transcultural psychiatry

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ARTICLE

Shifting Identities and Transcultural Psychiatry[1]

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Abstract Transcultural psychiatry needs new theories and methodologies to address a postmodern, postcolonial and creolizing world. This article argues for the need to direct attention towards clinicians' shifting identities and fluid cultures, which significantly influence psychiatric practice. The impact of shifting identities on clinical work is explored using the author's experience with two cases involving domestic violence. In the course of this exploration, key concepts of cultural psychiatry such as 'culture' and 'family' are contexualized and reconceptualized. Sensitivity to our own positionality in global as well as local power dynamics is essential to reinvigorate transcultural psychiatry.

Key words creolization • culture • domestic violence • intermarriage • post-colonialism

INTRODUCTION

When we consider psychological questions under the banner of transcultural psychiatry, our attention is focused, first and foremost, on issues of 'culture.' In contemporary international society, however, there is no phenomenon whose configuration is undergoing a more significant change than that very concept. The meaning of the word 'culture' has been transfigured, new meanings have propagated in many directions and gaps have opened. In fields such as cultural studies, postcolonialism, creole and

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queer studies, and feminist literary criticism, attempts have been made to comprehend this propagation of meaning and these ever widening gaps (Abu-Lughod, 1991; Anzaldua, 1987; Edwards, 1994; Glissant, 1990; Mazama, 1995; Phelan, 1993; Spivak, 1996; Warner, 1994).

Although I have been a fellow traveler with these postmodern thinkers, until recently, I have not been able to bring this work to bear on the field of transcultural psychiatry. This was undoubtedly because I prepared my articles as a dutiful novice researcher in an established field of study. The difficulty of freeing myself from words like disorder, adjustment, maladjustment, symptoms and pathology, the conceptual shackles of psychiatry, was also great. Then, there is the terrible strength of the postmodern idiom that, regardless of its destructive power, avoids clarity and construction.

This article is an attempt to clarify the relevance of postcolonial thought for transcultural psychiatry and for my own clinical and research practice. Even if integration is impossible, it is worth trying to explore the possibilities. After all, this is the very process we are already living.

Creolization and Postcolonial Transcultural Psychiatry

In an article that attempts to rethink transcultural psychiatry from a postcolonial perspective, Bibeau (1997) suggests that in our creolizing world, cultural psychiatry must go through some major changes. Phenomena such as multiple belonging, pluralist frames of reference, transitional communities and long-distance networks are becoming generalized. Identity systems (language, collective representations and symbolic orders), even if they were never closed, have never been as pluralistic and fluid as they are now. We do not have sufficient understanding of how people build identities in these systems, which may lack internal coherence. The heterogeneities, paradoxes and inconsistencies of meaning systems are interconnected with multilayered phenomena from the particular social organizational patterns of local communities to global contests for political and economic hegemony at the level of international society. For these reasons, according to Bibeau, we must rethink the key concepts of culture, representation, structure and identity. He advocates a new approach for transcultural psychiatry that would emphasize the connections between global conditions and local events and the relatedness of the cultural and the social.

Bibeau's insightful and deeply interesting discussion deserves careful reading. At the same time, however, it makes me somewhat uncomfortable. Why is it that he himself can seem so calm and composed, so far from the fray? While the cultures studied in cultural psychiatry undergo creolization, will not those waves engulf the one (including the academic one) in

which he himself stands? Will not those waves threaten his core sense of self or fundamental value judgments? The cause of my discomfort is the apparent fixity of his own identity and of the identity he seems to attribute to his readers.

Of course, Bibeau is aware that people who have been silenced and marginalized are beginning to tell their own life stories, and he emphasizes the importance of rethinking the right to represent the pain of others. He also points out 'the difficulties of writing and reading while standing at the boundaries of two worlds' (p. 15), citing the debates around the writings of Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasrin. Still, according to Bibeau, 'The challenge faced by both cultural psychiatry and medical anthropology is methodological.' (p. 18) Certainly, our research methodology must change. However, we must ask what can be made visible with this new methodology if the position of the researcher himself/herself remains unchanged.

I became interested in postcolonial language because of the feeling that my own identity was shifting and heterogeneous (Miyaji, 1998). Having taken up this shifting identity as my own and choosing to stand on the side of the representing subject (after all, that is what becoming a researcher is all about), rather than in the camp of the calmly detached researchers, I needed this postcolonial language in order to preserve my own sanity. I had to use my sense of smell to locate companions, to rely on my intuition to find like-minded souls, and I put my faith in their words. I came to feel an affinity to writers like Abu-Lughod (1991), Anzaldua (1987) and Spivak (1996). They never provide answers or clear directions, but their words make me aware of why I am now stuck in this quagmire, and why I cannot simply crawl out of it.

There is a famous quote in the writing of Fanon in which, reflecting on a child's exclamation, 'Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!' he discovers that he has unconsciously identified with white people. Then he concludes the book with a remark: 'My final prayer: O my body, make of me always a man who questions!' (Fanon, 1991). Studying people with shifting identities is not particularly difficult. The problem that should be raised pertains to what we do when the shifting of identities reaches, not the other side, but our own side; what is it to conduct research while embracing our own shifting subjectivity. For instance, consider the complexities and difficulties for a second-generation immigrant doing research in transcultural psychiatry, a former psychiatric patient studying psychiatry or a disabled person studying social welfare. Part of the difficulty comes from the fact that a political analysis of power cannot be avoided, but should not this difficulty be experienced and shared by all of us?

