Emotions as Metaphors: Critically Reconstructing Psychiatric and Cultural Discourses for Trauma and Healing

Kumar Ravi Priya[1], Shilpi Kukreja[2], Roli Pandey[3], Anuja Khanna[4], and Shikha Verma[5]

[[1]Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, India (krp@iitk.ac.in); [2] Chhatripati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur, India (shilpi2903@gmail.com); [3] Counselor and independent researcher, Hyderabad, India (rolipandey2903@gmail.com); [4] O. P. Jindal University, Raipur, India (anujakhanna87@gmail.com) [5] Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, Illinois, USA (docshikha@gmail.com)]

Abstract

The complexity associated with defining what emotions are is as intriguing as addressing difficult or painful emotions of people undergoing dire circumstances in their lives. Such an intrigue has led several historians as well as social scientists devoted to the study of emotions to comprehend the perspectives about emotion rather than pursuing its discovery as an objective truth. However, as the critical or constructionist paradigm posits, perspectives or theories of emotions are necessarily entangled with their functionality (or consequences) for the human lives being explored. Such functionality may range from sidetracking to creating humanizing spaces for difficult human emotions experienced as a consequence of undergoing trauma. This chapter takes up a critical reconstruction of such functionality that psychiatric as well as cultural (or socio-political) discourses have served to the survivors of trauma towards possibilities of healing. Whether it is psychiatric literature or qualitative studies (focusing on the culturally or structurally shaped experiences) of trauma and healing, we illustrate how emotions are used as metaphors to address the paradigmatic focus of the studies. In doing so, importantly, psychiatric as well as cultural discourses have uniquely shaped not only the healing (or a denial of it) but also redefined the importance of dignity or voice of the survivors.

Key words: Emotion, culture, healing, metaphor, psychiatry, trauma

While academic images of emotions or emotional experiences that accentuate their physiological or socio-cultural bases shape our understanding, narratives of lived realities of difficult emotional experiences of people – ridden with crisis or trauma – perpetually question our understanding as a learner of emotions and role as a fellow human being. Let us consider the emotional experiences of people affected by exclusion based on religion (communal riots), gender norms (shaped within economic globalization context) and poverty (and ensuing forced migration) represented in three cases presented below:

- Case I: In the post-Godhra communal riots of 2002 in Gurajat state of India, Muslims often found themselves labelled with derogatory words about their religious identity by the Hindus, in general, besides the state government. Viswambharan and Priya (2016) noted one such prejudiced belief against them

in their qualitative study. It was that they did were not loyal to the nation, and they better go away to Pakistan. One of these survivors narrated that it was only his Election Identity Card that could provide evidence for his loyalty for and citizenship of India, and no other country:

> I am an Indian, I will remain an Indian. See my card number. If I lose this, it will be difficult to get another. My name is Indian L. A. Khan, an Indian. This is my identity. If I lose this card how will I give India the proof of my being an Indian? If I have this, I can at least say I am an Indian. … [sobs] … I love India. India is my country and I love it. (p. 53)

- Case II: In a study of mental health of women living in poverty in South Africa, with a specific focus on the changing gender roles in the economic globalization period, Kruger and Lourens (2016) found mothers to have internalized the notion of being an "all-providing, ever-giving, self-sacrificing mother, an ideal that the women could not live up to" (p. 137). A 41 year old unemployed mother, who had three children, narrated:

  > The whole SITUATION, the whole problem I take on ME. (.hhhh) Because I think if things were perhaps DIFFERENT, if I perhaps could work and all the things then…Then we wouldn't have stayed in SUCH a place, then it would not have been so hard for my children and they would not be hungry… So I blame myself…Most of the time I blame MYSELF for my circumstances, my SITUATION and that makes it difficult for me… (.hhh) It makes me feel VERY-very inferior. It makes me (…) feel as if I am a zero. I… A zero, I don't exist…A zero…I am a nothing, yes. (p. 132)

- Case III: Highlighting the agony of apparently never-ending deprivation (in the context of having dreams but scant resources or no support or care to fulfil them) of poor in India, Piyush Mishra, a highly acclaimed Indian poet, theatre artiste, and musician has written a song titled, *"Ik bagal me chand hoga"* (On one hand, there is moon). An excerpt from that song (Pandey, Kukreja, & Priya, 2020):

  > *Ik bagal mein chaand hoga, ik bagal mein rotiyaan ,*
  > *Ik bagal neend hogi, ik bagal mein loriyaan,*
  > *Hum chaand pe roti ki chaadar daalkar so jayenge,*
  > *Aur neend se keh denge lori kal sunaane aayenge*
  > [On one hand, there is moon (aspirations or desires); on the other, food (survival),
  > On one hand, there is sleep (tranquillity); on the other, lullabies (aesthetics), We will (have to) go for survival keeping aside aspirations or desires,
  > And, we do not see soon a possibility of tranquillity through aesthetic engagements.] (p. 20)

What emotions do the narratives in the above cases represent? Do these represent *neat* categories of basic or primary emotions that are construed to be physiological in its essence (e.g., joy, sadness etc.), or those that are construed as more transitory and situationally or contextually shaped, such as guilt or embarrassment (Izard, 2009; Strongman, 2003)? Aren't the feelings that bring these emotions to the person's awareness epiphenomena of biological processes, where amygdala informs the person's brain through working memory about the invoked emotion (Izard, 2009; LeDoux & Phelps, 2008, Rączy & Orzechowski, 2019)? Can these emotions– whether termed as basic or non-basic – also be considered as essentially hybrid process that are cultural-cognitive-physiological at the same time (Harré, 2009; Harré & Parrott, 1996; Stearns & Stearns, 1994; Sundararajan, 2015)? To what extent are we sure that these conceptual descriptions and explanations of emotions about the three cases really help understand what the emoting persons are going through? Are their emotional experiences also calls for "being listened to" by a fellow human being? Do these also represent calls for a dialogue with important stakeholders to address the tragic conditions of their lives?

More than 135 years since William James' conceptualization of emotion, it is a general belief held among the psychologists, social scientists and historians that it is too *complex* to be defined (Izard, 2009; Neidenthal & Ric, 2017; Strongman, 2003). As the research in the field of emotion has proceeded taking such *complexity* to be a puzzling question as well as an opportunity to dig deeper into this everyday experiences of people, two distinct patterns about such research come to the fore: (a) explicit or implicit hegemony of positivistic biological-cognitive approach and the resulting (b) silencing or glossing over of the everyday emotional experience shaped within relational, socio-cultural context (particularly in case of socio-politically shaped experiences of survivors) in the aftermath of traumatic events or disasters. About the former, it is important to note that amidst complexity and uncertainty about the nature or emotions – whether triggered as physiological reactions by the environment or felt through socio-cultural or interpretive processes – psychologists' predominant understanding and direction of research has been its biological essence and cognition-based feeling or awareness. Any compromise with such a *"pure"* physiological-mental conception of emotion is fraught by researchers in general. Strongman (2003) indicates such academic culture within psychology, as he points out:

> If this argument has some force, then the politics of the academic world do not bode well for the future development of emotion theory. Academic careers are structured within institutions and are predicated on caution and conservatism. *Interdisciplinary research and thinking, not only taking theory into account but also making such theory complex and plural, is decidedly unsafe.* To create an emotion theory at all is bold; to create the sort of emotion theory suggested here might be considered by some to be foolhardy. (p. 298, emphasis added)

About the latter, that is, the silencing of emotional experiences that fall outside the biological-cognitive conception, Heider (2011) points out that neither of the "extreme" - universalistic physiological-based or cultural variation-based conception – is "taken seriously today" for one's supremacy over the other (p. 10). However, as he adds, "there is still interest in

ransacking the ethnographic literature for what seem to be culturally unique emotions" (p. 10; emphasis added).

