

Being Reticent for Healing - Singularity and Non-Verbalization in Indigenous Medical Practices in Sri Lanka

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Abstract : The purpose of this paper is to examine the meaning of verbalization in clinical practice using the keywords silence and singularity. A patient's experience of illness and treatment is singular, irreplaceable, and irreproducible and ultimately cannot be compared with that of others. In his book *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze positioned irreplaceable singularity as the opposite concept of particularity as a generalizable and substitutable property and matched the former with universality. He also said that singularity could not be represented because of its irreplaceable nature. Representation or verbalization is a procedure that converts an irreplaceable, idiosyncratic reality into something that can be substituted. Considering the act of verbalizing medical diagnosis based on this, it can be said that diagnosis is the practice of decontextualizing and generalizing the suffering embedded in the patient's irreplaceable life history as a disease. This paper examines the above with the key concept of the practice of "non-verbalization" in traditional medical practices in Sri Lanka. In the practice of Sri Lankan traditional medicine and the inheritance of medical knowledge and care techniques, there is a tendency to avoid verbalizing specific matters or stating them aloud. Specifically, the following should be avoided. The healer informs the patient of the name of the disease, mentions the name of the herb used in front of the patient, explains the patient's condition to the healer, and referring the names of poisonous animals, such as poisonous snakes that have been damaged. And so on. Furthermore, when passing on medical knowledge and skills, it is also possible to avoid verbalizing knowledge of medicinal herbs and medical treatment methods and explaining them verbally. In addition to the local belief that the soul of language in Sri Lanka is deeply involved in this background, Sri Lankan traditional medicine has a unique view of the human body and personality that is rooted in the singularity that appears in the relationship with the movement of celestial bodies and the supernatural realm. It can be pointed out that it is premised on the view. In other words, the "silence" in Sri Lankan indigenous medicine is the reason for emphasizing specificity. Furthermore, we can say that "non-verbalization" is a practice aimed at healing. Based on these discussions, this paper will focus on the unique relationships between practitioners and patients that become invisible due to verbalization, which is overlooked by clinical medicine, where informed consent, ensuring transparency, and audit culture is dominant. We will examine the experience of treatment and aim to relativize clinical medicine, which is based on audit cultures.

Keywords : audit cultures, indigenous medicine, singularity, verbalization

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