I do not want to privilege people with shifting identities, which is not really possible anyway (Phelan, 1993). If a rethinking of transcultural psychiatry is necessary, the questions concern not only how we should

recognize that the world is in the process of creolization, but how we ourselves are to live in a creolizing world.

Two Cases of Domestic Violence

Here I would like to introduce two cases that raise the issues of domestic violence. The English expression 'domestic violence' refers to violence committed by an intimate associate, usually a husband or a boyfriend, against a wife or girlfriend.[2] Recognition of domestic violence varies dramatically between cultures, and as violence against women has become an issue at the level of the United Nations, recognition is changing on a global level (Desjarlais, Eisenberg, Good, & Kleinman, 1995; Matsui, 1996, 1999; United Nations, 1993, 1995). In Japan, awareness rose sharply during the 1990s with the appearance of survey reports (beginning in 1993), translations of English language literature on the topic (two classics, Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* and Walker's *The Battered Women* were translated into Japanese in 1996 and 1997 respectively), mass media attention and finally law making (an anti-domestic violence bill was passed in 2000 and became effective starting October 2001).[3]

To illustrate the points of difference across this period of change and between cultures, I discuss my own clinical experiences in the US and Japan. The flux of my interpretations, my dilemmas and the changes in my approach, moved along with the changes and shifts in my own identity. These changes and shifts themselves provide a case study through which we can see the shifts in the key concepts of transcultural psychiatry such as 'culture,' 'gender' and 'family.'[4] Of course the description in this article is limited to a particular time and place. Therefore, there can be no final conclusion here, only a 'current version of the story.'

Case 1: Ms Lee and Mr Sato, 1990, Massachusetts, USA

This case involved a second-generation Chinese American woman and her Japanese husband. The man was 25 and had been living in the US for three years, working as a cook in a restaurant. The woman was 26, and trying to establish a small business in Chinatown. They had been married a little less than one year. About six months after they were married the husband became violent, at times hitting her, grabbing her by the neck and pushing her against a wall. The wife, wanting to improve their marital relationship, sought advice from me, as a clinician and casual acquaintance of her husband. Husband and wife came together for our initial interview.

The first interview was taken up with my listening to the story of their relationship and each of their feelings about it. Partly because the husband's English was not very good, most of our time was taken up with

me translating between the two of them. The wife said that she didn't understand what her husband was thinking, that his violent outbursts were signs of immaturity and that if he had a problem he should put it in words. She didn't want to live in fear of when he might suddenly lash out in anger. She had begun to suspect that he hadn't married her out of love, but merely to get his permanent residency in the US. The husband claimed they had no reason to seek help from me and that the whole thing embarrassed him. He said that he became irritated because what she said was always right and he could not say anything back to her. He came home exhausted from work only to be worn out more because in the US a couple is supposed to have a relationship of tension rather than interdependence.

To an extent we could resolve the misunderstandings, but their feelings continued to move in parallel lines with the wife saying, 'I am not a servant, nor a punching bag,' and the husband saying, 'Please try to understand me without my having to explain in words. I want you to be caring. I need to depend (*Amae*)[5] on you.' The wife wanted to continue with marital counseling, particularly because she could not talk about his violent behavior to any family members out of fear of their criticizing her choice of a husband and forcing her to leave the marital relationship. With the husband's agreement we made an appointment for our next meeting, but the husband broke his promise and the second session was with the wife alone. After that I heard from the wife that they were living apart and there were no more sessions.

CASE 2: MRS YAMANAKA, 1994, NARA, JAPAN

For two years Mrs Yamanaka had been having trouble sleeping and had received sleep and anti-anxiety medication from another hospital. She came to my outpatient clinic because of worsening of her sleep problem, diminished interest and pleasure in activities, depressed mood and symptoms of autonomic nervous system dysfunction.

She was the fourth of five children in her family. She worked for five years after graduating from a two-year college and then married at the age of 26. She was a housewife. She had two sons in their 20s, both of whom were already independent. Her husband, a university professor, whose work was his hobby, had never taken them on a family vacation. Suspecting depression, I placed her on an antidepressant.

On her second visit she told me that her husband had been violent to her for many years. The violence occurred when the children were sleeping. He had grabbed her by the throat, threatened her by brandishing a broken beer bottle or a hoe, and thrown tables with bowls and plates. One time she almost called the police but he stopped her. 'In 30 years,' she said, 'this is the first time I have spoken to anyone about my husband's violence.' In

subsequent interviews she told me that recently her husband had struck objects but had not laid hands on her directly, and that he continued to say things to her like 'I won't talk with an idiot.' Sometimes, when she knew her husband was in the house, she passed the time by riding the Osaka railroad loop line around and around. She felt satisfaction from the community activities in which she had been participating with her husband and friends for 20 years. She had thought about divorce many times, but she could not do it because they had children, she couldn't support herself financially, and she was afraid she would lose contact with the network of friends she shared with her husband. Her dream was to outlive her husband and be able to relax even for just one day.

I treated her with psychotherapy, antidepressant and anxiolitic medications and seemed to get a bit better, but she still had ups and downs and was being seen as an outpatient for four years until I moved to another hospital.

'KNOWLEDGE' OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The first survey on domestic violence in Japan, which was conducted in 1992 using a feminist action research method, revealed the seriousness of the problem and the devastating effects on victims: the duration of violence tended to be long (70% of cases last at least five years), the level of violence was much worse than expected (41% of cases needed medical attention), the influence on children was great (children were present in about 70% of cases and are themselves victims of violence in almost 40%), and the reaction of police and medical professionals was slow (Otto kara no bouryoku chousa kenkyukai, 1998).