What explains a myopic focus of psychologists even half a century after the interpretive turn in social science? What creative ways of getting close to the everyday experiences of emotions are missed due to the exclusive use of positivist paradigm? How do alternative paradigms facilitate the exploration of emotional experiences shaped within the relational, cultural and soico-political context particularly for the survivors of traumatic events? Averill (1996), Harré and Parrott (1996), Moghaddam (2004), and Sugiman, Gergen, Wagner and Yamada (2008) have pointed to the utility of analyzing subtle use of symbols, meanings or *metaphors* in psychological theories to unravel the paradigmatic or epistemological assumptions on which these are founded and the nature of "scientific rigour" these claim to be adhering to. Besides, social constructionist paradigm[1] also invites a psychologist to explore everyday use of such symbols or *metaphors* in shaping the experiences and social functions of emotions (Harré, 2009; Harré & Parrott, 1996).

Using social constructionist paradigm, we take emotions as metaphors used in the academic culture of psychology (representing agreed upon physiological-mentalistic images of emotions) as well as popular culture representing everyday use of variety of emotional experiences. More specifically, we explore (a) the socio-historical processes underlying progress and critiques of the predominant physiological-mentalistic metaphor of emotion in psychology, (b) the ways the metaphors of emotions and distress in psychology and psychiatry facilitate or hinder the exploration of distressing experiences among the survivors of traumatic events, and (c) the utility of cultural metaphors of emotions in shaping the processes of healing or rehabilitation of trauma survivors. Before we take up an exploration of these themes, a closer look at the need to consider emotions as metaphors is warranted.

Metaphors as Epistemological Windows to Experiences and Theories of Emotions

Interpretive or new paradigms of psychology, such as, social constructionism or critical theory posit that the worldviews or experiences of people are shaped through the culturally shared meanings or metaphors (symbols) that not only help represent their lived realities, but also regulate interpersonal and person-community relationships. For example, in *Case I* mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the person expresses love for his country through a *symbol* of *Election Identity Card*, but simultaneously reasserts the unreasonableness of undue mistrust people of other religion had on him due to his religious identity (but for his Identity Card, it would have been extremely difficult for him to prove his patriotism). Apprently, both, expressing love or patriotism and reasserting unreasonableness of others' mistrust make him cry. In *Case II,* the *symbol* of *"zero"* denotes the mother's sadness over lack of any valued social identity (a good, capable, and nurturant mother) and resulting lower self-esteem while emphasizing the implicit gender norms that the entire burden of earning the livelihood and taking care of the family was on her rather than her

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[1] Basic tenets of social constructionist paradigm are (Priya, 2012, p. 213): "(a) Questioning or deconstructing the realist ontological claims that reality exists independent of the observer and universal and decontextualized theories represent its discovery through induction, (b) Reality is constructed through socio-historically situated interchanges amongst people, (c) The primary function of a talk or social interaction is to initiate or regulate some social action rather than to represent a discourse-independent reality, and (d) Understanding about human experiences may be coconstructed through dialogic partnership between a researcher and a participant where the worldview of none is privileged over the other."

husband or any other family member. *Case III* entails a poor person's, such as, a migrant labourer's engagement with *moon* as a *symbol* of aspirations or desires and with lullabies as a *symbol* of aesthetic sense that he or she needs to postpone (or forgot) for want of sufficient resources or securing food for survival.

This analysis of symbols or metaphors of emotions might not have been possible in a theoretical or epistemological vacuum. It was only with an assumption that the relational, cultural or socio-political contexts – prejudice and mistrust faced by Muslims in *Case I*; gender relations within economic globalization policy in *Case II*; everyday realities of poverty largely silent in the discourse of national or economic development in *Case III* – shape emotional experiences that these could be made intelligible. If we replace this assumption (of social constructionist paradigm), with another set of assumptions, the description and explanation of emotional experiences in Cases I to III might change. Paradigms of psychological science, thus, may themselves be viewed as a symbols or *metaphors of science* that inevitably inform a study of human experience, such as, emotions (often expressed through *personal metaphors* as observed in Cases I to III). Thus, as it often happens implicitly or explicitly in psychological research or theorizing, *scientific metaphors*, through their epistemological stance, make *personal metaphors* intelligible. For example, if we again get back to analyzing Cases I to III through the positivist paradigm that as per Sugiman et al. (2008) use "machine metaphor" in which a person is taken as an "input-output machine" or a "computer" (p. 1), the experiential realities of emotions shaped within the contexts – of communal riots, gender norms shaped by economic globalization, and poverty and forced migration respectively – will be silenced with a reinvigorated focus on physiological-cognitive processes that would reinterpret these emotions as mere sadness. At the most, the contexts mentioned above will be converted into independent variables.

Thus, given the nature of emotion that is taken to be complex even after more than a century of research in psychology, the personal metaphors used by people to express their emotions may denote approximate or incomplete (or even "unscientific") description or explanation, but their use is inevitable for communicating emotions' complexity. Such metaphors, thereby, may help us reach closer to the voice of people. On the other hand, scientific metaphors help us fathom the paradigmatic or epistemological positionality of the scientists in describing and explaining human experiences, such as, emotions. Importantly, metaphors also denote the functionality or purpose these may serve to the communicators. Already observed above in Cases I to III, personal metaphors of persons served important relational functions to them in the social worlds – reasserting unreasonableness of others' mistrust in *Case I*; emphasizing the implicit gender norms in *Case II*; postponing or forgetting aspiration, desires or aesthetics for want of food for survival in *Case III*. For psychologists of positivist orientation who use scientific metaphors in the study of emotions, we observed how their application of *machine metaphor* end up "ransacking" cultural specificity (Heider, 2011, p. 10) or make the new paradigm researcher, who focus on contextualizing emotional experience, look "foolhardy" (Strongman, 2003, p. 298).

Metaphors of Emotions in Psychological Concepts and Theories: Historical Overview and Critique

A standard textbook that introduces concepts and theories of emotions to the undergraduate students typically represents the use of machine metaphor. An example of this is the definition of emotion quoted in the textbook by Robert A. Baron (1997) in which it:

> refers to complex reactions consisting of (1) physiological responses such as changes in blood pressure and heart rate; (2) subjective cognitive states—the feelings we describe as happiness, anger, sorrow, or disgust; and (3) expressive reactions that reflect these internal states, such as changes in facial expressions or posture. (p. 382)

In this definition, the physiological, cognitive, and bodily expressions are present, but do experiential (past socialization), relational, social, or cultural processes also constitute emotional experiences?

