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“Re-learning to Be Human for Global Times”

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I. Introduction

I. Discerning the Sign of the Times

What should be considered universally applicable now, while remaining true to the entire range of our eschatological destination? Some minorities and exceptional people may come close to this integral realization, while not demanding it of whole societies. Hence, the task of discernment is both crucial and terribly difficult: how not to lose proportions in view of the range of things that need to be understood. Much of this understanding comes not from studying the disciplines, but from **engaging in activity** in these fields (politics, or social movements, or living family life, etc.) Hence, discerning the signs of the times should be ever more inclusive of the broad.

II. Ways of Thinking/Knowing (**Social Imaginaries** and **Human Creativity**)

Through history, there grew a gamut of new possibilities: steps toward the good, steps towards the bad; threats to previous steps towards the good, etc. New moves in the direction of values have become possible; this is largely a matter of the development of social imaginaries, which put new forms of action and responsibility on the agenda. **New ethical goals** come to be discerned. This often happens because old taken-for-granted structures, sometimes ethically endorsed, cease to be seen as inalterable, or even to remain ethically positive.

III. Ways of Being (Learning To Be **Social**)

“The Categorized Human Beings”: A blind spot is created by understanding ethics as consisting in rules and codes. It becomes difficult to see how established rules burden certain people, e.g., aboriginals, people caught in bureaucracies, people with special needs. How then to learn to **see the human** in all its **differences and variety** in non-categorized way? This is a dimension of faith, that is really seeing people.

IV. Aesthetics (Universal Norms and Cultural Uniqueness)

It takes the search beyond the one set of universal norms to the more challenging realm of discernment in diverse cultures in order to identify the proper and **differentiated role of wisdom** in human life i.e. how does one live more humanely in time and space. Learning to be human is then much more an **aesthetic** effort to wed the light and the dark into a **pattern of beauty** so that the lightsome might shape the whole of life into a **constant pattern** that would be called **good or even holy**.

V. Cultural, Transcendental and Religious Values (Way of Acting of the Major Civilizations)

“Following the classical texts” has **never** been **integrally possible** for everyone, or for whole societies. This is not only because most people resist, but also because its demands are not applied integrally to the contextual societies in which even monastic communities are encased.

Incarnation and Exarnation: The human and the divine: The articulation of contextual anthropologies and sociologies of **situated freedom** must take **Incarnation** seriously with respect to its consequences for engaging the materiality of human culture and the physicality of human embodiment. The impact that a culture of **exarnation** and various forms of immersion in virtual worlds have upon the character, quality and the functioning of **human relationality** offer new possibilities and challenges to modes of human self-interpretation.

Materiality and physicality have upon how we **imagine, conceptualize, and affectively engage** our human vulnerability in all its manifestations and the moral vectors that are manifest in such vulnerabilities, expressed classically and **lived most fully** in our human history of sin and redemption, salvation and resurrections. More broadly the title of the RVP publication “Unity and Harmony, Love and Compassion in Global Times” reflects Buddhism, Christian and Moslem themes.

II. Re-learning

Charles Taylor (McGill University, Canada)

Seeking the Signs

In this discussion, I am drawing heavily on the work of David Martin.¹

I

First, I want to invoke his concept of “the grain of the world”. This starts from the obvious fact (once you think about it) that the central values or norms that we find preached and acted out in the Gospels – non-violence, universalism, self-sacrifice, service, repentance, reconciliation (page 9) – could never be realized at the level of whole societies. They can be lived to the full by individuals, and also to some extent by small, dedicated groups, but not by entire political societies.

For instance, the gospel calls for non-resistance to force, even when this is in the service of injustice. But societies which adopt total pacifism would rapidly fall victim to external conquest. It is not just that one couldn't in fact get everyone to adopt this stance voluntarily. It is also that dilemmas arise as soon as one proposes such a far-reaching change. Thus universal non-resistance in face of a threatening enemy that one could deter would have itself to be imposed by some sort of force. Or put another way, I could decide not to resist an aggressor, even to go to my death, but where this means that you too would be without defenses, and you haven't chosen martyrdom, I would be failing you by not fighting back. As Martin says, there was nothing noble about our not intervening in the Rwandan massacre in the 1990s. Nor would we have been blameless if we had let the Yazidis suffer massacre and forced conversion at the hands of Islamic State.²

There are restrictions built into our politico-moral predicament which set limits to our living the Gospel fully at the level of the collectivity, let alone the globe. The source of this resistance is what Martin calls “the grain of the world”. Human beings live in societies, and cannot but do so. Societies need some sense of a “we, or “us”, to which its members are bound. But the “us” contrasts to a “them”

It would seem that at the dawn of humanity, this us/them partition was all-pervasive. The remarkable transformation in human history can perhaps be situated in the great Axial revolutions, which in one or another way, introduce the notion of the human being as such, or of **universal humanity**, an idea with strong normative consequences. But these normative demands remain in tension with the ineradicable role of the us/them distinction in our lives.

These remarkable turns in human history are hard to square with a reductive approach based on evolutionary biology. We ought to be stuck forever in the old ruts of insiders fearing/avoiding/fighting outsiders. And in some ways we still are (see the common responses to the refugee crisis in Europe and the West). But in another way we have come to accept as a norm a **universal doctrine of human rights**, and the **duties of humanitarian assistance**.

This gap between aspirations and reality is an endless source of standing dilemmas and conundrums, of which the **tension between the Gospel and the “grain of the world”** is one example. There is a strand of modern liberalism which holds that this gap is provisional and will eventually be made up. But apart from the fact that this liberalism doesn't aspire to the full range of Gospel values (it

¹ *Ruin and Restoration*

² To note this is not to disparage Christian pacifism. On the contrary, the deep dilemma here calls for people to be on both horns, and yet live in communion with each other. For instance, it is a long-standing norm in Christian churches that clergy should not fight.

allows for coercion, and lots of { non-lethal] enmity, for instance), there is good reason to think that this hope is unrealistic.

It's true that there have been impressive gains. Steven Pinker argues that the kill rate per head in our much larger population was much less in the 20th Century than in previous epochs – in spite of the spectacular mass killings for which this century is infamous.³ And in our modern democracies, under the rule of law, ordinary non-élite citizens enjoy a degree of freedom, or at least non-domination, unprecedented in the history of state-governed societies. But the very mechanisms that ensure domestic peace and freedom: judicial systems, courts, markets (as sites of freely agreed contracts), can turn into instruments of oppression (large corporations who can buy government compliance, multi-nationals in developing countries, trade deals with skewed dispute-resolution provisions, courts which respond to the demands of the powerful, and so on).

At the same time, these impersonal mechanisms operating on a nation-wide or even global context treat people more and more under abstract categories, and are blind and deaf to particular aspirations and needs. Moreover (the “Foucault point”) they depend on agents interiorizing disciplines of impersonal behaviour (you can't give that job to your brother-in-law, it must be attributed through a competitive exam.) which are corrosive of personal relations.