The question of why the abused wife does not run away is frequently asked.[6] In addition to interpersonal theories involving a cycle of violence (Walker, 1979) and 'co-dependence' theories (Cermak, 1986), there is a complex intertwining of factors: lack of public interventions by police and medical authorities because it is considered a personal matter; lack of sufficient safe spaces such as shelters to which women can actually run away to; the grip of the conventional wisdom that a woman who cannot satisfy her husband is a bad woman; lack of means of making a living; and consideration for children. In the Japanese survey mentioned above, very much the same explanations were voiced by the victims of domestic violence about why they stayed in the relationship. The effect of the reign of fear is a thorough destruction of the victim's sense of self respect and self-esteem, a routinization of the violent conditions by the victimizer, and devastating long-term impact on the mental health and development of victims and children (Barnett & LaViolette, 1993; Walker, 1979).

Domestic violence occurs around the world in both wealthy and

developing countries (Davies, 1994). Of course there are cultural differences in its occurrence. Levinson (1989), who conducted an international comparison using the Human Relations Area Files, noted a number of factors associated with low rates of domestic violence, including: monogamy; economic equality of men and women; equality of authority within the household between men and women; equal rights to divorce; the existence of someone to help with childcare; frequent interventions into disputes by family and neighbors; and rules about choosing non-violent means to settle disputes outside of the household. Although some cross-cultural differences emerge from the literature with respect to the background and the anguish of the victims, the commonalties are truly astonishing.

The first community survey in Japan with random sampling, conducted by the Tokyo metropolitan government in 1997, showed that 3.2% of women were repeatedly beaten, kicked or bitten by their husband or boyfriend, another 11.6% were once or twice, and 3% of women had had an experience of physically more damaging and even life threatening violence. The same survey found that 26.7% of men and 12.9% of women think slapping a wife's face can be permitted depending on the situation (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1997).

OVERTURNING CULTURE

CONCERNING CASE 1

The dilemma that I felt with the first couple was how to resolve the tension between the culture of Japan that accepts domestic violence and that of the US where it is severely censured. I met with the couple while I was in the US as a visiting research fellow, studying medical anthropology. At that time I was probably somewhat obsessed with the idea that cultural differences must be taken very seriously. In our sessions, it was as if the wife was pulling me along. I was thrown off course by the anger she expressed. I understood the husband's need to be indulged in terms of *amae*, as Doi (1973) has described, and I could even understand why he had become violent.[7] I felt that I should try to stand in the middle. I thought I could be the ideal mediator, having Japaneseness in common with the husband and being a woman in common with the wife. The reason that the husband stopped participating in the treatment, I felt, was my failure to stand successfully in the middle ground, and I blamed myself for the fact that they were no longer together.

This was long before I read the literature on domestic violence. I was still at the point of having felt the waves of feminist thought while avoiding a direct encounter. Around the time that I lost contact with this couple, I

finally began to read the literature and came to realize that I knew nothing about the reality of domestic violence and its psychological impact.

Although I was somewhat put off by the wife's anger and inflexibility, it was fortunate that she was able to assert herself straightforwardly against her husband's physical violence. If she had behaved differently at that early stage, she might have entered into a cycle of violence from which it would have been hard to escape. I think I told her something like, 'No, hitting is not good, but you should also recognize his need to be understood.' How dangerous were those words? How close did those words come to pushing her into an abyss of violence? To make things worse, I regretted not being able to maintain a neutral position and ending up taking her side more than his.

The framework in my mind was that Japanese culture tolerates domestic violence, whereas American culture rejects it. With such cultural relativism as a base, I tried to take a neutral position as a therapist quite possibly endangering the wife in the process.[8]

But is it so simple? I remember feeling uneasy about saying: 'You must stop your violence because this is not permitted in the US.' That led to other questions. Would it be okay if it was a Japanese wife? Would it be okay if they were living in Japan? Personally, I believed that domestic violence was inexcusable. At the same time I did not have the courage to declare that it is universally a bad thing. It would be bad, I thought, to say that and shut the man's heart – but that was not the main reason for my hesitation.

I personally believed that violence was inexcusable. That me was a Japanese person. So why did I come to think that what was excusing domestic violence was 'Japanese culture'? Why couldn't I say: 'As a Japanese I think that violence is inexcusable'? After all, I *was* able to say: 'Although I am Japanese, I think that violence is inexcusable.' I guess by being a young woman in a conservative medical community, I was over-sensitive about how I would be perceived and afraid to be labeled 'deviant' or 'too radical.' To say that it is 'Japanese culture' that excuses domestic violence is not only to admit that one's opinion does not count much, but it also ends up erasing all other minority opinions in the culture. The authority of the psychiatrist requires that individual opinions be put aside in the search for a 'neutral' middle ground. In the process, the 'minority-ness' of oneself and others are erased. This is a sophisticated mechanism for maintaining the dominance of the majority.

In any culture there are already multiple competing value systems and it is from the competition that the culture changes dynamically. That culture includes irrational and negative elements is already part of the common sense of anthropology. Nonetheless, when we use the term 'culture' we encourage the fantasy that some common consciousness exists

within some defined boundary and that a problem is tied up with the 'this side' and 'that side' of cross-cultural conflict.

CONCERNING CASE 2

Does this mean that I should have ignored cultural categories? I don't think so. Although there are some negative consequences of thinking that what excuses domestic violence is Japanese culture, it is not entirely without merit.