Etymological, cultural and historical analysis of the conception of emotion in psychology by Averill (1969, 1973, 1976, 1996) points to the application of unfounded and unscientifically used metaphors, such as, *physiological, irrational, and less-evolved and animal-like* to study human emotion largely focusing on the physiology-oriented study that are contrary to the discipline's claims of using objective and empirical science. It is noteworthy that these metaphorsof emotions, as Averill (1996) accentuates, are of Western origin. Psychologists have largely ignored a more pluralistic conception of emotion, focusing on the cultural and moral discourses shaping experiences, that may be found in the works of Aristotle and Charles Darwin (Harré & Parrott, 1996).

Aristotle and Darwin Speak: Is Emotion Exclusively Biological or Evolutionary in Its Essence?

It is highly surprising, however, to note that psychologists have been extremely selective in adopting a physiological-cognitive model of emotion in most of the theories, given the fact that the machine metaphor is not the only one emphasized or endorsed by the philosophers or scientists of the stature of Aristotle or Charles Darwin (Harré & Parrott, 1996; Parrott, 2019). Aristotle's theory of emotion, as Daniel Robinson (1996) accentuates, "incorporates moral, social, developmental and cognitive considerations within a larger naturalistic framework" (p. 22). Robinson provides an example from Aristotle's views on shame, fear and anger:

> People who feel shame, Aristotle says, blush, whereas those who fear death turn pale. These emotions reflect conditions of the body but are also predicated on different cognitions; in the one case, fear of disrepute, in the other fear of physical pain. As fear of disrepute can have a salutary effect on conduct, inclining persons to live *according to the expectations of others,* it is a passion well suited to youth. . . .Nor is one to be judged harshly for anger if this passion is *unjustly provoked.* Rather, it is the instigator who is blameworthy as is one who when treated unjustly is not angry! Anger, as Aristotle understands it, is a feeling of pain coupled with a desire for avenging a wrong; one is angry over a 'conspicuous slight at the hands of those who have no cause to slight oneself'. (p. 22, emphasis added)

Similarly, Charles Darwin (1996) whose work is often stereotypically quoted in the textbooks in psychology to be the corner stone of biological or evolutional theories of emotion provides

a counterexample to this popular image of his theory asserting simultaneously the essentially moral (rather than necessarily biological-evolutionary) cause of emotions. As he has illustrated, emotions of shyness, shame and modesty induce blushing; contrary to the belief that physiological reactions being at the essence of emotion or the cause of emotional expressions (e.g., fear or joy being produced by the sight of a person or object). He further accentuates that *moral cause* of such emotions: "It is not the simple art of reflecting on our own appearance, but the thinking *what others think of us*, which excites a blush" (p. 310, emphasis added).

The Arrival of Machine Metaphor: The "Enlightenment" Effects

Notwithstanding such pluralistic conceptions of emotion available in the works of historically important scholars, such as, Aristotle and Charles Darwin, the machine metaphor propounded to study human nature or experiences in the 17th and 18th century by the Enlightenment philosophers started getting applied in psychological study of emotion. These philosophers were also instrumental in establishing the logical positivist approach to science – focused on the study of a phenomenon (including human experiences) by considering reality as existing out there to be discovered in terms of universal laws about that phenomenon – that also served as the yardstick of scientific rigour or legitimacy of knowledge being produced in psychology since late 19th century (Robinson, 1995). With such "scientific" orientation to use machine metaphor, a variety of physiological-cognitive theories of emotion have been formulated since late 19th centuy

Following the predominant machine metaphor as the theoretical foundation of the study of human behaviour or experiences, William James (1884) and C. G. Lange (1885) believed that the perception of a potentially emotion-evoking stimulus (e.g., mother for the child) in the cerebral cortex leads to changes in viscera as well as skeletal muscles, and as the cerebral cortex receives the feedback of these bodily changes, the person feels these bodily changes to be emotion (e.g., happiness for the child). This theory is popularly known as James-Lange theory. A couple of decades later, Walter B. Canon (1915) along with Phillip Bard not only criticized James-Lange theory, but also came up with a theory, namely, Cannon-Bard theory, that brought to the fore the importance of neurophysiology of emotion. Their theory added that it is thalamus rather than cortex that plays a central role in feeling the emotion. When thalamus receives the information about the stimulus, it nearly simultaneously produces bodily changes and gives feedback to the cortex leading to feeling of emotion. A two-factor theory by Stanley Schachter (1959) added the role of cognition in understanding emotion. According to this theory, the bodily arousal is caused by sympathetic nervous system. A cognitive appraisal of these bodily changes makes us feel the emotion. In the recent developments on these physiology- or physiology-cognition-based theories, the role of amygdala in informing the brain about the presence of stimuli-evoked arousal through working memory has been hailed as the basis of being aware of (or feeling) the emotion (LeDoux & Phelps, 2008). Furthermore, as reflected in Izard's (2009) review of the psychological theories of emotion, the predominant biological-cognitive orientation that continue to guide emotion research using the machine metaphor include (a) "*brain responses constitute emotion* or the body expression of emotion" and feeling of emotion is an outcome or a phase of neurobiological processes (p. 3, emphasis added) and (b) there are "*basic emotions* rooted and defined primarily in evolution and biology and *emotion schemas* that

include cognitive components that differ across individuals and cultures" (p. 6, emphasis added).

The Mid-20th Century "Affective Turn": Struggle towards Pluralistic Studies of Emotions

One of the major criticisms of logical positivism – a predominant paradigm of science followed in mainstream psychology – is that contrary to its claims of objectivity and neutrality, a silent but certain use of cultural values or standards underlie research and theory-building. Therefore, as Parrott (2019) traces the history of emotion research in psychology, he finds that midway in the 20th century, "emotion was understood more as a *source of disorganization* than of functionality, more as a topic of biology than of cognition, language, or culture" (p. 131, emphasis added). As observed above, emotion being irrational or a source of disorganization has largely been an assumption of the Western world (Averill, 1969, 1973, 1976, 1996; Sundararajan, 2015). However, there arose some motivation among social scientists and psychologists in 1960s and 1970s to still pursue this field. In this "emotional revolution" or "affective turn" (Parrott, 2019, p. 131) within academic social science, "the philosophers, anthropologists, and sociologists were concerned with the cognitive elaboration and cultural diversity of emotions", but "the psychological renaissance largely proceeded from assumptions that emotions were innate, involuntary, primitive, and non-cognitive" (p. 132). Parrott further noticed:

> With a few exceptions, the psychologists disregarded emotions' incorporation of subtle social knowledge, culturally-specific moral standards, and the distinctions marked by different languages. Furthermore, they employed the research methods of Behaviorism, biological psychology, and context-free experimental manipulation that would be ill-suited to exploring such topics. (p. 132)

As Parrott (2019) recounts, amidst such positivist and Eurocentric conception of emotion through the use of machine metaphor, there arose a growing interest in critical evaluation of the mainstream psychological research on emotion and a social constructionist orientation towards studying emotional experiences. Works by James Averill (1969, 1973, 1976 1996), Udai Jain (1994), and later the two edited books – *The Social Construction of Emotions* (Harré 1986) and *The Emotions: Social, Cultural, and Biological Dimensions* (Harré and Parrott 1996) – were some of the important studies that brought about a paradigm shift in the psychological study of emotions.