For these and other reasons, maintaining the gains of domestic peace, nonviolence, the rule of law, democratic government, requires constant effort. Back-sliding, or “side-sliding” into **new forms of unfreedom** as described above is an ever-present possibility. And the continued spread of democracy is far from assured.

Democracy, human rights, universal emancipation, nonviolence. All these can become **institutionalized**. But they can only come about by a broadly-spread change in self-understanding among the people concerned, and in their often implicit understanding of **the way their society works, its basic ethic**, and so on: in short, by a change in **social imaginary**.

To think that one can introduce modern, **universal-citizen** democracy together with the rule of law into a quite different social context (Afghanistan, Somalia) simply by writing a constitution and a rule book is to indulge a costly illusion (one to which politicians and publics in the Western world still seem fatally prone).

All this should make us wary of a Condorcet-type theory of progress. Even granted large transformations in social imaginary, (1) all these positive institutionalizations have their flip side. Internal peace and the rule of law demand various modes of coercion; this coercion may slide into becoming an instrument of exclusion and prejudice (policing in some parts of the USA, application of modern law to tribal areas).

Then (2) they are not irreversible: they may (a) become corrupt and deviate through controlling interests (contemporary democracies in the West); (b) they may gradually depart from their guiding spirit through a decline in the dedication of the agents involved (the “Ibn Khaldoun” point).

They can (3) encounter new situations where they need to adapt (e.g., violent non-state actors), and may be unable to.

Then there is (4) the institutionalization not of good but of counter-Gospel values. And this can include radical evil (Nazis, Islamic State) JPII.

II

In history new moves in the direction of Gospel values become possible; this is partly a matter of the development of social imaginaries.

³ *The Better Angels of our Nature*

But a change in what is possible may also come from progress in technology, and in the techniques of social organization. This is something we easily recognize today, because modern civilization has been built on the steady increase of the potentialities of control.

Modern (we might say, post-Enlightenment) consciousness comes about through a gradual realization in the late 17th and 18th Centuries that on many issues, we humans are (at least potentially) in charge. Now, after the Industrial Revolution, we are inclined to think of this as the fruit of science and technology; and certainly our leaps forward in this domain have been spectacular. But in the 17th/18th Centuries, there was also a growing sense of the possibilities of social control, exercised by governments: the fostering of new industries, the improvements in agriculture which peasants could be induced to adopt (e.g., planting turnips, potatoes, crop rotations). And perhaps most impressive at the time, the ability to confine the spread of plague through quarantine and the forbidding of movement from plague areas.

If we look at a recent dramatic event, like the outbreak and then containment of the Ebola virus in West Africa, we can see the inheritance of both these facets of social control. On one hand, the techniques of strict quarantine, on the other the impressive scientific advances which enable us to recognize the ebola virus and devise vaccinations for it.

But alongside science, technology and the techniques of organization, there also arise new forms of social life which are potentially more humane. These cannot be realized by **ruling élites** which have mastered some techniques (although this has been a widespread and costly illusion)

III

Through history, a gamut of **new possibilities** grow: for steps toward the good, or for steps towards the bad; and also of new demands: in face of threats to previous steps towards the good, we need a response.

New ethical goals come to be discerned. This often happens because old **taken-for-granted structures**, sometimes ethically endorsed, cease to be seen as inalterable, or cease to be seen as ethically positive. Examples: slavery, or despotic or paternalistic political authority. Or else a certain reading of gender difference (women can't be citizens), as well as the authoritative "patriarchal" forms of the family. When these fade, many of the goals of contemporary feminism come to be widely accepted.

Then new possibilities come on the horizon because new forms of social imaginary spread (or old ones are recovered), and these put new forms of political rule on the agenda. (Arendt power). Or new ways of resistance (Gandhian nonviolence).

And then new goals may arise because of our altered situation in the universe. Climate change.

IV

So there is a great task of discernment for the Church: what should we press/work for as universally applicable now, while remaining true to the whole package as our eschatological destination?

But this hard to get right. We can deviate in either direction: We can insist on goals which can't be realized without appalling cost (like integral pacifism, or total internal peace – which may not be achievable without despotic control). Or, on the other side, we can fail to see ways in which society could undergo a transformation. Examples of this failure: all the Christians who opposed emancipation of slaves in the 18th and 19th Century; many did this not out of interest (though lots did out of this motive as well), but because they thought society couldn't function if the "peculiar institution" was abolished. Or again: the Catholic Church's long opposition to democracy and human rights. Or again, the failure of many to see the importance of nonviolent resistance.

The flip side of this is that in other circumstances, these negative, hesitant, or pusillanimous judgments would have been right. Today there are societies where demanding the immediate installation of the full panoply of democracy and the rule of law is a recipe for disaster or breakdown.

So the task of **discernment is crucial** and terribly difficult. How not to make either of the deviations mentioned above. The range of things you need to understand is very broad. In terms of academic disciplines, theology, ethics, history, politics, sociology, to make a minimal list. But of course, lots of our understanding of these domains comes not from studying the disciplines, but from **engaging in activity** in these domains. Our experience of engaging in politics, or social movements, or living family life, and so on.

In the light of all this, the idea that discerning the signs of the times should be the exclusive task of the magisterium is absurd, one might say even, grotesque. This might just begin to make sense, if the only expertise involved were theology. But even of this were the case, how could the best theologians, sitting in Rome, call the shots for Rio, Bombay, Kinshasa, etc.? “Grotesque” may be an understatement (but if we want a euphemism, try “bizarre”).

II. In Global Times

Tony Carroll (Heythrop College, University of London, London, United Kingdom)

The Spiritual Horizon of the Human Person

A major challenge facing us today is that of re-discovering a **spiritual horizon** of the human person. Confronted by a worldview of **materialistic naturalism**, and powered forwards by strong economic and political forces our ability to view human life as oriented towards a spiritual horizon is severely diminished today. Sadly, this diminishment is not only in the secular spheres of life. Religious institutions have themselves become embroiled in this worldview with a noticeable decrease of spiritual capital as a consequence. In Christianity, for example, the lack of the tangible mediation of a way of holiness by churches has led many people to seek outside of formal religious institutions for this **depth dimension**. Furthermore, religiously inspired universities and other educational institutions have themselves become caught up in the ‘logic of the market’ and are now often difficult to differentiate from their secular equivalents.

These developments are of course not new. Already in the nineteenth century, thinkers such as Max Weber had noted these **secularising** tendencies in universities in the United States and fears of an onslaught to human freedom had become evident with the various romantic reactions within modernity. But, perhaps a difference today is that these often formerly elite reactions against religious worldviews have now spread amongst the general population and notably are increasingly common amongst women in many Western societies. And, such concerns are not only present in the **Western world. China**, which is undergoing rapid modernisation, is also caught up in its own force field. On the one hand, enormous economic and social changes, which have achieved a revolution for the poor of that country lifting great numbers out of poverty, but, on the other hand, this has led to serious concerns over care for the **environment** and of the future of the great cultural and spiritual heritage of this nation.