Where did my view that Japanese culture excuses domestic violence come from? There are big differences within Japan, according to class, locality and age for instance, in the awareness of domestic violence. In my case, I had heard of its occurrence and seen the response of other adults to it among my relatives and in my neighborhood. There have also been frequent scenes of domestic violence in television dramas and novels, many of which are portrayed as understandable, if not natural or normal.[9] To the extent that domestic violence was not reported as a crime on the TV news before the 1990s, the statement that domestic violence is excused in Japan has a certain truth.[10]

Consider Case 2. For 30 years, this woman had not told anyone that she was a victim of domestic violence. Though she finally revealed it, the conversation after that moved away from the topic of domestic violence. As the physical violence had almost stopped, she thought that the remaining psychological violence was 'not worth talking about because the pattern won't change.' What brought her into the clinic was not the domestic violence itself, but rather her disturbing physical symptoms. Her son's pat lines whenever he returned home expressed it best: 'Dad's personality is as bad as ever, isn't it,' and, 'No one in this family has ever communicated honestly.'

She had not come to see her current symptoms as having anything to do with the domestic violence, and I was not sure that making this insight explicit was the best way to proceed. I saw this case around the time when it was finally becoming possible to see violence by an intimate partner as a problem in Japan and the Japanese proverb which says, 'When husband and wife fight, even the dog is bored' was gradually being turned around. I was already clear about the seriousness of domestic violence. The first survey data of domestic violence were attracting media attention, and this may have motivated the patient to visit a doctor and to reveal her secret. However, she had already withstood 30 years of these conditions and her husband had been weakened slightly as he faced retirement. It seemed to me that to lay out the dynamics of domestic violence, when the physical violence had now ended and some psychological equilibrium had been established, would imply that her life had been a failure, even if I

emphasized that it was not her fault. Wasn't she secretly wishing to be praised for having persisted in silence, for her strength, for being 'an enduring woman'? If we conclude that all of her endurance was a waste, we perforce negate her entire life, leaving her no other path but total collapse. In the fact that domestic violence never became the focus of her problems while she secretly wished for her husband's death, we can also see how traditional morality is internalized, and how vividly it becomes embodied in the life of a Japanese woman (Kondo, 1990; Lock, 1993; Miyaji & Lock, 1994; Salamon, 1986). Isn't that the real meaning of saying that Japanese culture excuses domestic violence?

The Meaning of Culture

Looking again at Case 1, the idea that Japanese culture excuses domestic violence appears everywhere: a therapist took the spineless path of seeking a middle ground – although she herself was unable to forgive the violence – believing that it was Japanese culture that was failing to place blame; the psychological mechanism of domestic violence was not part of required psychiatric training in Japan; when the husband did not continue to come to the counseling sessions, the therapist felt responsible for his discontinuation of therapy.[11] In the discussion of my presentation of these cases at an academic conference in 1997 (Miyaji, 1997), someone commented that 'ideology' should not enter into one's treatment (is it an ideology to say that domestic violence is wrong?), and, as we were leaving the session, people responded informally that 'cases like these are very common,' 'couples where there is domestic violence are so close to each other,' and 'are you also a victim of domestic violence?'

As a clinician, I have always tried to give priority to a cultural standpoint over my personal one, and a 'neutral' one over a cultural one. I had not come to see, however, that what is considered neutral is itself culturally dependent. I had not come to see that culture is performed through a translation process in which I explain Japanese culture to an American or where I explain the psychology of a woman to a man. The client's assessment of the current situation and the norms she has internalized and embodied, the historicity of the clinician's consciousness and the oscillations in her interpretations of the individual case, the mainstream of opinion in the field – all of these are included in culture. Culture consists of the collective meaning constructed through history as well as the paths taken by each individual to recapture these meanings (Kleinman, 1988). It is in this sense that being conscious of the notion that Japanese culture is one that excuses domestic violence is indeed useful.

To be sensitive to gender or culture is not to analyze a case simply by fitting it into the framework of already existing categories. We cannot use

culture as an already existing framework, or withhold judgment on cultural grounds, but rather must approach the conditions through careful analysis of each context (Good, 1994). We need a conception of culture that can be used in that way. For instance, it should help us understand the meaning of the finely distinguished categories such as the Nisei, American, Chinese, woman in Case 1. Those meanings should resist stereotypes but help to reconstruct the couple's historicity in a personal as well as a cultural way.[12] Thus, at the same time as we use the phrase 'Japanese culture permits domestic violence' we have to resist maintaining that cultural reality through the performative functions of that statement. Even if it is necessary to understand the emotions of the man who commits violence, to understand is by no means to forgive. In order to raise an objection effectively, you need to understand the perspective of the partner. As a member of society, why must I hesitate to say 'I can understand you but I cannot forgive the violence' and to try to change the society? Culture is something that we are recreating by ourselves in the present.[13]

This also raises the question of whose position we should try to understand in the first place. What is it to understand the feelings of a woman who has lived for 30 years with a man who beats her? Who should understand? Who does not understand? Why do they not understand? Surely this is a problem of power, whirling on the inside of culture.

OVERTURNING THE FAMILY

The harsh reality of domestic violence shatters our image of the stable family, colored with expectations of harmony. The family is a small social group, and family troubles quite faithfully reflect cultural and social power relationships. If the concept of culture shifts, the shifting will spread to the concepts of the family and gender.

