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*Associate General Editor: William Sweet*

# **Philosophy Emerging from Culture**

*Edited by*  
*William Sweet*  
*George F. McLean*  
*Oliva Blanchette*  
*Wonbin Park*

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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## INTRODUCTION

# PHILOSOPHY EMERGING FROM CULTURE

WILLIAM SWEET and GEORGE F. McLEAN

The theme of the 2008 World Congress of Philosophy in Seoul, Korea, “Rethinking Philosophy Today,” was, in many ways, a timely one. The beginning of the new millennium was also the end of the 400 years of the modern era. Since the mid 1970s, philosophers had already begun to speak of a post-modern era, and the attempt to enter the new global arena in terms of the old coordinates of control for national self-interest had shown itself to be a formula for disaster.

Global times now endow – and challenge – philosophy with a broad diversity of cultures and civilizations. At the same time, the progressive deepening of human concerns reaches beyond what is clear and distinct to what is of meaning and value, and beyond that which is universal and necessary to free human creativity. There has been a move towards culture, that is, towards persons and communities, which over time and space have cumulatively generated cultural traditions. These two dimensions: one of global breadth and the other of the depth of the human spirit, now combine to open new sources for philosophy as the work of the human spirit.

The Seoul World Congress, then, proposed that philosophers rethink the philosophical enterprise, and look for a new paradigm able to integrate the achievements of the past while moving into a radically new era.

As groundwork for this broad task, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) – with the International Society for Metaphysics (ISM), the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies (WUCPS) and Soongsil University (Seoul), with the assistance of the National Taiwan University – held a conference in Seoul during the three days immediately prior the World Congress of Philosophy. Distinct from the World Congress, this conference nevertheless focused on an issue preliminary to its theme: “Philosophy Emerging from Culture.”

The papers in this volume, selected from that conference, seek both to provide an elaboration of the theme and to examine the possibility of a new dynamic in philosophy. Following the structure of that conference, the theme of “Philosophy Emerging from Culture” is explored in three parts: *The Dynamics of Change* – dealing with modernity’s strengths and weaknesses; *The Nature of Culture and its Potential as a Philosophical Source* and, finally, the *Challenges and Opportunities for Philosophy* in an era of global awareness and interchange. Each of these three parts has, as an objective, to introduce and unfold the key issues, to engage in substantive

reflection upon the perspectives introduced, but also to reflect the breath of the background and philosophical horizons of authors from across the globe.

## SOME PRELIMINARIES

### *Identifying the Central Concepts*

To help to understand the theme and central issue of this volume, as well as the contributions of the individual authors to it, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on the key terms and some of the presuppositions.

*Philosophy.* The first and most obvious question is what is meant here by ‘philosophy’? The meaning of the term is, not surprisingly, highly contested – and agreement is far from universal.

In fact, according to some authors today, the term has almost no constant meaning. According to Richard Rorty, for example,

‘Philosophy’ is a sufficiently flexible term so that no one is greatly surprised when a philosopher announces that half of the previous canon of ‘great philosophers’ must be thrown out because the problems of philosophy have been discovered to be different than had been previously been thought. Such a philosopher usually explains that the slack will be taken up by something else (‘religion’ or ‘science’ or ‘literature’).<sup>1</sup>

And, similarly, Justin Smith writes

There is no thread of core concerns that weaves across the centuries, tying Plato and Paracelsus and Prinz together. It is true that they are all interested in some of the same things, but each is interested in many things that do not interest the others at all, and each holds these other things to be just as philosophical as what is shared by all.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, for some, “the major traditions supported by the profession [of academic philosophy] are exhausted” and that, in its place, one should develop a “philosophy-as-critical-theory” – “a holistic social theory which is at once a descriptive-explanatory social theory, an interpretive social theory and a normative critique” but that “departing radically from the philosophical tradition, ... will be an empirical theory.”<sup>3</sup>

In many cases, philosophy is a term whose application has been taken to be almost exclusively ‘Western.’ For example, Gene Blocker and Christopher Starling remind us of the Japanese scholar and political theorist of the Meiji era, Nakae Tokusuke who stated that “from antiquity to the present day, there has never been any philosophy in Japan.”<sup>4</sup> They cite, as well, the contemporary Japanese philosopher Sakamoto Hyakudai, who,



when asked to “explain the essence of ‘Japanese Philosophy’ ... respond[ed] that ‘There is no such thing; everything is imported, imitated.’”<sup>5</sup>