Moreover, the rise of **religious fanaticism**, most dramatically in the radicalisation of young **Muslims**, presents a **global counter narrative** to transcendence as incarnating wisdom, peace, love, and social justice. War and terror reproduce in human actions an image of divine transcendence which is exacting, harsh, and brutal. A strange correlation between understandings of the divine, paradoxically

shared by both exclusive humanists and religious fundamentalists, is helping to reinforce an image of **transcendence as anti-human** and as **contrary to a central value of modernity, freedom**.

In such a global context, the importance of rediscovering fruitful ways of thinking, acting, representing, and indeed being part of the spiritual horizon of transcendence is evident. In my own work, I am beginning to look for alternatives to the traditional 'theism-atheism' accounts of transcendence by turning towards traditions of '**panentheism**' which I believe need to encounter contemporary humanism in order to provide both another way of thinking about transcendence and also a much needed and richer account of human flourishing. Such a 'panentheistic humanism', a way of understanding God **as in all reality but not reducible** to it, is one that has roots deeply embedded in the spiritual traditions of many cultures and which today, with the possibilities of interreligious dialogue and interreligious experience, is opening up **new horizons of the spiritual experience of humanity**.

The encounter of **Buddhism** and **Christianity** is just one example of this family of contemporary developments. Many have been inspired by Enomiya Lasalle, Thich Nhat Hann, and by Ama Samy to enter into this profound encounter between Buddhism and Christianity. And, these personalities represent just some of the most well-known sources of **charismatic 'spiritual capital'** that act as agents of social change and of the transformation of our **socio-spiritual imaginaries** towards new horizons. Whilst nothing is inevitable and counter narratives to these fruitful encounters often seem more dominant, these other voices do represent important resources for our project of relearning to be human in global times.

As religious forces currently hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons the need to relearn **how as a human being to live within a spiritual horizon** could not be more pressing.

Peter Jonkers (Tilburg University, Tilburg, the Netherlands)

A preliminary sketch of a multidisciplinary and global approach

Today, we are confronted with a number of unprecedented problems and challenges that require us to relearn what it means to be human, not only on a theoretical, but also practical level. Seen from a Western perspective, these problems and challenges concern:

1) Our ways of interpreting ourselves. There is a growing divergence when it comes to our (self)interpretations as humans, and this divergence is not only reflected in our **ways of thinking**, but also in our ways of **feeling and acting**. Without any pretension to be exhaustive, at least two major fields of divergence can be mentioned: Are humans primarily natural or a spiritual beings, are they **self-determining** or rather **vulnerable beings**? The traditional view of humans as primarily **spiritual** and (physically and emotionally) **vulnerable** beings is nowadays challenged by theories, attitudes, and policies that define them as completely natural and self-determining. Given the theoretical and practical impact of these divergent views on the human, it is timely to re-examine them from various perspectives.

2) Our ways of living together in society. Many researchers (a.o. Charles Taylor) have noticed that, since the seventies of the previous century, **expressive individualism** has become part and parcel of all Western societies. Another factor that has had a deep societal impact is **migration**, resulting in today's **multicultural** societies. These two developments require us to think in new ways about **cultural identity, social cohesion, political liberalism** and the (the limits of) **tolerance**, and to draw the practical and political consequences from these new societal realities.

3) Our ways of relating to non-Western societies. Globalization can be defined as the fact that developments in countries around the globe have a growing impact on our daily lives, economies, and politics. Traditionally, this impact was supposed to be limited to the economic and political sphere,

resulting questions about the division of wealth, natural resources, political dominance, spheres of (political and military) influence etc. More recently, the socio-cultural aspects of globalization have come to the fore. As a consequence, Western liberal democracies are confronted with alternative (often more traditional) views on individuals and society, thus challenging the typically Western conviction of cultural and political superiority. Although the term ‘clash of civilizations’ (Huntington) might be overdramatizing the current situation, it is clear that **socio-cultural globalization** requires us to **rethink** all kinds of individual and political values and to draw the practical consequences from them.

4) Our ways of relating to our natural environment. Various recent developments (e.g. climate change, the depletion of oil supplies, the shortage of drinking water) have made clear that the **exploitation** of our natural environment is **no longer sustainable**. Besides technological, economic and political changes, we need more than ever different, in particular **more global** ways of thinking about and dealing with our **natural environment**.

The **common element** in all these four sets of problems is that they are global and hence require a **more encompassing kind of rationality** than the fragmented one of the sciences, which dates from the Enlightenment. But although most scholars agree that such a global rationality is needed, actually developing it is easier said than done. Against this background, the best we can do is examine these problems by means of a combination of **multidisciplinary** and **multicultural** approaches.

III. To Be Human

William Sweet (St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Canada)

a/ The Dimension of the (individual) **Self** – What is it to be an **individual self**? Here, I would invite the perspectives of different traditions to see the roles of animality, consciousness, rationality, gender, freedom/creativity, spirituality, and affectivity/emotions in our understanding of what it is to be a self. Contributions from the hermeneutical and phenomenological traditions will provide important insights, but also from other **philosophical traditions** - analytic, materialist/physicalist, idealist, and pragmatist traditions.

b/ The Dimension of the **Community** and **Tradition** - What is the role of the community and tradition in arriving at a robust, situated, and historically-conscious understanding of the **human person**, that recognizes our need for, and what we share with, one another. Related issues include: the place of autonomy/rights and consent; justice and dissent; compassion and care; loyalty and duty/responsibility; solidarity and diversity/difference. Some practical issues might be the community in relation to the stranger, the refugee, the heretic or apostate; power, empowerment and oppression.

c/ The Dimension of **Nature** – What is our relation to (the rest of) the **natural environment**? How is the **natural world** essential to defining **human personhood**? Is humanity ‘other’ than nature; are there limits to nature or ways to overcome or transform nature through **technology**? In what way does, could, or should, the human go beyond the natural (e.g., transhumanism). Some practical issues might be the human in relation to non-human animals, the natural environment, climate change, but also the possibility of artificial intelligence.

d/ The Dimension of the **Sacred** or **Transcendent** – In what way does, the sacred, the spiritual, and the transcendent (including the **aesthetic**) serve to add to our understanding of the human being, as a person and as a socially-embedded individual (e.g., as an **ethical resource** or as a **source of meaning**)? How does it serve to add to an understanding of human flourishing? Does the idea of the sacred (broadly

construed, to include practical love) provide a basis for intercultural or transcultural communication and solidarity?

Staf Hellemans (Tilburg University, Tilburg, the Netherlands)

The contribution of Catholic/Christian humanism

The ‘Catholic/Christian contribution’ thematic, if chosen, could be subdivided into four subthemes (other subdivisions being, of course, possible):

1. *The Catholic World Church and World Humanity*

How is the Catholic Church nowadays implicated in the new world order: what does she do to favor Christian humanism? Relevant issues are, e.g., the pope as a moral world leader, Catholic social teaching and world developments (cf. ‘Populorum Progressio’ or ‘Laudate si’), the role of European, Latin American, African and Asian bishop conferences, how Christian humanism (and the lack of it!) is present within the Catholic world church.