A KOREAN BRIDE

Dr Yoshio Igarashi has written candidly about the anxiety caused when, in the course of his clinical transcultural psychiatric work in Yamagata Prefecture, a family was broken apart by his therapeutic success (Igarashi, 1997). Yamagata is a rural area of Northern Japan known as 'Snow Country' because it is buried under deep drifts each winter. The flight of young people from the isolated and harsh conditions of Yamagata farms and small towns to urban areas has created a marriage crisis for eldest sons, tied to the land by their inheritance. Some local governments have gone so far as to invite women from the Philippines, South Korea and other Asian countries to come to Yamagata to be Japanese farmers' wives. Igarashi was treating a Korean woman who had become the wife of a Japanese farmer

through a commercial marriage arranger. By addressing in therapy the traumas she had experienced while she was in Korea, he helped the couple resolve a whole array of mutual misunderstandings. However, just when he thought that the couple had reconciled and could start over, the wife, with a smile, said to her husband: 'With your help I have just made up my mind to go back to work as a hair dresser. I'll be okay by myself now' (p. 21).

After this, Igarashi stopped his transcultural psychiatry activity for a year, shaken by the anxiety that, in discovering equality between men and women for the first time, the marriages might lose their meaning for the Korean women. The danger is that when they are healed from the traumas they experienced in their home country and they re-establish their identity in Japan, they also come to question the fundamental meaning of their marriages and this leads once again to the break up of the family, of husband and wife (p. 23). Before long, however, Igarashi came to see that 'the fear of a break-up only intensifies the neurotic effect of traumatic experience, because staying with the status quo maintains the conflicts and contradictions within it.' He has come to feel that 'in order to make conscious our own traumatic experiences, those produced by our own culture, and to recover from our neurotic symptoms, we needed to have foreigners invade our own community and live with us, in our families' (p. 24).

THE FAMILY IN NARRATIVE

In their book *Medicine for the Family*, Nishi and Itoh (1995) attempt to overturn the image of the family.[14] There are many stories, in *Grimm's Fairy Tales* and among the Japanese fables, with a structure in which a family is separated for some reason and comes back together after having overcome various tribulations. Together these are stories in praise of the family, warnings to people who would stray from their families. Nishi and Itoh, however, say: 'We want to call the place where these stories reach their climax a family too.' They call the original family ''Family A,' the family returned to at the end 'Family C,' and the family in the middle 'Family B,' the quasi-family, in transition. An example of the latter is the time Snow White lived with the Seven Dwarfs. In the process of overcoming difficulties, the characters in each story are not separate and alone, but rather in the setting of Family B. They even suspect that 'Family C and Family A are fictions produced by the necessary structure of the story.' 'We don't know whether our real lives are in Family A or Family B' they continue. 'When we start to be suspicious, it looks as though everyone is being rotated through a continuous chain of families of the B-type or are themselves actively rotating through such families their entire lives.'

Nishi and Itoh's analysis does not end here. In Japanese fables there are

often interspecies marriages that fit into the Family B space. The Crane Wife is a prototype. In this story, a poor sailmaker takes pity on a wounded crane, which he nurses back to health. A short while afterwards a mysterious woman appears at his door, in the middle of a storm, begging for shelter. The woman stays and the two become husband and wife. As times are hard, the sailmaker is having trouble selling his sails, so his wife offers to make him a sail on the condition that he not look at her while she weaves. The sail is magnificent and he is able to sell it for six months' wages. Six months later, he asks his wife to weave another, which she agrees to do despite the arduous work that seems to drain the very life from her. Again he sells the sail at a premium price. When a ship's captain offers him a fortune for another sail, he presses his wife into service again, but this time he cannot contain his curiosity about what she is doing, secreted behind a screen. As he sneaks a peek at her he sees a crane, sitting at a loom, weeping in pain as she weaves a sail of her own feathers. As soon as he sees her, the crane wife takes flight, never to return.[15]

Nishi and Itoh see all marriages as interspecies marriages. 'Man and Woman marry each other as different species and we call them a family. Thinking of themselves as a family, they produce new or cross breeds, children of different species and raise them within the household.' Therefore:

> 'Wouldn't it be best if we could live like an illegal alien in our own households, each member like a visiting foreigner, without having an identity rooted in our origin nor in the household in which we happen to be staying? . . . 'If you are of a different species, then you can be banished from the family. If you are banished, there is no need to be haunted by family obligations. If you want to leave, it is enough to emphasize that you are of a different species.'

It is the same to destroy the family itself as to destroy the family image: to do away with the illusion of being one. To be conscious that the family is but a collection of outsiders. Nishi and Itoh invite deviation or even flight from the self-constraining framework of the family. To begin with, the one who tells the fairy tales is a wandering entertainer, an outsider, expelled from the family. The enchantment of the story is the pain and suffering during the time away from home. Perhaps the expulsion of the outsider at the end of the story and the protagonist's safe return to Family C is no more than lip service to the dominant society, so Nishi and Itoh say.

FAMILY B IN THE CASES

How close to Family B is the point at which Igarashi arrived? The family escapes collapse by embracing an outsider, the Korean bride. The family

then falls apart as soon as it is healed. This is the inevitable conclusion if we approach clinical work sincerely.

To conclude that everyone is a foreigner carries the danger of ignoring the historicity of the individual members. However, to clear out the stale air in marital relations and the family and allow fresh winds to blow, this point of view is very effective. The issue is not the survival of the legal marriage of the couple in front of you, but rather the pursuit of a deeper level of familial love.