It is noteworthy that despite noticing a risk that psychologists may face in endorsing this paradigm shift, Strongman's (2003) fifth edition of the volume, *The Psychology of Emotion* has full-fledged chapters devoted to phenomenological, cultural, and other social science discipline's (philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies) perspectives. Besides, the volume also includes a chapter devoted to a variety of paradigms, such as, biological, evolutionary, social constructionist, and post-modernist among others. This paradigm shift in emotion studies in psychology, thus, was a move towards pluralism or hybridity in conceptualization and research orientation (Harré, 1986, 2009; Harré & Parrott, 1996; Parrott, 2019). We present in the following section, some elaboration on this paradigm shift in the psychological study emotion that is now more open to endorse social constructionism.

Creating Space for "Hybrid" and "Spiritual" Metaphors: The Social Constructionist Paradigm

Reviewing the works of scholars of emotions who have underscored the merits of not only evolutionary and biological, but also cognitive, cultural, and relational approaches to emotion, Harré and Parrott (1996) have put forward a social constructionist orientation towards emotion by defining it in the following manner:

Emotions are at once bodily responses and expressions of judgements, at once somatic and cognitive. They seem to have deep evolutionary roots, yet they are, among human phenomena, notably *culturally variable in many of their aspects.* Even the somatic aspect of emotions is complex. *There are emotion displays and there are, in some cultures, emotion feelings, and neither is immune from cultural influence. . . . their display is subject to rules and conventions; they are embedded in culturally specific moral orders and normative systems that allow for assessments of the correctness or impropriety of emotions.* (p. 1, emphasis added)

Deconstructing mind-body dualism and irrational, less-evolved and animal-like connotations as the implicit Western assumptions underlying the conception of emotion (Averill, 1969, 1973, 1976, 1996; Parrott, 2019; Sundararajan, 2015) has been possible using social constructionist paradigm. Also, multiple *facets* of experiences, expression and functions of emotions have been pointed out by Harré and Parrott (1996) as they have elaborated on the "cognitive and linguistic, the social, cultural and historical" besides the biological and evolutionary aspects of emotions (p. 13). More recently, Harré (2009) has used the "hybrid" metaphor for such nature of emotion by highlighting a conception of emotion "involving bodily perturbations, judgments of meanings, and the social force of emotion displays" (p. 294).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide detailed elaborations on how such hybrid metaphor of emotion may lead to delineating not only culturally constructed metaphors of emotional experiences, but also the relational functions these might entail for the culture-sharing communities. However, we would like to briefly mention some such exemplary and illustrative works by Udai Jain (1994) and Louise Sundararajan (2015). As far as the relational functions of metaphors of emotions goes, we will illustrate through the works of Ting and Sundararajan (2018) how the local "spiritual" metaphors of emotions have been ignored or wiped out in the process of modernization or economic development for some ethnic minority groups of Chinese society.

Reconstructing Emotional Experiences in Cultural Context

Jain (1994) has illustrated a transcendental or spiritual experience of emotion in the Indian subcontinent that has been a part of people's life not only in the ancient India as reflected in the ancient text of *Natyasastra*, but also in contemporary times as indicated in ethnographic studies. Such a spiritual emotion or meta-emotion is *rasa* or aesthetic joy. *Rasa* has everyday emotions as a source, but these are experienced in the relational context – artiste-audience, poet-reader, or other personal relationships – by people who tend to realize their spiritual consciousness. Jain points out, "Devotional (*bhakti*) mode of self-realisation captures this aesthetic experience as a way to approach God. Such symbolic representation of emotions goes beyond most of the dualities such as irrational-rational, mind-body, internal-

external, concrete-abstract and individual-social" (p. 159). Furthermore, "even those emotions which modem psychology calls negative emotions – like disgust, horror, sadness – are capable of producing *rasa* in combination with other emotions" (p. 158). Also, in everyday life, as Jain points out, such spiritual emotion may be observed, for example, in the form of love. Citing examples from a study of experience and expressions of love *(appu)* in Tamil society by Trawick (1990), he shows how love could be expressed as:

> *containment* (love of mother to her son is kept hidden), love is considered as *gradual habituation* (gradually it turns into a habit and one cannot live without it), love is also expressed as *cruelty* (e.g., harsh treatment of children for their future good). It is even enacted in "*dirtiness*" (such acts as lustful infatuation, or eating together from the same plate). This study shows the varied manifestations of a single emotion based on the social relationships between the actors (mother-child, husband-wife, kith and kin, etc.). (p. 163-164, emphasis added)

In another example of the use of spiritual metaphor of emotions, as Sundararajan (2015) points out, the Chinese term that is nearest in its meaning to emotion is "*qing gan*" or " *gan qing"*. Emotions, as per these terms, signify "what it is to be human" as these are taken to be an essential aspect of human nature (p. 192). *Qing* "discloses something that is true about the person and the world . . . it is *qing* that grounds us in reality; it is humans who distort reality when they fail to be true to their *qing* (p. 192). *Gan* represents a "resonating feedback loop based on an intrinsic affinity between all things in a sympathetic universe" (p. 192). Clearly, similar to what Jain (1994) observed in the Indian setting, a transcendental conception and experience of emotions are evident in Chinese culture too.

Which Metaphor is Real? Deconstructing Homogeneity and Reification of Emotional Lives

Social constructionist approach to emotions through the use of pluralistic metaphors of emotions also cautions against reifying any metaphor as the only and final truth, as it entails the danger of homogenizing as well as excluding diverse realities of people. Much as Gergen (1994) and Sampson (1993) have accentuated that reifiable images or metaphors that are in use for describing human experiences or characteristics often act as tools to create and maintain social hierarchies by the powerful in the society and the academic world. Similarly, Sundararajan (2015) and Ting and Sundararajan (2018) have alerted researchers of emotion about any homogenized notion of Chinese culture or Chinese emotions. For example, Ting and Sundararajan (2018) have pointed out that the *Yi-Bimo* community endorses a more relational worldview of self and emotion than the *Yi-Christian* community (both constitute ethnic minority communities) in China. Furthermore, through their rigourous ethnographic analysis of emotional experiences of these communities, Ting and Sundararajan (2018) have illustrated how pluralistic and spiritual metaphors used in the everyday life of people induces healing and resilience among the distressed, but on the other hand, the same were "deemed 'superstitious' and 'illegal' during the Cultural Revolution in China (1960s–1980s)" and further excluded by an uncritical enforcement of medical science and economic development in their social world in the contemporary times (p. xiv). These authors elaborate that for Yi-Bimo community, its cognitive and emotional resources are

located primarily in the communal space of the collective, rather than in the individual psyche. To such an embedded community, in which the mind is embedded in the body, which in turn is embedded in the collective life of myths and rituals, the process of rapid modernization is especially devastating. One extreme form of modernization was the Cultural Revolution, during which time all native religious rituals and folklore practices were banned, and their symbolic expression "silenced" in the public arena. It was not until the 1980s that the government began to accept and restore the Bimo cultural tradition as the World's Heritage. Yet, there was a generational gap and a vacuum in collective memory. The local Yi people picked up the Bimo rituals, but had lost the language for understanding them. . . . This "culture amnesia" in the younger generation of Yi people takes a heavy toll, as it deprives the Yi of the collective resources needed to regulate their emotions, while under the stress of migrant work, especially being away in a strange city without the strong support of their clan (*jia zhi*). (p. 254)

How the social world that shapes positive (relational) emotions of people are the ones that are targeted in modern times in the garb of economic model of development has been of critical concern among the psychiatrists and social scientist of trauma and healing (Priya, 2018; Summerfield, 1999). We turn to the diverse, but powerful use of metaphors of emotion in psychiatric science as well as qualitative studies of trauma and healing in the next two sections.