2. *Christian (Catholic) Humanism(s): Tradition(s) and Topicality*

Since the launching of modern Catholic Social Teaching with ‘Rerum Novarum’ and, in particular, since the elaboration of the Catholic personalist perspective in the 1930’s and 1940’s (Maritain, Mounier), there have been vast discussions on the theme among Catholic intellectuals, mostly applauding before 1960, more critical thereafter. What is the state of the discussion today? Does Christian/Catholic humanism still constitute a program that is worth pursuing and, if yes, how? Or, if it is considered outdated, what are in this regard new promising ideas?

3. *Learning to be (Christian) Human*

It’s not enough to hold high some nice ideas and theories. They have to be put into practice. The experiences of the past are a warning that ‘implementing’ (Christian) humanism and becoming (Christian) human are no easy things. The Catholic organizations that were regarded before 1960 to constitute the transition belts of Christian humanism, especially Catholic parties and Christian labor and peasant movements, have declined or passed away. Some ideas have remained forever abstractly idealistic (e.g. mutual Christian benevolence between patrons and workers) or have backfired, as in the case of Catholic corporatist ideas serving to legitimate authoritarian regimes. What then are nowadays ways, spiritualities and pedagogies to help put Christian (Catholic) humanism into practice?

4. *Christian Humanism and Other Humanisms*

Christianity/Catholicism is not alone in (re)thinking humanism. The theme of the World Congress ‘Re-learning to be human’ is a case in point. It relies heavily on the Confucian tradition where it is of central importance – it’s no coincidence that Tu Weiming is acting as its president. In a time when Catholic churches are becoming minority churches, the question how Christian humanism relates to other traditions of thinking to be human, arises quite naturally.

Philip J. Rossi (Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI. USA)

Challenge 1. Plurality and Otherness: The Formation of Personal and Cultural Identities in a Pluralized, “Hybridized,” and Digitized World

Context: A pervasive “plurality of otherness” in meanings, values, and in the interplay of communal and personal identities now marks a globally interconnected—yet fractured and fragmented—world. **Plurality** shapes new possibilities for human **self-understanding**: It is thus not just the world and our experience of the world that is pluralized—the dynamics of multiplicity now constitute an “**immanent otherness**” for our identity as human. Responding to this challenge requires attention to practices that accord **welcome to otherness** in all its variety and thus empower hope for human wholeness amid this landscape of plurality

Challenge 2. Finitude, Fragility and Vulnerability: Acknowledging and **Living within the Constraints of Human and Planetary Sustainability.**

Context: This challenge arises from the increasing urgency to find sustainable ways for dwelling with one another in the face of the deepening wounds we inflict on the fragile planet entrusted to our care. George Steiner has aptly characterized a key requisite for responding to this challenge: We must learn how “to be guests of each other...We must teach people we are **guests of life on this crowded, polluted planet.**”⁴

Challenge 3. Hostility, Vengeance, Violence and Evil: **Building a World for Peace, Wholeness, and Holiness.**

Context: Deeply entrenched patterns of injustice, inequality, and exclusion, as well as the persistence of violence at all levels of human culture, render the conditions for dwelling in concord with one another increasingly precarious. Our welcome for others falters in our fear of the others’ power to displace us. Inscribed deep in our failures, great and small, to welcome the uprooted stranger, and in the fear that gives license to drive them away with coldness, hostility and even violence, is a refusal to recognize that we, too, stand, as Susan Neiman aptly puts it, “**metaphysically homeless**” **with one another in our human condition.**

Challenge 4. The “Globalization of **Superficiality**”: Renewing Imagination, Ritual, and Celebration as Enactments of the Good and the True.

Context: A severely disabling consequence of the technological advances that made possible an exponentially expanding flow of informational immediacy and commodified creativity has been an erosion of the capacity of human imagination for what Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, has called “a profound engagement with the real” that is marked by “a refusal to let go until one goes beneath the surface.”⁵ Engaging this challenge will require strategies for reviving and nurturing both our individual and our communal capacities for patient and deeply reflective imaginative envisioning (and enacting) of possibilities for “**a more humane, just, sustainable, and faith-filled world.**”

Oliva Blanchette (Boston College)

The Growing Threat of Dehumanization and Destabilization of Nature in the Ongoing Globalization

Globalization is usually thought of as an unmixed blessing for the human race as a whole and of the use we make of nature

⁴ Theo Hobson, “On Being a Perfect Guest: The Tablet Interview: George Steiner.” In: *The Tablet* 259 (August 13, 2005), p. 15.

⁵ “Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today,” <http://www.scu.edu/scm/winter2010/shapingthefuture.cfm>

a/ -that is the way the multinational corporations which have brought globalization about, for their own benefit, want us to think of it

-but if we think more carefully about the way globalization is being brought about, there is room for a lot more second thought about what it is doing in the process to humanity and culture and to nature

b/ -as a way of being, these **multinational corporations** are more like war lords in competition or at war with one another, without regard for what happens to the vast majority of people or peoples in the world, and without regard for the cultural and the natural habitat in which they exist

-and without regard for anything that transcends their narrow **commercial interests**, including the mass production and sale of firearms and of weapons of mass destruction, let alone for anything truly religious

c/ -theirs is nothing but a reckless way of acting that is destructive, not only of any humanized culture, but even of nature itself from which they extract all their profit, as is evidenced in the universal social crisis of poverty and in the universal ecological crisis of survival in which we find ourselves

-theirs is an ethic of enrichment at the expense of the poor and of the masses, who suffer as their fate is decided behind their back in the secrecy of the boardrooms of the large multinational corporations ever in competition or at war with one another

d/ -resistance to this threat must come from the liberation of the oppressed masses in both the so-called third world and the so-called first world, the people who are still creative in their use of natural resources, rather than destructive, as in the food first movement for the preservation of the family or the local co-operative farm, and the movement toward renewable energy resources away from fossil fuels, and the movement back to strong labor unions around the globe as a necessary counterforce to the large corporations

-the solution to the twofold threat of **dehumanization** and **destabilization** from the large multinational corporations can be found and is being advanced only by movements that counter the twofold threat on both fronts at once, that of liberation or humanization and that of stabilization

João J. Vila-Chã (Gregorian University, Rome, Italy)

Re-Learning to be Human in Times of Globalized Space

1/ Humankind is **changing paradigms** at an unprecedented speed: in science and technology; in the socio-economic and political sphere; in the cultural self-understanding of cultures and societies; in the transformation of major religious entities; in the revolution that Pope Francis is operating in the heart of the Catholic Church. So, we need to ask: What are the **constancies** in human **self-understanding**? What kind of constancies do we need in order to advance the process of becoming-human?