Family B is quite enchanting. Let's say that in Case 2, the crowded train on the Osaka loop line is Family B. Compared with the exploitation of labor named love in Family A, what a peaceful and comforting place it was. However, although Case 1 was an international couple supposedly close to Family B, the Japanese husband stuck to the ideal of Family A, expecting conformity and indulgence (*amae*) from his wife, refusing the therapist's intervention to open the family. *Amae* is said to originate from the child's feeling of being accepted unconditionally by his/her mother, in a family setting very similar to Family A.

Dr Hiroyuki Kon has reported a terminal care case in which he became involved as a psychiatric consultant in which a woman who didn't want to be buried in her husband's family grave, took a leave from the hospital to go purchase her own plot (Kon, 1998). Couldn't we also call this a search for Family B? Kon writes: 'In the face of impending death, people's behavior is variable and extreme. Quite often, the meanings are very hard to understand, even for their families.' However, it is probably because they are family that they have trouble understanding, and perhaps it is often the case that they do not want to understand. In Family A, there is the woman who has been a 'good wife and wise mother' (Miyaji & Lock, 1994), who has always served and supported her husband. When women who have played the role expected by Japanese cultural models all their lives are face to face with their own deaths, they finally start acting on their own behalf, which is quite treacherous and unexpected for the watchful family. Advancing towards death gives one power (Miyaji, 1993, 1996). 'Treason' by the dying person carries weight. The person who is advancing towards death becomes an alien. What a pity that she can only assert herself and object to her conditions at this stage of life. It must be true that not only women, but many men who are dying long to be released from their roles in Family A.

Family A is expected to be the most permanent of groups in society. It strictly controls its own membership and maintains a high level of secrecy. Collective responsibility is desired. This is the social group most relied upon by the nation, bearing the most expectations and responsibilities for 'social stability.' Even though everyone knows that the family originally does not have these qualities, we still look to it for uniformity and cohesion.

A simple refusal or conflict, in this emotionally closed group can ferment, leading even to murder.[16] The one who breaks up the peaceful life of the family is thrown out as an alien, as is the stepmother in the denouement of many fairy tales. However, we also know that the real mother, or the real father, or the real son or daughter can become the big bad wolf – this is Family A. This is the source of Igarashi's remark: 'To cope with our neuroses we must have foreigners live with us.'

POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY AND POSITIONALITY

Family B is the space of creolization. The notion of 'Creole' expresses a worldview based not on origins but formations, not purity of blood but hybridity, not universality but multiplicity (Bibeau, 1997; Glissant, 1990; Mazama, 1995). We can say to the international couple or the bi-national child 'you're a Creole, aren't you?'[17] And we can praise what is Creole. Inscribed in creolization, however, is not simply the mixing of 'blood,' but a traumatization from the confrontation of and invasion by a different culture, i.e. colonization.[18] In the sense of having traumatic experiences, couples caught up in domestic violence are in the same boat. Not only are the victims traumatized; in many cases, the abusers themselves were victims of abuse in childhood. Still, we can say to these people: 'You live with the world's contradictions and the distortions of gender relationships in your own personal wounds. But in that is also the emergence of a new way of living, a new "culture" as an art of survival in this traumatic world.' As transcultural psychiatrists, can we witness and support the production of new esthetics by those 'malformed', 'deviant' and 'alien'? Can we even become role models for these 'aliens'? Here again, we must be reflective about our own positioning.

Spivak (1996, p. 19) writes that 'postcoloniality is a child born of a rape.' I know no more accurate characterization of the issues of transcultural psychiatry in this creolized world.

The Asian brides of rural Japan, the marriages arranged by commercial brokers, are meeting points between the strong and the weak, resulting from complicated factors such as the internationalization of the marriage market, economic inequalities at the level of nations, and the conditions within each country affecting the value of men and women (for instance the social position of divorced women) (Kuwayama, 1995). In his book, *The Sociology of Marriage*, Yamada (1996) lays out the mechanism of Japanese international marriage. In Japan, 'marriage up,' where women marry men of higher position, has been the norm, but as fewer and fewer people fit this condition, the marriage rate is declining. The imbalance in the internal marriage market has contributed to the rise in mixed and international marriages. Commercially arranged marriages are only part of

this broader phenomenon. Of course there are many exceptions, and not all couples who do conform to the pattern selected each other because of the 'marrying up rule' (Johnson & Warren, 1994). However, power is still there when it is said that 'we simply happened to like each other.' We want to emphasize passion and love in marriage and the family, but, though that is definitely not a mistake, at the same time, family and kinship relations clearly reflect power relations at the level of nations and the level of gender.

If we develop a concept of 'economic rape' (analogous to the notion of 'economic refugee') then the complexity of our bi-national children appears even more post-colonial. It is not simply a question of Asian brides and bi-national children, nor is it as simple as Igarashi (1997) makes it, putting in the position of rapist 'we poor farmers in Yamagata' (especially the eldest sons), whose neuroses require 'us' to have foreigners live with 'us.' Even mainstream transcultural psychiatrists, overwhelmingly urban, often neglect to ask how 'we' are implicated in the actions of people such as these poor Yamagata farmers. This 'we' already excludes them. Igarashi's tacit stance shows clearly that shifting identities exist among us in transcultural psychiatry. 'The countryside,' 'local districts,' 'remote places,' 'the farmer's eldest son,' – who is it that sets their value so low in the marriage market? Is it the single woman longing for a life of luxury, the parents who don't want to make their daughter 'suffer' as a wife in a rural extended family, conservative rural society that expects women to fulfill the role of traditional housewife, the second and third sons who forsake their home-towns for the allure of the city, or 'we' transcultural psychiatrists? Is there anyone who is innocent?