Psychiatric Metaphors for Emotional Reactions and Outcomes of Trauma: A Critical Overview

The etymology of the term, "trauma" reveals that it is derived from Greek language, and it means "wound" (Quosh & Gergen, 2008). The traumatized or psychologically wounded person often undergoes trauma due to loss of physical health, life, valuables, or relationships that one has encountered in accidents, violence, or other forms of man-made or natural disasters. This sense of loss is often associated with difficult emotional experiences including sadness or distress. Therefore, the theories, concepts, perspectives or metaphors of emotions often play important role in understanding trauma and recovery towards mental health or wellbeing. Again, therefore, the metaphors of emotions and selfhood that are in use in the mental health research and intervention warrant a systematic exploration. A critical overview of the use of such metaphors in the psychiatric perspective towards trauma and intervention, that is pivoted on the diagnostic category of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and treatment for the same, is provided below.

The Machine Metaphor of PTSD

Gupta, Bhattacharya, and Priya (2019) noted that since late 1970s and early 1980s, when psychiatrists and social scientists with an interdisciplinary orientation, such as, Arthur Kleinman and Veena Das, were conducting ethnographic studies to explore the structural (socio-political) context of violence and its impact on everyday experiences of suffering among the survivors (Das, 1985, 1990; Kleinman, 1977, 1987), another movement was going on at the same time in mainstream psychiatry to universalize the impact of trauma. More

pluralistic and hybrid metaphors of difficult emotional experiences were being used by the former and an implicit use of machine metaphor in the latter. PTSD, in the early 1980s, was formulated as a mental disorder keeping in mind the mental health problems of the Vietnam war veterans. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – III (DSM-III) listed PTSD as a psychiatric disorder with the symptoms cluster of (a) re-experiencing the past traumatic events, (b) numbing and avoidance of stimuli associated with traumatic events, and (c) hyperarousal (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). In mainstream psychiatry, this became a potentially generalizable diagnosis potentially resulting from an exposure to traumatic events ranging from death of a loved one to accident, sexual violence, wars, ethnic violence etc. The focus of the clinicians shifted from the person to the traumatic events as a marked change in diagnosis process was set in motion by PTSD (Alexander, 2004). In current times, the symptoms of PTSD, according to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – 5 (DSM-5), are (a) re-experiencing (b) numbness and avoidance (c) hyperarousal, and (d) negative cognition and mood (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). PTSD as a diagnostic category comes with its rationale of underlying neurophysiological as well as cognitive processes occurring within the traumatized individual.

Increased sympathetic nervous system (SNS) activity is important for survival of the person while addressing stressors for a shorter duration of time. Heightened SNS activity with higher cortisol levels resulting from increased hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal activity helps in addressing the stressor. Homeostasis usually brings the body back to normal SNS activity after the perceived threat due to the stressor ends. During chronic stress or trauma conditions, an imbalance occurs in autonomic nervous system (ANS) that entails a "new normal" for the physiological system with decreased parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) activity and lower activity of an inhibitory neurotransmitter, that is, gamma amino-butyric acid (GABA) along with increased SNS activity (marked by increased cortisol levels and HPA axis activity). This new normal is considered as *allostatic load,* and PTSD is considered to be the response pattern to the allostatic load (Wilson, 2004). Another important explanation for PTSD is retriggering of traumatic memory, that is, unresolved (inadequately processed) emotion and cognition associated with the traumatic event, in the post-trauma period. Kienzler (2008), in her review of literature on trauma and mental health outcomes, pointed out that for people exposed to severe traumatic events, PTSD symptoms can constitute the experience of psychopathology. However, it is the exclusive focus on PTSD as *the* predominant mental health outcome of trauma that, as literature points out, may silence the diverse difficult emotional experiences of survivors. We explore this next.

PTSD as Unknown-Size-Fits-All Machine Metaphor: A Critique

Similar to the psychologists endorsing machine metaphor and resisting pluralistic, cultural or hybrid metaphors, psychologists and psychiatrists, in general, focus exclusively on PTSD in their theorizing and research on the outcome of trauma (Bracken, Giller & Summerfield, 1995; Quosh & Gergen, 2008; Kienzler, 2008; Priya, 2015, 2018; Weiss, Saraceno, Saxena, & van Ommeren, 2003; Summerfield, 1999). This defies logic for the following reasons:

(a) Imprecise causality: Neurophysiology and neuropsychology of PTSD

(b) Symptoms not necessarily representing psychopathology

(c) Diverse experiences of distress (threat to wellbeing) or psychopathology other than PTSD

(d) Culture and distress: Available pluralistic metaphors of self and trauma

(e) Dyadic therapies not meaningful and effective especially in socio-centric cultures

It has been extremely difficult for the researchers of trauma to establish the neurophysiological or neuropsychological basis of PTSD symptoms, although attempts have been made in the direction of causality due to allostatic load (Streeter, Gerbarg, Saper, Ciraulo, and Brown, 2012) or traumatic memory (Wilson, 2004). For example, allostatic load may result in not only PTSD, but also epilepsy and depression (Streeter et al., 2012). Also, besides traumatic memory, the socio-political processes (e.g., inequity or discrimination) in the aftermath of traumatic event may retraumatize the survivor (Bracken et al., 1995; Weiss et al., 2003). Furthermore, Quosh and Gergen (2008) have noted that the diversity in potential sources (trauma events) is one major barrier in establishing such causality:

> One might hope that brain-scan research could provide an ultimate breakthrough. There are studies of this kind as well as recommendations about the pharmaceutical treatment of PTSD (McNally 2003; Schiraldi 2000). At the same time, investigators in this area do realize that there are problems in identifying the cortical locus of PTSD. As McNally (2003) describes, "With such diverse events deemed causally relevant to PTSD, it will be difficult to identify common psychobiologic mechanisms underlying symptomatic expression."(pp. 103-104)

Even if the causality is established and symptoms are found, do these mean that the symptoms necessarily represent psychopathology? Bracken, Giller and Summerfield (1995), in their classical ethnographic study of trauma and distress among the survivors of civil war in Uganda, noted that presence of PTSD symptoms in some survivors did not necessarily mean experience of psychopathology, and absence of these symptoms did not mean that distress or psychopathology was not experienced by the survivors. They elaborated:

> In Uganda *we looked for the symptoms of PTSD* and found that while these were often present, they seldom dominated the person's account of his or her suffering. For example, in a series of rape victims the commonest presenting complaints were *somatic* in nature. These were felt by the women to have *stemmed from the rape experience*. In a society where fertility is of great importance, *subsequent failure to conceive* ranked highly amongst presenting complaints. Although on further questioning many admitted to symptoms consistent with a diagnosis of PTSD, very few chose to present with these and instead sought treatment for the somatic problems. *These somatic complaints were not just 'epiphenomena', but the way in which these women actually experienced their distress.* (p. 1078, emphasis added)