2/ We are now facing enormous **challenges** when it comes to the solving of problems such as the creation of conditions required by the affirmation of the dignity of all members of the human family, particularly in regard to the solution requested by phenomena so disturbing and ultimately unacceptable such as needless hunger and chronic unemployment, violence and terrorism, injustice and exclusion, abuse of children and abandonment of the elderly, analphabetism and ideological manipulation, destruction of human cultures and of the natural environment in which we are living. Hence the need to ask: What role must be played by **Ethics and Morality** in the advancement of political and economic processes, in science and in technology? How to reconfigure the humanizing mission of Education and

the processes of communication and/or diffusion of knowledge? In what sense must the great religions of the world advance their own self-understanding, their identity and their mission? How to understand the role and the mission of Family and School in the process of renewing humanity and so creating the conditions of possibility for a future that can be said to be truly human and, by the same token, more divine than ever?

3/ I suggest that the following questions must be faced: how to overcome economic injustice and inequality? How to develop a culture of Peace? How to ensure that cultural re-integration follows suit with the gigantic processes of **scientific and technological developments**? How to transform the key religious expressions of humankind into forces of integration and progress, justice and peace, harmony and collaboration, respect and communication, development and transformation of the world? How to develop a common and shared self-understanding of our own Being-Human on a Global Scale?

4/ I also suggest that we are involved in a **communicational process** that needs to be faced in its implications, and all the more so in a time such as ours in which the social networks are growing by the day and induce in human societies a gigantic process of transformation of **human awareness** and **social consciousness** while at the same time reconfiguring in a deep way the cognitive processes we go through in the process of establishing bridges with the world we live in.

5/ From a philosophical perspective, I suggest that we need now more than ever (and this seems to me to be the major intuition of Pope Francis in calling for a Jubilee Year totally dedicated to the theme of **mercy** and **compassion** in human life) to deepen the structures implicit in the **human experience** of *love* and *compassion*, of *gratitude* and *responsibility* and so try to develop a cultural and religious self-understanding of man capable of bridging together the multiseular contributions of East and West, of North and South, of Religion and Science, of Art and Technology, of Freedom and Law, of self-interest and cooperation ...

6/ We need to understand the role of **education** in the process of establishing elementary forms of the ethical experience of “man” and so represent the starting point of any form of authentic religion. We need to explore what we might call the enigma of the passage from *pathos* to *ethics*, that is, illuminating what might be considered as the liberating passage of that *I am* that in any given case is *mine* (Heidegger’s *Jemeinigkeit*) to the proclamation a new commandment, of that *you shall* that for the human being represents the gift of attention to the Epiphany of the Other whenever it is given in the context of any **authentic human encounter**, desire or even necessity.

7/ We need to understand the role of virtue and among them all understand the special role of *gratitude*, particularly as it is able to transform us both in relation to the Transcendent as well as in our horizontal relations with others. In fact, our social world needs to rediscover the high moral value associated with the experience of gratitude. I consider that being-grateful constitutes a manifestation not only of humility and benevolence, but also of true freedom. Being ashamed of being grateful before the Other, human or divine, can only be sign of a strange form of submission to pride. Whoever is fastened to self takes the good deeds for granted and, consequently, is deprived of true lucidity and freedom. I would like to suggest, therefore, that both **gratitude and compassion** represent especially positive manifestations of affection and emotion, and as such must be recognized as two most important elements in the constitution of the social bond. Through the expression of **thankfulness**, the human being really comes to occupy his/her proper place in the world. As with compassion, it is through gratitude that the human being better enters into the sphere of values such as truth, freedom, **humility**, goodness... Indeed, *gratitude* and *compassion* represent our best way to access the moral life and fulfill the patterns of our ethical condition. Compassion and gratitude, therefore, are the practical instances capable of transforming human beings into citizens of a new *polis*, ambassadors of that Kingdom that transcends all the kingdoms of the world, the Kingdom whose proper name is Goodness, or, said in yet another term, the domain of benevolent Justice – another name for Compassion.

Jeffrey Bloechl (Boston College, Boston, MA, USA)

Suffering as a Problem for Philosophical Anthropology

Six Theses and a General Indication

1. As we become increasingly aware of the plurality of cultures, traditions and **ways of understanding**, we are decreasingly confident about our prospects for agreeing on what counts as **good** (I do not say that we can find no such agreement at all). In comparison, we remain confident that we can often agree readily about what counts as **evil** (though not in all cases). The latter is most evidently the case when the evil in question is specifically **human suffering**, about which there is virtually universal agreement that it is a negative phenomenon.

2. Suffering is not strictly and simply pain, but the state of **undergoing pain**. If pain is an unpleasant feeling caused by physical or emotional damage, suffering is an unpleasant feeling caused by having to undergo the damage, and perhaps having to abide in the undergoing. We might say that suffering is the unpleasant experience of being subject to pain. To the degree that pain persists, or so long as it persists, one suffers.

3. Exposure to pain and suffering are essential / defining features of sentient beings, i.e. of beings that sense, feel and, to at least some limited degree, have consciousness. Human beings and animals can feel pain and can suffer.

4. In human beings (there is debate concerning animals), the experience of suffering calls forth a demand for **meaning**, i.e. that the suffering must mean something or be for some reason. Indeed, it may be that the lack or impossibility of finding meaning for one's suffering exacerbates it. It may also be that in some situations, a lack or impossibility of meaning of any kind constitutes a special form of suffering that threatens life (V. Frankl). Conversely, it has been contended that human life *is* suffering and that attempt to give meaning to it express an urge to escape it or cover it (Nietzsche). Whichever the case, the knot of suffering and meaning is distinctly and universally human.

5. Yet we do not find general agreement about the **meaning of human suffering**. Moreover, this is the case at two levels. We are most familiar with it when it is a matter of observing individual persons, each of whom has her own physical and mental limits, and interprets her experience from a range of psychological, moral, cultural and religious commitments that inform her **feeling** and **thinking** in a unique way. But already here, in the interpreting, a difference between individuals can be seen to open onto another, more expansive difference. We may say that all interpreting of suffering occurs in a language, here taking '**language**' in the broad sense of a **field of meanings** supplied by culture, tradition and a way of understanding. At the global level, we recognize different languages in incomplete communication with one another. And so when the suffering person appeals to a language to find meaning for her suffering, she forms an **interpretation** that does not always agree with interpretations that are possible according to other languages.

6. A comparative phenomenology of suffering and meaning-giving thus faces a two-fold challenge. On one hand, suffering originates in a **passivity** antecedent to personal interpretation (M. Henry). In this sense, it has a concreteness that is already lost when it receives a meaning and thus is committed to a language. On the other hand, insofar as it does receive a meaning (except in only relatively few cases), and insofar as meaning always appeals to a language, there is **plurality** over quite how to understand it. Together, these two difficulties—the difficulty of gaining access to suffering as such, and the difficulty of speaking univocally about its meaning—suggest that while we readily agree that human suffering is evil, we are without a means to agree on how to understand it. And this is to say that what we may agree is a universal feature of human being nonetheless resists a universal definition (it may be the case that concerning at least some features of human being, there can be only conversation and exchange of ideas).

