. *Fourth*, his early work in applied psychology involved teaching policemen and sleuths how to correctly recognize emotional experience from facial expressions of suspected criminals or spies. After his encounter with HH Dalai Lama, however, he realized the importance of a different type of applied psychology, aimed at a distinctively Buddhist goal of enhancing loving compassion. Finally, Ekman's personal transformation implies a most distinctive goal of Indian psychology: to bring about a deeply personal transformation that can be legitimately called a *spiritual* goal. Indeed, for Ricard, B. Alan Wallace, and several others, what apparently turned them to Buddhism was spiritual self-development—which is Indian psychology's quintessential raison d'être. Thus, integration of Indian and Western approaches under the influence of HH Dalai Lama happens well beyond the level of recognition of some distinctive concepts of psychological phenomena, or even some psychological theories. It happens at a very deep level: at the level of the overarching goal of Indian psychology. Insofar as Ekman seems to be convinced of the relevance and need for promoting loving compassion is a concept derived from Indian thought, it is a good example of the goal envisioned by the late Professor Durganand Sinha (1965), namely "the integration of modern psychology *with Indian thought*" (emphasis added). Such integration in psychology has a potential for a most significant service to humanity.

Another look at co-existence *as the fifth category of inter-cultural relations*

As noted earlier, based on his studies of some tribal communities in Bihar, Mishra suggested the need to add co-existence as a category to the four types of relations suggested by John Berry's model. In the context of the relations between Indian and Western psychologies, this idea makes sense in particular. Note, for instance, the ways in which Ekman and HH Dalai Lama differ in their approaches to application of psychological knowledge. While Ekman developed techniques for identifying emotions from facial expressions to be used by law enforcement officers, Buddhism developed techniques of meditation for spiritual self-development and for enhancing loving compassion. These goals are thus quite different, but they are relevant and useful for different needs of the society and the individual. There is absolutely no

need for conflict between such differing goals; both are legitimate in their respective spheres. By and large, scientists like Ekman tend to follow the lead of Francis Bacon, the "father" of modern science, who thought that the goal of scientific knowledge was to be of practical utility to humanity at large. In contrast, psychology in the Indian tradition developed primarily in pursuit of spiritual goals for individual self-development. There is no reason why the pursuit of psychological knowledge must be dedicated to a single goal, and different types of theories and techniques are appropriate for differing goals. There is therefore good reason why different approaches to emotion or any other psychological phenomenon can, and should, co-exist.

An important implication of the idea of co-existence is that there is no need to think in terms of either/or; indeed, the silent preference of integration in Berry's model implies a combination of selected elements of *both* cultures, ancestral and adopted as in the case of immigrants. Sinha and Tripathi (1994) have pointed out that Western psychology has traditionally worked through binary and dichotomous categories such as individualism-collectivism, often thinking in either/or terms. But in the Indian cultural tradition, there is often a preference for the co-existence of not only differing elements, but even opposites. Thus, for example, the family life in India tends to be highly collectivistic in the sense that obligations of each member of the family to other is more demanding than in Anglo-American families. At the same time, however, the pursuit of spiritual growth is left entirely to the individual; everybody is free to choose a spiritual path and a guru that suits him or her, no questions asked. In other words, a highly individualist aspect of life co-exists with a collectivistic one. Therefore, the Western way of rating cultures as either collectivist or individualist, or some way between the two poles, does not make much sense in the context of Indian culture. There is need to go beyond binaries.

Co-existence is possible and beneficial when the differing aspects of different systems are complementary. It should be clear that, by and large, Indian psychology's focus is on inner world, on the Self or the Jamesian self-as-subject, and on self-control. In contrast, in Western psychology the focus is most commonly on observing events in the "outer"—public—domain, and controlling behaviour from the "outside" as in the case of a therapist shaping the client's behaviour. For B. F. Skinner, inner control is a myth as there cannot be a homunculus pulling strings from inside; even controlling oneself must be done only through the environmental manipulation of rewards and punishments. In Patañjali's Yoga, by contrast, self-control is the key, and the individual is thought to be agentic with an "inner" centre of control. Both inner and outer control may be possible and have their uses in different contexts and towards different goals. Such alternatives are complementary and not conflicting. There is every reason for them to co-exist. Why not work towards enriching different systems of psychology through benefiting from each other's strengths?

Taking Another Look at the Concept of Integration

As noted, the barriers between Indian and Western traditions in psychology have begun to crumble; individuals from either side have started to look at contributions from the other side with mutual respect and a spirit of healthy give-and-take. Shweder, for instance, has not only recognized the distinctive nature of psychological phenomena like emotions across cultures but has also recognized the value of the traditional Indian approaches to the study of emotions. Ekman's turning to HH Dalai Lama provides an interesting case where science and spirituality, which have otherwise been segregated, have come together. While HH Dalai Lama has been giving a sympathetic and respectful hearing to advances in "scientific" studies of the expression of emotions and their practical applications, he has similarly treated advanced neuropsychological studies of Buddhist meditation, while reciprocally neurologists have been seriously studying higher states of consciousness attained through meditation. Neither side has indicated a self-appointed sense of superiority of their respective approaches. Such attitudes will pave the way for possible "integration" of select aspects from knowledge traditions on either side so that the blended approaches would provide broader and richer perspectives on studies of specific psychological issues and phenomena. India-West is not the only pairing for exchange of ideas; there are many such pairs which bring into play the insights of their respective cultural traditions.

It seems necessary and useful to recognize integration within specific areas of study at the hands of cooperative research teams composed of members trained in two or more knowledge traditions. The idea of a "grand narrative" producing a "universal" single body of psychological knowledge may be an unworkable ideal since it cannot happen without imposing one particular vision. The universe of psychology is vast and rich; distinct phenomena demand differing conceptual frameworks and matching methods. Besides, there cannot be a single goal for the pursuit of knowledge. Looking back once again at Ekman studies as an illustrative case, his cross-cultural studies of emotion appear to be guided by two related goals: "knowledge for its own sake" inspired by the Greek ideal of the dispassionate pursuit of knowledge, plus "knowledge for power" to be used for public good in the spirit of science initiated by Francis Bacon. In contrast, the Buddhist and most other Indian approaches have been guided mainly—but not exclusively—by the overarching goal of spiritual uplift. There is a plurality of equally legitimate goals for humans, and there is a plurality of ways to attain those goals. If this is correct, then the co-existence of differing approaches naturally follows. The idea of "integration" into a single approach of all the rest would be neither possible nor necessary. Yet, as individuals and small cooperative teams keep pursuing integration focused on shared goals within their specific fields, a broader, richer, and pluralist psychology will become available for all humans across the world.

Notes

1. For a text of the Pondicherry Manifesto of Indian Psychology see www.indianpsychology.net/about_pmip.php.

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