Clearly, neither the presence of PTSD necessarily represent psychopathology, nor PTSD is the only distress that survivors are concerned about. Priya (2015) in his study of the survivors of Nandigram violence in India, where the state government used violence and torture to forcibly evict the villagers from their habitat to build a chemical factory on their land, noted

that rather than PTSD, their major distress was the "betrayal" they went through in the hand of the government as well as community members. One such villager reported:

> The biggest cheating was done by the state government as it proclaimed that it cared for farmers but it began to kill us. . . . The people who were threatening me of abduction are still living in this village. They have not left their homes. After my father was abducted, they were telling me, 'We will abduct you too. We will cut you into pieces, pack you in a box and throw it in the river.''' (p. 436)

For such villagers, who might not be diagnosed as having PTSD, but went through intense distress of betrayal, if PTSD is used as the exclusive criterion of victimhood, then "some *victims would not be believed* if they could not secure the diagnosis" (Summerfield, 1999, p. 1450, emphasis added). Importantly, cultural variations in understanding the meanings of trauma and distress have been completely ignored by highlighting PTSD as a predominant and universalistic mental health problem following exposure to traumatic events. Rather, an implicit Western notion of self "constituted through continuities of memory" (Breslau, Lucia, & Davis, 2004, p. 116) forms the foundation of supposedly "culture-free" conception of PTSD. Summerfield (1999, p. 1455) has elaborated:

> Many ethnomedical systems have taxonomies which range across the physical, supernatural and moral realms, and do not conceive of illness as situated in body or mind alone… Western trauma theory, which likens the brain to a *machine* and sees PTSD as the result of *incomplete emotional and cognitive processing within that machine*, cannot make sense in such settings (Bracken et al. 1995, emphasis added).

Given such different notions of trauma and difficult emotions associated with that prevalent in diverse cultures of the world, is it sufficient to use supposedly universalistic treatment or psychotherapy for addressing these?

Therapies for PTSD: Repairing the "Faulty" Machine Ignoring Inputs It Received

The paraphernalia of "scientific" metaphors, including the machine metaphor of emotion, for describing, explaining, and intervening (through emotion regulation) has also been used in the study of trauma over last four decades. As Weiss et al. (2003) have noted, PTSD as a mental health outcome may be more relevant in cultures where self is defined in terms of *agency* that may orient the person to actively work towards emotion regulation. In socio-centric cultures, where rather than agency and control, *relational harmony* defines selfhood, trauma survivors might not be oriented towards emotion regulation (Lewis-Fernandez & Kleinman, 1994). For example, as Sundararajan (2015) and Ting and Sundararajan (2018) have points out, emotion regulation to address difficult life experiences might not be conducive in the traditional Chinese societies, where the emotional experiences do not merely entail cognitive appraisal of the environmental stimuli, but are shaped by relatedness with the community or humanity. Thus, if post-trauma difficult emotional experiences are more cultural and relational rather than merely physiological-cognitive, it is no surprise that typically dyadic psychotherapies might not be relevant in socio-centric cultures that constitute a majority of world's population (Lewis-Fernandez & Kleinman, 1994). Bracken, Giller and Summerfield (1995) have elaborated:

In many other societies, different conceptions of the *self and its relationship to the social and the supernatural* also mean that explorations of *inner* emotions and conflicts have less relevance than in the West. In short, helping to alleviate distress by the exploration of intrapsychic cognitions, emotions and conflicts is a form of healing somewhat peculiar to Western societies and of doubtful relevance to societies holding different core assumptions about the nature of the self and illness. (p. 1075, emphasis added)

The role of *cultural* healing (typical dyadic Western psychotherapies or spiritual or community-based healing in the non-Western world) cannot be emphasized more as a way to address difficult emotional experiences related to exposure to traumatic events. Meta-analytical studies, such as, the ones by Benish et al. (2008) comparing various therapies, including variants of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) or eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) have delved deeper into relative effectiveness of processing involved in them. Priya (2018) in his review of such studies analyzing effectiveness of therapies for PTSD noted that

despite the evidence of the efficacy of various therapies ranging from CBT, psychodynamic therapy, EMDR, exposure therapy to trauma desensitization compared to the control groups, it was *not the type of therapy that predicted their success*. (p. 364, emphasis added)

Furthermore, as Hubble et al. (2010) have assessed through such reviews the effectiveness of various psychotherapies. As Priya (2018) noted, their contribution pointed to the pattern that it is the

factors, including *self-generated change by the clients, and goal consensus and collaboration within therapeutic relationship*, which may be common in different types of psychotherapies predict the successful outcomes of these therapies. Generally, these two factors also assume importance as these incorporate the crucial input in terms of the cultural context and cultural meanings of health and illness. (p. 364, emphasis added)

We will return to this pattern accentuating the role of culture and compassion in healing difficult emotional experiences of trauma in the next section. Before that, we will briefly touch the reasons behind the dominance of the machine metaphor in understanding such psychological effects of trauma and their treatment that often relegates the cultural, hybrid, or pluralistic metaphors to the background.

PTSD as Medicalization of Socio-Politically Induced Distress: Geopolitics of Machine Metaphor

Understanding emotions and intervening for emotional or illness problems, as we observed earlier, are generally approached uncritically through the use of medical paradigm. Economic globalization or economic development policies that are being applied in the various countries of the world facilitates the process of medicalization as it commodifies mental health care (Ting & Sundarajan, 2018; Bhatia & Priya, 2018). Summerfiled (1999)

observed how in case of trauma (such as, violence or armed conflicts) such alien intervention approaches (based on medicalization of mental health care) to address difficult emotions or distress may further silence the survivors:

> Humanitarian interventions are not exempt from considerations of *power and ideology*, and may be at risk of an unwitting *perpetuation of the colonial status of the non-Western mind* . . . . Western psychological concepts are a product of a globalising culture and increasingly present as *definitive* knowledge. The possibility that the Western trauma discourse imported into communities socioculturally devitalised by war might impair their struggle to reconstitute a shared sense of reality, morality and dignity merits serious consideration. Once people are defined as sick (`traumatised') a treatment is needed and experts to provide it or people trained and supervised by experts . . . . These *experts know* how the sickness will progress and what will constitute a recovery. In the face of this there may be real pressure on far-flung war-torn populations to represent their suffering in a `modernised' form if they are to have their predicament recognised by humanitarian agencies. It would be an irony if their calculations of their best chances of survivorhood induced them to present in a victim mode in which *their resilience, resourcefulness and, not least, rage over injustice was played down or hidden*. (pp. 1458-1459, emphasis added)

Furthermore, as China Mills' (2014, 2018) analysis of *commodification* of mental health problems in the economic globalization era has revealed, a deliberate use of medicalization (and psychiatry approach) of socio-politically induced distress or trauma usually boosts the pharmaceutical companies side-tracking the context-based resources that may aid the survivors' experience of relational or cultural healing. What could be more *dehumanizing* for these survivors who are, as result of medicalization of structurally induced distress, rendered a *burden* on national or global economy (Mills, 2018)?