This is the way Ukai explains Spivak's words:

> Rape itself cannot be justified in any circumstance. It means that when a child is produced out of rape, that child cannot be rejected. The word itself raises questions about the position of its speaker: Who is saying it? With what emphasis? In what way? Spivak was speaking directly about the presence of English in Indian languages, . . . but it is clear that she does not mean it simply as a metaphor. (Ukai, 1996)

Rape forcefully connects the victim and the victimizer. With the presence of their child, they can never perfectly cut the connection from each other. So with the colonized and the colonizer. So with the wife and the husband in the case of domestic violence. What is more, the next generation has to keep the chronic pain of their shameful identity or get lost in dishonesty, as the remark of the son in Case 2 poignantly implies.

From what standpoint, directed toward whom, should Japanese (and other) transcultural psychiatrists appreciate this phrase? How far can we go avoiding talk about Japanese war responsibility for the countries of Asia,

the reflection of the student movement and anti-psychiatry movement, and Japan's position in the current international economy?

In the documentary film 'War and Rape' (Saywell, 1996) there is a woman who became pregnant in the systematic rapes during the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, gave birth and is now raising her child. She is shown on video, in profile, quietly crying as she remembers the painful experiences. Next to her is a baby whose face is so innocent. And then, her image again, facing the video crew when they return one year later, playing with the child, now a bit bigger. This is reality, not a metaphor. Where should we stand? On the raped woman's side? On the side of the woman's mother who worries about her? With the child who will somehow come to know that she was given life in a rape? Or should it be with the director who filmed it in order to communicate the woman's truth to people across the world?

These questions are difficult, even though they involve events in the former Yugoslavia, a place far beyond the borders of Japan and without any practical influence on daily lives. What then of the questions to be asked in the farm households of rural Japan, in the sexually transmitted disease clinics near the urban combat zones such as Shinjuku-Kabukicho (where many foreign sex workers work), in the nurseries with Japanese-Filipino babies in the Philippines, and in the women's shelters with secret addresses (Babior, 1993; Desjarlais et al., 1995; Matsui, 1996, 1999)?

CONCLUSION

Coming to grips with the shifting identities of the subject is naturally linked to the deconstruction of major categories of family and culture. Breaking down categories, however, is just as dangerous as imposing them. There are many overarching categories, such as nationality and gender differences, that are necessary to use in an essentializing way. There are real limits such as permission to enter or leave a country, being disqualified from the pension system or from promotion at work (such as the recent case of a Korean-Japanese public health nurse in Tokyo). Or consider the daily inconvenience and humiliation of people with gender identity disorder. Crossing boundaries is quite risky for some people. Failure may literally cost them their lives.

Moreover, although a stereotyped identity can be a burden, it can also provide armor. The anthropologist Matsuda (1998) has shown how a stereotyped way of speaking about such things as war experience can carry a deep meaning. Observing elderly Koreans' testimony in court 50 years after they were forcibly brought to Japan and survived the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Matsuda powerfully argues there are experiences that can only be spoken of in a stereotyped manner.

To transform oneself from an innocent child delighting in smashing everything to someone truly engaging the world, it is necessary to appreciate the value and meaning of categories such as 'culture.' We have to show that categories are supported by power relations in the background, and that they produce effects from the action of those powers. We also have to both appreciate and resist stereotypes of each category by seeing their temporary, dynamic and fluid nature.

If we think about it, we have already crowned ourselves with the very postmodern, creolized name of 'transcultural psychiatry.' We should give our most careful consideration to what we mean by the 'trans' in 'transcultural.' When we have given this enough thought, I think we may be usefully absorbed into the general field of psychiatry.

Notes

1. This is a revised version of an article originally published in Japanese as *'Yuragu identity to tabunkakan seisinigaku'* (Shifting Identities in Cultural Psychiatry) in *Bunka to Kokoro* (*Culture and Psyche: Japanese Journal of Transcultural Psychiatry*) in 1999 (3, pp. 92–103). The current version was translated into English by Joshua Breslau in collaboration with the author, peer-reviewed for *Transcultural Psychiatry* and then revised by the author. I deeply appreciate Joshua's superb work. Thanks also go to Jack Tobin for his linguistic, intellectual and moral support as usual. Responsibility for the content lies entirely with the author. I would like to sincerely thank three anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments.
2. The Japanese phrase *kateinai bouryoku* (intrahousehold violence) is usually used to refer to adolescent children's physical aggression against family members, especially their parents. The phenomenon became a social issue in the 1970s, and when violence by an intimate partner was problematized, the Japanese expressions *domesutikku vaiolensu* or *DV* were used in order to differentiate these two phenomena and to make the situation visible by giving it a different name. Although school bullying (*ijime*) is well recognized as a serious problem in Japan, violence against weaker people, such as minorities, children, women, the elderly, etc. tends to be overlooked and normalized in Japan. For instance, it was only in 2000 that doctors came under a legal duty to report suspected child abuse to authorities.
3. On the history of domestic violence in Japan, see Tsunoda (1995, 1997), Otto kara no bouryoku chousa kenkyukai (1998), Yoshihama (1999), Kozu (1999).
4. I have chosen here to speak in the first person because I know of no better way to call out, to just get a hearing, to have people look into themselves other than by speaking explicitly from my own personal experience. But at the same time, as I write, I have a keen sense of the limits of self-representation as a communication method. In another article (Miyaji, 1998), I have called for self-reflexivity, but, from the start, self-reflexivity is extremely difficult (Messner, Groves, & Schwartz, 1989). The gravity of disclosing one's self, the

misplaced forbearance in keeping hidden that which one planned to disclose, the exhibitionism and the narcissism that goes with it are all issues. Of course it is important to put effort into self-reflexivity, but I think it may be even more important to be conscious of the difficulties and to construct an open system that invites the gaze and analysis of third parties.

