

Indigenous and/or Universal in Counselling: Present-Day Presuppositions

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Abstract

This short paper advocates the importance of the correlation principle of the client/patient's culture and mentality with the applied methods of psychological counselling. In so doing it is argued that only dialectical interaction/combination of indigenous and global, absolute and relative values is most appropriate in every case when cross-cultural differences are taken into account.

Keywords: *Cross-Cultural Psychology; Counselling; Mentality; Values; Indigenous Approach*

Researchers and practitioners working in the field of cross-cultural psychology and psychological counselling increasingly state that, in essence, "all psychologies are indigenous" [1]. The generally accepted postulate that the psyche is socially and culturally conditioned today acquires a special meaning which is specified by a famous Russian thinker G. Gachev via the term "existential culturology". G. Gachev's brilliant idea maintains that "metaphor or image is hidden within the terminology, strict scientific terms included" [2]. Neither Hegel nor Kant presents universal thinking. Their works are marked with the seal of the German vision of the world, just like those by Descartes - of the French, Galileo -of the Italian, Newton - of the English one. This list can be easily continued, including the founder of psychoanalysis and his followers, American behaviorism or German-Russian school of reflexology. Increasingly attracted attention to the indigenous trends in counselling might be considered as a reaction of present-day researches to the aggressive attempts to turn the mankind into a homogeneous mass of nomadic consumers. Perhaps, it would be fairer to believe that it is membership of a particular civilizations and culture that define a set of specific mental features of clients/patients. And taking into account these mental features, in fact, determines the expediency and effectiveness of counselling. Counselling which cannot but be culturally centered.

Otherwise, as J.W. Berry, *et al.* emphasize, the bulk import of the so-called Western psychology can lead to chaos, since the methods and ideology of modern psychology are combined in some cases with the ideological foundation of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Shintoism and even Marxism-Leninism [3, p. 492].

Indubitably, people seek psychological help in a particular situation. But if the situation is a real event, then the experiencing of a psychoemotional state in it is a mental event. A mental event, i.e. an event inside the world of a person requires specific semantics and logics of its interpretation, which might differ from universal interpretative schemes. Moreover, the latter may reflect only ideological rather than strictly scientifically-grounded models of what is indeed happening to a client/patient. That is why modern cross-cultural studies emphasize that naive attempts to confuse science and politics, ideological and mental problems lead to one-sided, limited psychological assistance. Simultaneously, one cannot be aware of the fact that absolute, higher values cannot but exist. And it is these values, not merely those of individual ethnic groups that provide a true perspective for the development of both the individual and

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humanity. To quote Roger Scruton: “And if faith justifies murder, faith is not an option” [4, p.1]. Isn't it worth to believe that it is precisely such universal truths that should guide us in exploring the relationship between global and indigenous values in psychology and psychological counselling?

Conclusion

1. Researchers and practitioners working in the field of cross-cultural psychology and psychological counselling increasingly state that, in essence, “all psychologies are indigenous”.
2. Russian thinker G. Gachev's idea of “existential culturology” allows a deeper understanding of the relationship between absolute, higher values, local ones and their interaction in the mentality of a particular patient/client.
3. Naive attempts to confuse or ignore them in cross-cultural counselling lead to one-sided, limited psychological assistance or to just ideological indoctrination.
4. One of the central tasks of cross-cultural psychology might be the study of their fruitful interaction to increase the effectiveness of psychological counselling.

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