Whether or not one expects to reach an objective definition of human suffering, there are at least three important sources of material for the investigation.

(a) Contemporary philosophy and psychiatry continue to improve our precision about the constituent elements and process of suffering.

(b) Unfortunately, contemporary experience continues to present us with a vast testimony to its many faces.

(c) The great religions and philosophies have not ceased to pay them heed.

Indra Nath Choudhuri (Comparative Literature Association of India, Delhi, India)

In Indian philosophy man is just not a physical entity or a thinking mind, he/she is also a divine one as says Mundaka Upanishad. He exists with his cosmic self (jivatma). Hence in Indian context the term 're-learning' is, as I think, a misnomer. Instead 'reinforcing human elements in man' can possibly be the correct word.

By reversing our gaze from West to East "the alien, the strange, and whatever has become alien" may become, in the hermeneutical situation, a description of something that confronts us – and concerns us – and claims our attention and wants to be brought to understanding. We must enter simultaneously into the two actual language-worlds, where terms and symbols have their definite meanings and association in their own phenomenological spheres. To give an example, the notion of Pure Consciousness (chit/chaitanya), the pivotal concept in Vedanta, would come quite close to the concept of 'transcendental consciousness' in Husserlian phenomenology. However Husserl's intentionality theory of consciousness goes against the non-intentional framework of Advaita.

Similarly the theory of compassion as the 'sense of responsibility and the 'ethics of hospitality' elucidated by Levinas and Derrida is different from the Indian spirit of acknowledgement of the **whole world as one's family** as conceived in the Vedic discourse: *vasudhaiva kutumbukam*. This is also different from what the Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope said in 412 BC, 'I am a citizen of the world', because it does not in any case prove one's identity as a member of a family. This idea of *vasudhaiva kutumbukam* is India's all-embracing age-old vision of **human unity**. This includes the entire world in it and rejects any kind of narrow nationalism.

With the help of ontological study (study of reality) of these two language- worlds comprehension and discursive analysis of i) ways of being, ii) ways of acting/making and iii) aesthetic, freedom and creativity can be possible for **reinforcing humanity in man**. In these global times we are mainly faced with four challenges:

- i) Environmental Pollution
- ii) Religious Fundamentalism
- iii) Violence
- iv) The erosion of moral values in the name of a) self-centred liberalism and
- v) Secular neutrality to wards and most moral values

These are the emerging challenges and we can always fall back to our **religious-cultural tradition** to effectively face these challenges and resolve conflicts and violence and establish peace.

Any ontological study of human life from Indian context will show life **in progressive movement from lower level** of existence **to a higher consciousness** for example four states of human consciousness, *jagrata*, (waking state of consciousness), *sushupti* (the dreaming state of consciousness), *swapna* (the state of deep sleep in which the mind, the ego and the super ego are still), *turiya* (the state of thoughtless awareness beyond the mind or being one with the self) or five dimensions of life, *aannamaya kosha* is the physical body sustained by food and shelter, *pranamaya kosha*, the life force sustaining the existence of an individual. The third *manomaya kosha* is the mental identity of an individual who thinks, acts, resolves, loves and hates. The fourth *kosha* is *vijnanamaya* is intellectual

awareness that is capable of discriminating, of making judgements. And the fifth *anandamaya kosha* is a perception of being in bliss or four achievements of life *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desires) controlled by *dharma* (righteousness), and the last is *moksha* (emancipation) or four stages of life *brahmacharya* (student), *garhastya* (family life), *vanaprastha* (renouncing the family life) and *sannyas* (renunciation). All these categories reflect a progressive upward movement from inferior to superior level of human existence and a steady enhancement of his own welfare, individual and collective, in other words, his **quality of life**.

In the epic Mahabharata it says First bow to *narayana* (the divine) then to *nara* (the human) and then *narottama* (the best) among men and hence it is an epic of the becoming of man which is the realization of all the divine possibilities inherent in man- the ceaseless endeavour of man to be in harmony with the fullest of life. Mahabharata does not refer to *moksha* but of ever flowing stream of life. One cannot escape the eternal flow of this knowledge. Sooner or later one has to get drenched in it, to float in it, and to be swept by it. Through this knowledge man may take the vow to be man, and not to be a god or demon for both gods and demons desire **humanness**. This does not imply that man is the superior most; it does mean, however, that the state of being man is that state which allows one to feel for others. The state of being man is the state that accepts everyone and desires humanness for all- desires that humanness which is exclusive but which merges in all. The merging makes *nara*, man, *narottama*, the **perfect man**.

The set of four themes crafted perfectly by Professor Mclean (see his mail of 8 November, 2015). Only certain questions can be raised as parts of dialogues for the organisation of the new project:

1. Is it possible to have a real dialogue between cultures?
2. The macro-microcosmic axis of the West and the East and the possibility of the divine in man to help for a new regeneration.
3. Anthropocentrism and the need to adopt a non-human perspective of life. Is it mentally possible to adopt such a non-human view?
4. Religion, rite and myth: is it possible to have a secularized representation of the world or does the 'sacred' pervades each and every link of the relational net between man and the world?

Robert Neville (Boston University, Boston, USA)

1. Given our ecological and **environmental challenges** around climate change, we need to develop new ways of *residing*. This has two main parts. The most obvious is that we need to be more ecologically friendly, with frugality regarding power, diet, and so forth. The second part is that we need to adapt our ways of living to changing conditions, perhaps having to migrate to other parts of the world, or at least uphill, learning to wear new clothes that are weather-friendly, changing patterns and modes of travel (I now drive a hybrid; my next car will be all electric; the one after that will be a boat—I live 20 feet above sea-level.). Both of these considerations will mean different things in different parts of the world. Although most people think of such environmental challenges as moral programs, I think we should stress that they are new ways of being human relative to the environment.

2. Part of being human is being religious. By this I mean that everyone engages what is ultimate in cognitive ways (theology, for us religious professionals), existential ways defining our deepest identities, and practical ways of daily life and religious organization (if any). What is ultimate is just what is ultimate, and every culture over time finds ways to engage that, to conceive it, to provide venues for maturation with regard to ultimates, and to allow various ways to live in light of **ultimacy**. In my view, although all cultural symbols for engaging ultimacy are human constructions, they all have what is really ultimate to engage, more or less well, in one way or another. Ultimacy is like the weather: it has to be engaged some way or other. Now, in Global Times, to be religious requires worldviews that

acknowledge other **religious cultures than one's own**. On the cognitive level, one's theology needs to accommodate all other (relevant) theologies. Existentially, one's ultimate self-definition and self-cultivation needs to relate to other ways of being human in ultimate perspective. On the practical level, one's religious way of life needs to be respectful, accommodating, and interactive with other ways of life. What this means varies by location on the globe, which religions are next to us, and what our religious thought, definition, and practice amounts to. With increasing globalization, we will need to deal with more and more diverse ways of being religious. Because religion is not static, but changing, we should not think of our own religion as fixed but on the way to something else. Other religions should be understood in terms of where they are from and where they are going. **Being religious is a process**, even for those of us entering advanced middle-age (I'm 76).