Culturally Shared Metaphors of Trauma and Emotional Experience: Towards Healing

Returning to the Cases I to III that we engaged with in the beginning of the chapter, we could note that a machine metaphor might limit our understanding of their experiences to be sadness or distress. Taking up a social constructionist approach allowed us a pluralistic, relational, or cultural understanding of their emotional experiences through the metaphors of "Election Identity Card", "zero", "moon" etc. Besides, we also inferred how these metaphors also have the relational functions of "reasserting the unreasonableness of undue mistrust people of other religion had on the Muslim man due to his religious identity", "emphasizing the implicit gender norms that the entire burden of earning the livelihood and taking care of the family was on the mother rather than any other family member", and "postponing or forgetting fulfilment of desires or aspirations for want of sufficient resources to secure food for survival" in Cases I to III respectively. Importantly, the machine metaphor, through universalistic approach to diagnosis and treatment is often utilized by psychiatrists and psychologists for testing and treatment of PTSD that as we observed above. This may silence human miseries reflected in Cases I to III owing to relationally, culturally or socio-politically generated distress through enforcing "scientific" exercise of medicalization. Given this, promoting further use of machine metaphor through other medicalization-promoting practices, such as evidence-based practice or randomized control trails further reinforces what

Kirmayer (2012a) has summarized as the "scientific" practices often "*biased by specific disciplinary, economic or political interests and cultural assumptions*" (p. 249, emphasis added). Kirmayer (2012a, 2012b) has instead accentuated the need to critically foster cultural competence among researchers in terms of developing "cultural humility" and "cultural safety".

According to Kirmayer (2012a), cultural humility entails "the need to respect and be open to clients' own culturally-based understandings of their illness and treatment interventions" beside realizing the fact that a researcher or clinician can only gain a "limited access to insider culture knowledge" rather than complete mapping of the native's human and social world as usually claimed in the scientific approaches to mental health (p. 251). Furthermore, "*cultural safety* shifts attention to the historical and political contexts of health care, insisting that clinicians and health care institutions have a responsibility to work to make the clinical encounter safe by *acknowledging and addressing structural violence and inequality* (p. 251, emphasis added). In the remaining part of this section, we focus on (a) examples of cultural metaphors used by the survivors of trauma in comprehending their own difficult emotions (owing to structural violence) and facilitating healing and (b) the ways to engage with the survivors through creation of a humanizing space that respects or values their experiences or worldview.

Healing refers to the process of developing a new enabling meaning in life amidst illness, trauma or distress with the help of culturally valued beliefs or symbols within the humanizing interactional spaces the distressed person and the listeners (community members, clinicians or researchers) together constitute (Cassell, 2004, 2013; Priya, 2012, 2015, 2018; Kleinman, 1988a, 1988b). Cassell (2004, 2013) accentuates that healing pertains to the reformulation of selfhood constituted pivotally by cultural meanings and emotional experiences. Healing, thus, indicates how a survivor may experience wellbeing that is intricately linked with enabling emotional experiences shaped within the cultural context (Priya, 2018). For example, Misra (2010) accentuates this further in relation with the Indian setting:

> The state of well-being refers to a tranquil state of mind achieved through harmony with other people, society, and nature . . . . It lies in the rhythm that characterizes resonance across all life forms and cannot be equated with material prosperity. The evidence does not indicate that the level of happiness or SWB [subjective wellbeing] is linearly related to the extent of economic growth . . . . The Indian notions of well-being are less dispositional and more interpersonally distributed. They necessarily entail affective engagement of a relational self in the eco-cultural context. Therefore, an examination of the relationship between emotion and the self seems appropriate. (p. 97)

As noted above, the culturally valued beliefs or symbols implicit in mental health concepts (diagnostic categories and psychotherapies) of mainstream psychiatry and psychology pertain to the Western or Euro-American worldview (Lewis-Fernandez & Kleinman, 1994). In the previous section, we observed that survivors belonging to a different cultural milieu, who do not adhere to this Western worldview, may find their experiences of trauma and distress silenced by the use of PTSD, deemed to be the major mental health

outcome for trauma survivors across cultures. Therefore, it makes sense to focus on the cultural symbols and metaphors that facilitate the processes of healing in the non-Western world that, as per Lewis-Fernandez and Kleinman, adhere more to the socio-centric worldview (valuing relational harmony more than the sense of agency and control).

Relational and Spiritual Metaphors for Healing

Priya (2013) reported the findings of an ethnographic study he conducted among the survivors of an earthquake that struck Kachchh district in Gujarat state of India in January, 2001. The belief of the villagers, who constituted a set of participants in his study, in *karma*, that is "internalized duties towards oneself, family, community and other beings of nature", pivotally shaped their everyday discourses and actions in the post-earthquake period (p. 362). Priya reported that their belief in karma not only reaffirmed their sense of transcendental self, but also provided *shanti* (peace of mind), besides inspiring them to contribute towards welfare of humanity as well as birds or animals (parts of their ecological habitat). Maya Ben's (a 48-year-old woman) husband expired in that earthquake. Her belief in karma could enable her to engage in everyday life with purpose and this could help her experience shanti:

> My only son who lives in Mumbai, calls me there feeling that I would be lonely here. But, I do not like to leave this place. I have brought back one of my granddaughters from Mumbai and I look after her. Living at this place, I would be able to do some punya like, *sewa* or service to animals, birds, cow and poor people. Living here doing this gives me shanti. (p. 362)

Priya reported another ethnographically generated poignant story about how Paras Bhai, a 42-year-old villager working as a daily-wage labourer could meaningfully engage with his grief towards healing. He had received Rs. 80,000 (about 1000 USD) from the state government as compensation for the death of her 13-year-old daughter in the earthquake. He added another Rs. 20,000 (about 250 USD) to the received compensation money and contributed this money towards rebuilding the ruined bus stop (due to earthquake) near his village. In his conversation with Priya, he conveyed that "he did feel sad whenever he came across the bus stop but at the same time, also felt motivated to carry out his karma with compassion towards all beings of nature" (p. 363). He elaborated:

> The death of my beloved daughter showed to me that our lives and those of our loved ones won't last forever. Therefore, whatever time we have in this world, we must try to do whatever we can for the society and humanity. Building the bust stop for the village was a small step in this direction . . . . (p. 363)

In another ethnographic study on the survivors of political violence in rural area of Nandigram in West Bengal district of India, Priya (2015) noted how some survivors' healing could be facilitated by the culturally shared metaphor of *"shahid"* (martyr) or sacrifice that provided moral re-affirmation of being some good for the entire community's welfare. The villagers did not want to give away their land being forcibly evacuated by the state government to build a chemical factory there. Indeed, this relational and transcendental cultural value of contributing towards community welfare by laying down one's life gave the family members of the martyr a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction amidst suffering. Aman, aged 36 year, was a daily-wage labourer, who lost his son (in his teenage) when a peaceful

procession against the land-grab by the government was attacked by the cadres of ruling political party of the state. Aman shared a feeling of fulfilment as his son became a martyr for the sake of the community:

> My family and I are in the midst of agony and joy. . . My son is a shahid (martyr). When some meeting or procession is held and people raise the slogan, *"Shaurya amar rahe!"* ("Long live Shaurya!"), I have a sense of fulfilment. . . . The agony of Shaurya's death will remain with us throughout our lives but to live our lives, we need to do our work and earn our livelihood. This is our *kartavya* (duty) towards them. (p. 441, emphasis in original)

Similarly, Yaksh, a 60-year-old villager, faced the loss of his son on 07 January 2007, who was killed in a similar attack by the party cadres of the ruling political party on a peaceful procession against land-grab. Yaksh also shared a sense of fulfilment over the martyrdom of his son.