5. *Amae* is a propensity to depend and presume upon another's benevolence, which is similar to 'primary love' or 'passive object-love,' but more socially sanctioned in Japan (Doi, 1973).
6. The question 'why do husbands hit' is asked less often – a fact that the Italian writer Dela Costa (1978) explains like this: Housework is a labor of love and it is unpaid; even if a man is unsatisfied, he cannot penalize a woman by cutting her wages. Therefore, the man uses physical violence as a means of intimidation. It is justified, however, not by the wife's not working but by her not loving her husband enough; he hits her because he loves her. We could substitute the words 'care' for 'love' here and this analysis would probably fit very many cultures.
7. Salamon (1986) points out the close connection of *amae* with Japanese male chauvinism. There is a great deal of literature on *amae* in Japan, but the gender inequality aspects of this phenomenon are not much discussed. See also Kondo (1990).
8. I have the impression that among professionals involved in the treatment of psychological trauma, there are many who, as they gain in experience, come to refuse the neutral position. Of course this depends on how we define 'neutral position' (Herman, 1992; Martin-Baro, 1994).
9. There is a Japanese comic (*manga*), *Jigyaku no uta* (*The Poetics of Self-Torment*) that well describes the subtlety of an abusive marital relationship. The main character is a woman from a dysfunctional family, who lives with her abusive husband and takes care of him with unconditional love (Gohda, 1996). But, we cannot deny the danger of the accepting and glamorizing the social conditions of domestic violence. The same is true of television novels such as *Terauchi kantaro iikka* (*The Terauchi Kantaro Family*) by the late Kuniko Mukouda, a famous scenario writer. There, a violent father, who is the head of a large family, is portrayed as a loving and beloved character with his very submissive wife depicted as respectable.
10. For example, the late Prime Minister Eisaku Sato used to beat his wife (she revealed it in 1969), but it did not become a big issue, not to mention a crime, in Japan (*Daily Yomiuri*, 1999; see also http://www1.odn.ne.jp/~cam39380/epage/epage060.htm). He kept the prime minister's position until 1972 and got the Nobel Peace Prize in 1974. Another telling example is a ruling by the Hachioji Branch of the Tokyo District Court (14 February 1985) against a woman who sought divorce because her husband forced her to have sex using physical violence. The court said that although the husband's action involved a certain degree of violence, it is within the range of the degree of force used in intercourse among ordinary married couples, and thus, it does not warrant special consideration. (Yoshihama, 1999). Yukiko Tsunoda, a leading feminist lawyer, notes that 'the Japanese criminal justice system has rejected

recognizing domestic violence as a crime . . . I experienced many cases where wives were blamed for calling police officers for their 'private' quarrels' (Tsunoda, 1997). The change in general attitude can be seen in the response to the news that a Japanese consul in Canada hit his wife in the face and, when questioned by the police in the hospital where his wife was treated, asserted that domestic violence was part of Japanese culture (*Daily Yomiuri*, 21 February 1999). Many Japanese voiced disagreement with the idea that domestic violence was part of Japanese culture, or something to be proud of, and some pointed out it was an exaggeration by the Canadian media of the consul's excuse 'we usually deal with these issues within a family. It is a difference of cultures.' Nevertheless, the main reaction was surprise that violence against wives is not a crime in Japan, but that abroad the husband can be arrested. The consul was ordered to return to Japan and received a 10% cut in salary by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

11. After I learned how difficult it is to treat perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual violence, I ended my own self-reproach. I was quick to think that the husband in Case 1 would have stopped coming no matter what I had done, and my whole perspective on the case was altered. The language problem and different expectations about the marital relationship between the couple definitely precipitated the conflict and violence, but I had sensed that he would have committed violence against his wife even without these problems.
12. For example, the average American psychiatrist might think that a couple like Case 1 would be able to understand each other particularly well because they are both 'Asians.'
13. Of course, the constraints and authoritative power for this re-creation are not equally distributed among individuals in a given society, but no one is a totally passive recipient of culture. This argument gets more complicated when one is not a member of the society in question, but I still think that raising questions and objections should be always allowed.
14. The book title is a parody of a family guide to medical treatments written for the general public. Nishi is a professor of comparative literature and Itoh a poet. As husband and wife they co-authored popular books on child rearing. Around the time this book was published, they separated and Itoh, with their children immigrated to California where she had another child. Some of her writing is also about these experiences.
15. There are several versions of the story, one of which is in Yagawa (1981).
16. There are stories, such as 'Letters to the Ugliest Parents in Japan' in which resentment against the family that has been fermented is expressed in multiple ways (Create Media, 1997).
17. Avoiding the term 'half' (as in 'half-breed'), which carries the connotation that a person is not quite whole, the term 'double,' having two cultures, is now being used. In the word double, however, the rigidity and privilege of cultural distinctions can still be felt. In 'Creole' or 'Mestizo' or in Abu-Lughod and Narayan's use of 'Halfies' (Abu-Lughod, 1991), the liquidity is implied.
18. Herein lies the difference between Creolism and Americanism (Mazama,

1995). In the same way the term 'Queer' does not simply mean multiplex sexuality, but also retains the sense of a sexuality that has been denigrated and despised (Warner, 1994).

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