3. Rituals of many sorts, more or less coherent, establish the stable structures and social habits of our lives together. Re-learning to be human would be helped greatly by serious studies of how **rituals** at all levels are operative for better or worse. Rituals allow for **high civilization**, but they also impede what many people (probably including *all* the friends of George McLean) think of **moral progress**, e.g., the elimination of racism, the elimination of poverty (which means different things in different parts of the globe), promotion of education for all people, eliminating prejudice against sexual minorities, etc. Identifying the rituals that help and those that hurt, re-learning to be human requires the development of improved rituals. The nice thing about rituals (I follow Xunzi's theory of ritual) is that they allow for the high levels of society to be achieved even if you have to play them with people you hate, or don't understand.

4. Philosophical (and theological) understanding of what it means to be human needs to be developed as a major theme for the global philosophical and political discussion. On the one hand, the understanding and practice of human-making is a matter of diverse cultures, with different cultural and intellectual resources. On the other hand, these must be brought into conversation so that we can have a global understanding of what is to be respected in people, which people to respect, and what call people of different sorts have on our attention, resources, and defense. One lesson from Confucianism, for instance, is that **individuals** are at the **center of a vast matrix** of hundreds of rituals and they **need to individuate** their playing of the various rituals, and to improve the rituals where appropriate. Because we all have so many rituals to play, and each ritual brings into ritual-play interaction with different sets of other people and environmental conditions, **to be a person** is measured in part by **how we play these rituals**.

Non participants

Tadeusz Buksinski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland)

Ethics –culture-politics

The good life of men consists in the development, from one side the universal essential features of the human being, from other side the particular talents and abilities. Both kinds of capacities are developed in the cultural, historical and political situations and contexts. Therefore the conditions should be created to make possible the best development of human capacities.

There are four basic kinds of dimensions of human life and four kinds of capacities (potentials) of men essential for the good life in the age of globalization. They are rather classical, but some of them were forgotten in the modern period.

(1) Biological – human being has biological (material and psychical) needs and is able to work for their appease: e.g. to take care after health, life, food, hygiene, security. Cultural, social and political relations should be so constructed, to assure the chances to realize the biological and psychic capacities of people.

(2) Men are the rational and spiritual beings. Therefore the people have the duty to develop of reason and rational capacities. The perfection of cognitive virtues and knowledge is a condition of good reasonable life.

(3) The basic role in the good life is played by communication and cooperation. Therefore the developing of fundamental capabilities to communicate and cooperate with other people (and with people of different cultures and different religious and political opinions) is of specially importance. The children, young and old people must be educated to acquire the abilities (virtues) to live friendly with other people, to cooperate with them even in cases not having the material interests, be tolerant, kind, reciprocal. These features are sometimes called the social virtues.

(4) Men is the moral subject. The moral individual and social life is the immanent good. It is not the natural phenomenon but the result of the strives and efforts. Morality express the duty of assuring the special dignity and respect for the person, as the basis for other obligations against people and nature. It plays the role of fundaments of all deep aspirations and claims of the individuals and communities. Justice, freedom, equality, solidarity are treated as ethical social values, and honesty, hospitality, truth, aids and assistance to others, respect for the people, and for property as the personal moral virtues. Therefore the moral perfection should belong to the main attentions of the political powers as well as cultural and religious authorities. This kind of morality have the universal aspects, e.g. universal values and norms, but to some degree could be interpreted according to the traditions of different cultures. IT must be present in realization and expression of communicate, rational and biological capacities.

Every society and every political community presuppose the idea of man and the ideal of man. In the modern times dominated the concentration of interests on the ideal of man as biological and rational being. In the global age the role of communication and cooperation is stresses. There is still to a few remarks and not enough reflection on the practical political and social role of ethics and morality in different cultures. Usually the reflection on ethics concentrates on the problem of relativity of moral norms conceived in abstracto. The research on the relation between ethics (morality), culture and politics in contemporary world – as it is and as it should be-could help us to understand the weakness of our civilization and what is wrong with the project of societies, which is implemented in West and in other cultures.

The good example of shortcomings of the contemporary philosophical thought and political practice are human rights. The human rights were conceived as the moral and legal instruments to defend the citizen against the state and abuse of political powers, but the obligation to observe and secure the human rights are officially assigned to states as holders of hard power. States should (a) observe liberty rights (e.g. negative rights), (b) secure institutionally that the liberty rights are respected by all people, (c) deliver goods and services to all people living in the state (to implement the positive rights). To fulfill these obligations states are entitled to control the action of individuals and institutions. This way the state extends its power over non-state actors, despite the fact that many states violate rather than respect human rights.

The perplexities of contemporary political and ethical theory could be shown by interpreting the theory of John Rawls, which is very popular today. He reduced the policy to implementation of the principle of justice and justice reduced to formally equal distribution of material goods and social positions. The spiritual and religious goods and moral norms removed to private sphere. That what is most important for human beings could not be expressed in public sphere. It means the marginalization of morality and spiritual life.

The other example of one-sided interpretation of the complex phenomena concerns the conflict with so called Islamic state. It is usually explained in terms of war of cultures (or civilizations and religions – referring to Huntington theory). This kind of interpretation overlooks the fact that the contemporary conflict was caused by the politics of western states (and corporations) striving to control the petroleum sources and in their policy of ignoring from one side the spiritual and religious identity and tradition of Islamic societies, and from other side the fundamental moral norms and values. One cannot build the peace and harmony only on material interests and rational calculation. The dimension of communicative relations between societies and moral principles (values and norms) must be observed. Their implementation is not always easy but cannot be ignored, if we want to create the really just and cultural world, which gives chances to develop all the important human capacities.

Tomas Halik (Charles University, Prague, the Czech Republic)

At the end of modern secular age and at the threshold of a new global civilization we are obliged to ask the same questions raised by Immanuel Kant at the time of the Enlightenment.

Who are we?

Different concepts of human person, its substance and dignity should be discussed in intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

Could the intercultural hermeneutics be the “via media” in dispute between non-historical substantialism of “human nature” and relativism of multiculturalism and radical pluralism?

Does globalization carrying out changes just in structures of society and culture, or even changes in “the art how to be human”?

Which are the constants and variables in human existence? What can dialogue of science, philosophy and religion tell us new about it?

Search for transcendence always belonged to the core of human culture. Where will people of tomorrow seek "ciphers of transcendence"?

Where are we going?

How to transform the globalization process in process of communication, sharing and mutual enrichment?

According to Teilhard de Chardin love is the only force, which unites without destroying. Is a vision of future “civilization of love” just a naïve utopian and unrealizable dream?

What can stop the spin of the spiral of violence in the world? Are the roots of fundamentalism, fanaticism and terrorism in extreme religious and secular currents in ideology, cultural and political conditions or in "human nature"?

What can we hope for?