> I felt *anand* (joy) while talking to you. It is so because my son died but people from all parts of our country came and talked about us and our movement. I feel honoured by that… [silence]… It was one thing if my son had after illness but he died to protect our motherland, he cannot be called 'dead'." (p. 440)

How culturally shared relational and spiritual metaphors may shape healing process is also indicated in the ethnographic study of Bracken, Giller, and Summerfield (1995) who explored survivors' distress and healing associated with the civil war of 1980s in Uganda:

> A 40-year-old Ugandan man who had been a prominent politician in the past was arrested and brought to an army compound. He was held for seven days. During this time, he was beaten and humiliated while being interrogated. . . . He told us that he was a Christian but that prior to his imprisonment his faith had not meant a great deal to him. While he was in detention, he felt a strong identification with the figure of Jesus Christ who had also suffered torture and humiliation. He found that his own suffering and his identification with Christ brought him closer to his religion and since his ordeal the quality of his spiritual life was intensified. He indicated that because of this the overall effect of his experience had been positive for him. (p. 1077)

In the following section, we explore how compassionate or empathy-based engagement of researchers with the survivors of trauma has facilitated the exploration of such cultural or relationally shaped experiences of distress and healing.

Compassion in Fieldwork: When Emotional Experiences Become Intelligible

The metaphors of emotional experiences in Cases I to III mentioned in the beginning of this chapter not only represented contextually shaped experiences, but also simultaneously indicated their relational functions in the lives of the emoting persons. These relational

functions may be viewed as ways of highlighting how their voices were silenced by the hierarchies of religion, gender and class. One way to re-centre these silenced or marginalized voices is the use of reflexive qualitative methodologies. Pandey et al. (2019), Priya (2019), and Gemignani (2017) have pointed out the need for the researcher to be reflexive about (a) the researcher-participant or knower-knowable hierarchy and (b) one's own personal experiences that may help create an empathic relationship with the participant. Radley (2004) emphasizes that empathic connection necessitates a compassionate step taken by the researcher towards participant's experiences, especially related to illness or distress: "Other's suffering recognized in my own experience is that which provides not an explanation but a demand for a response that in its immediacy is termed compassionate" (p. 35).

Priya's (2012) reflections, for examples, on his personal experiences could help him develop empathic connection with a survivor of Kachchh earthquake, with whom he was engaging compassionately earlier in the day:

> I was reminded of my childhood crisis (of being told by my family members about the uncertainty of my mother's recovery from meningitis) the day I interviewed a widow in her mid-40s in a post-earthquake setting (Priya 2010). She began to weep before me after she shared only this about her daily routine, *"kain . . kain karun chhun"* ("something . . . I do something"). It was indeed difficult for me to bear the minutes of silence that followed. Before taking leave and promising to meet her again, she insisted that I should take tea that she made and served quietly. Before leaving the field after completing my field work, I asked her whether she felt bad about or wanted to avoid my interactions with her about her suffering. She said, *"Tame prem thi puchu chho, tyare bikh nathi laagto"* ("You interact with compassion; therefore, I do not feel sad talking to you about he incident" . . .). The compassion that she noticed in my way of interacting during the interviews with her perhaps also created an experiential space in which she could gain meaning and value for her experience. (p. 220)

Parvez (2018) also has recently accentuated the need among qualitative or ethnographic researchers of emotions (including difficult emotional experiences, such as, crisis or trauma) to have a humane and compassionate relationship with the participant as that provides an ethical and a powerful way to get closer to the complexity of emotional experiences. She posits: "The willingness to comprehend and treat informants as complex and multidimensional individuals (rather than viewing them as stock characters) leads to mutual recognition and reinforces the relationship, opening doors to more shared experiences and deeper understanding" (p. 460).

Concluding Comments

In this chapter, we have argued for and illustrated how considering emotions as metaphors as used in academic social science and human social world provides a meaningful way to comprehend the complexity involved in defining its nature, sources and functions. A social constructions approach that takes metaphors (symbols or images) to be an epistemological window to the experiences and theories of emotion focuses on metaphors' representational as well as functional properties. In doing so, as the historically and culturally situated analysis of such metaphors have revealed, once emancipatory (from the church's

hegemony as pointed out by the Enlightenment philosophers) use of *machine* metaphor to describe human experiences or characteristics has silently ended up becoming a hegemonic force through emphasizing a physiological-cognitive essence of emotions.

Such a Western notion of emotions is also incorporated in the conceptualization of psychological impact of trauma – through the diagnostic category of PTSD – within mainstream psychiatry or psychology. Paradoxically, both, depiction of emotion as physiological-cognitive in its essence as well as the mental health outcome of trauma as PTSD are still construed as universally valid human experience. We could also note through such an analysis that particularly in the study of difficult emotional experiences of trauma survivors, such a metaphor (through the diagnostic category of PTSD) can retraumatize the survivors by excluding or silencing the very emotional experiences that would help them make sense of their loss towards cultural healing.

Harré's (1986, 2009) call for making sense of emotional experiences through pluralistic, hybrid, or cultural metaphors provides a meaningful alternative to not only conceptualizing emotional experiences, but also the trauma-induced distress as well as healing. More relational or spiritual metaphors shape the experience of emotions and healing in the socio-centric societies as several studies among trauma survivors have illustrated. However, importantly for this purpose, it is not adequate to take culture as a homogenous and apolitical category merely representing the shared beliefs or values. The fact that these beliefs and values are continually shaped by hierarchies (or structural forces) of race, religion, gender, ethnicity besides geo-economic powerplay, such as, economic globalization, the conception of neither culture nor emotional experiences (and healing that it shapes) can be construed as apolitical. For example, as Ting and Sundararajan (2018) have pointed out, the Yi ethnic minority community in China has faced erosion of its traditional relational and spiritual notions of emotions and wellbeing due to first, Cultural Revolution in China during 1960-1980 and then, drastic modernization through economic globalization in the contemporary times. Through their ethnographic study, they point out the following measures for Yi healing from alienation-induced health and mental health problems (also culminating in HIV/AIDS) within prevailing cultural and socio-political context:

> First, this prevention model should honor those members of the community who are elderly and wise (Bimo and Degu), exploring their religious resources so as to empower high-risk families. Second, this prevention model should bridge the knowledge gap between traditional healers and Western medical doctors to increase trust between both groups, and exchange helpful resources in HIV prevention. Third, this prevention model should empower high-risk families (especially women) to protect themselves via safe behaviors. . . . (p. 260)

Finally, it cannot be emphasized more that compassion- and empathy-based researcher-participant relationship that is the foundation of comprehending emotions, particularly difficult or distressing emotional experiences, forms a humanizing space where the researcher and the participant may inadvertently find themselves learning mutually about healing they facilitate for each other (Pandey et al., 2019; Parvez, 2018; Priya, 2010, 2012; Radley, 2004)

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