The secular eschatologies (Marxism, uncritical trust in progress of science and technology, welfare society etc.) have failed. The experiences of the XX century overshadowed the images of heaven and hell of traditional Christian eschatology. Is Christianity prepared to proclaim eschatological hope in a more understandable way?

Re-entry of religions into political life is considered mainly as a threat. How is it possible to awaken in world religions the power of healing, peacemaking and reconciliation?

In our world is growing thirst for spirituality. When it comes to escape from the "fidelity to the Earth" (Nietzsche) and when it comes to the source of healing the world and human relations and hearts?

Sayed Hassan Hussaini (Akhlāq) (The Catholic University of America)

Relearning to be Human in a Global Age; an Islamic View

Islam as other religions describes itself as a way of life, Shariah or Path toward Water to help humanity to be better human, in body, mind, and soul. It became a Global religion focusing on equality among all humanity before God and in the relation to each other. It promotes the idea of Finality of the Prophethood's Period while celebrates diversity of faith and prophet (Shariae, plural of Shariah) before the Prophet Muhammad. It is justified mostly on the basis of the intellectual growth of humanity throughout history. Thus, Islam recognizes its Prophet, Muhammad, as the “Mercy for All Worlds.” In practice, Muslims show a variety of forms of faith mixed with multiple cultures like South East Asia, East Asia, Middle East, Africa, Europe, and in the United States.

The fundamental concept for Islamic view of Global world is to try to harmonize diverse regional cultures with universal values and visions. This way of harmonization is called *Ijtihad* (intellectual exertion) in Islamic terminology (the Quran, 9:122). Unfortunately *Ijtihad* in Islam mostly was closed in Sunni context after Fourth School of Thought and was limited to some aspects of law in Shia context.

The ongoing question is how Muslims redefine *Ijtihad* in global age in order to enrich human life. How to understand ethical ways of behaviors and conducts in new emerging situation? How to define Islamic relationships with the “Other” in order to build a better human community with the “Other”? How to reinterpret the Quranic verses on Ummah and The Straight Path in a more inclusive rather than exclusive way? How does Medina Constitution can be read to promote civil society and the Rule of Law? How does Shariah part of Islam can help Muslim countries to promote the Rule of Law? How to balance the tension between secular and Shariah in order to find a way to harmonize reason and revelations? Which parts of Islamic culture possess more capacity to teach tolerance in relation to the Other? How can Islamic identity accommodate modern identities in order to contribute in mosaic identity? How can Islamic emphases on almsgiving, congregational prayers, pilgrimages, Jihad, and Amr Bi Marruf and Nahi An Mukar (Promoting good deeds and prohibiting bad deeds) be implanted in global times in order to adjust religious qualities as well as human virtues?

Marietta Stepanyants (Russian Academy of Social Sciences, Moscow, Russia)

1. Humans are rational creatures (Aristotle) There is nothing in human nature above the mind (Aurelius Augustine)

2. “Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.” (Aristotle, Politics) The man is designed to function in society; he is not complete and contrary to himself, if he lives in isolation (Johann Fichte) The man is unthinkable outside society (Leo Tolstoy)

3. Humans are moral creatures. In the Groundwork, Kant writes: ...every rational being, exists as an end in himself and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will...Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature have, nevertheless, if they are not rational beings, only a relative value as means and are therefore called things. On the other hand, rational beings are called persons inasmuch as their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves. (Kant, 1785, 428)

And in the Lectures on Anthropology: The fact that the human being can have the representation “I” raises him infinitely above all the other beings on earth. By this he is a person....that is, a being altogether different in rank and dignity from things, such as irrational animals, with which one may deal and dispose at one's discretion. (Kant, LA, 7, 127)

4. Humans are spiritual creatures. It is my impression that those of my proposals are in some way in tune with the sub-themes suggested by you. I do not see the better way for relearning to be Human in the Global Times than to take critical stand by pointing out in which way we turned from being human and to look for remedy from that by applying INTERCULTURAL approach that is learning from each other's cultures.

Juan Carlos Scannone (Colegio Máximo de San José, Argentina)

Re-learning to Be Humans in Times of Globalization

In the conversation with Enrique Dussel in Mexico, we agreed that to re-learn to be humans in these global times, it is convenient to depart from the anti-human factors that the present type of globalisation has brought to the mankind. Then it excluded not only individuals, but also entire peoples and their cultures from humanity, which are nominated as “surplus” and “waste” by Pope Francis. But, if “nothing should be alien to us as human”, every person, every people, every culture have in our historical moment something unique, irreplaceable and indispensable to offer to the others, whose loss is a crime against humanity. The model for the latter is the polyhedron in its unity of and in its irreducible differences.

Hence, it is necessary:

1) to have intercultural dialogue in order to overcome conflicts into a higher synthesis, which assumes the validity of each party;

2) to criticise the current technocratic paradigm and its logic of an absolutised instrumental reason, which prevail in the current type of globalisation;

3) to discern the now emerging “seeds of future” in order to get an alternative globalisation, in which to be human is re-learned in justice, equity and solidarity. Apparently such seeds are growing from below and from above, i.e. in the popular grassroots movements, whose protagonists are the historical victims, and -on the other hand- in the new human creativity that is now manifesting in spiritualities, natural and human sciences, and arts.

Re-aprendiendo a ser humano en tiempos de globalización

En la conversación tenida con Enrique Dussel en México, estuvimos de acuerdo que, para re-aprender a ser humano en estos tiempos, conviene partir de lo **anti-humano** que trajo la globalización como de hecho se está dando. Pues en ésta no sólo hay personas, sino también pueblos enteros y sus culturas que -de hecho- están siendo excluidos de la humanidad. Son los que el Papa Francisco denomina “sobrantes” y “deshechos”. Pero si “nada humano nos debe ser ajeno”, cada persona, cada pueblo, cada cultura, tienen -en un determinado momento histórico- algo de único, irremplazable e insustituible, cuya pérdida es un crimen de lesa humanidad. El modelo de ésta es el poliedro, en el cual se da la unidad de y en las diferencias.

De ahí la necesidad 1) de un diálogo intercultural en estos tiempos de globalización, asumiendo y superando los conflictos en síntesis superiores que subsuman lo válido de cada partido; 2) de la crítica al actual paradigma tecnocrático y a su lógica de absolutización de la razón instrumental, que prevalecen en el tipo de globalización hoy vigente; 3) de discernir las “semillas de futuro” actualmente emergentes, que apuntan a una globalización alternativa en la cual se re-aprenda a ser humano en justicia, equidad y solidaridad. Según parece, ellas se están dando tanto “por debajo” como “por arriba”, es decir, en los movimientos populares de base -de los cuales son protagonistas las víctimas históricas-, y, por otro lado, en la nueva creatividad humana que se está hoy manifestando en las espiritualidades, las ciencias y las artes.

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1. Education as a process of formation of humanity
2. Dialogue among different cultural traditions to broaden our concept of being human
3. Onto-Cosmic dimension of being human
4. "Person" as the core of all humanist concern
5. Spirituality, cultural traditions and being human