This scepticism or hesitation about philosophy would have been surprising to many of our forebears. As we know, etymologically, philosophy means ‘love of wisdom,’ which would suggest both that there is such a study, and that it is to be found wherever there is a desire and search for, and enjoyment of, wisdom. Reflecting on Greek classical and mediaeval philosophy, for example, we see philosophy described as “The profound knowledge of the universal order, of the duties which that order imposes upon man, and of the knowledge which man acquires from reality.”<sup>6</sup> And no doubt at least some of the speculative reflection of Buddhist, Hindu, Egyptian, Ubuntu, and other ancient traditions would fit under this description as well.

With the modern period, however, one finds an emphasis on method, on the nature of reason, and on the place of reason in philosophy – seeking clear concepts and ideas, employing evidentialist or deductive models of argumentation, and focusing on the nature and limits of human knowledge rather than the nature of reality. In this sense, one can say that there is a ‘modern’ paradigm of philosophy. While Descartes described philosophy as “‘the study of Wisdom’,” he saw this to be “a *perfect knowledge* of all the things which man can know for the conduct of his life, the preservation of his health, and the discovery of all the arts,”<sup>7</sup> so that “Philosophy absorbs the other sciences – is the whole of science.”<sup>8</sup> In *Leviathan*, Hobbes writes that “By philosophy is understood the knowledge *acquired by reasoning* from the manner of the generation of anything to the properties, or from the properties to some possible way of generation of the same, to the end to be able to produce as far as matter, and human force permit, such Effects, as human life requireth.”<sup>9</sup> For Locke, philosophy is “nothing but the true knowledge of things,” and he sees the task of the philosopher as primarily that of “an under-labourer in clearing ground a little, ... removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge.”<sup>10</sup> According to Hume, “the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation” – and so philosophy must have an empirical character and have such an empirical foundation as well. For Kant, philosophy is that which “contains principles for the rational cognition of things through concepts,” grounded on a “system of higher cognitive powers.”<sup>11</sup> It aims at a “rational concern with God, the Soul and the World,”<sup>12</sup> but ultimately is the “science of the limits of reason.”<sup>13</sup> In the modern period, then, the focus seems to be on philosophy less as a love of wisdom, and more as a desire for conceptual knowledge and the solution of problems.

It is true that, in some quarters, the range of definitions of philosophy has been somewhat more expansive. According to Richard Rorty, Hegel called philosophy “holding our time in thought”<sup>14</sup> – though, as is widely recognized, Hegel also excluded oriental philosophy from the

category of ‘true philosophy,’ and ignored the contributions of Africa altogether. The Scottish idealist of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, called philosophy “a criticism of categories.”<sup>15</sup> Martin Heidegger considered philosophy to be “the attempt to grasp explicitly the fundamental movement of human life,”<sup>16</sup> and Gilles Deleuze, “an opening of the possible.”<sup>17</sup> While Wittgenstein said that the object of philosophy was “the logical clarification of thoughts,”<sup>18</sup> Wilfrid Sellars saw philosophy as “to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term.”<sup>19</sup> A similar breadth is found in non-Western thinkers: for the Indian scholar and statesman, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, it is “a progressive discovery of reality or defining of reality in terms of fundamental conceptions or categories, or a gradual passage from lower, more abstract and indefinite conceptions, to higher, more concrete and definite ones,”<sup>20</sup> but also “the attempt to think out the presuppositions of experience, to grasp, by means of reason, life or reality as a whole. It seeks to discover a rational explanation of the universe.”<sup>21</sup> And a contemporary expert on comparative philosophy, James Heisig, has described it as the “more critical body of thought dealing with ultimate questions, systematically recorded and transmitted.”<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the notion of philosophy as primarily a cognitive, rational, conceptually-focused enterprise, exemplified by writers of the modern West, remains dominant. In the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, philosophy is defined as “the use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of the real world and existence, the use and limits of knowledge, and the principles of moral judgment”<sup>23</sup> – and it is perhaps in this sense that many continue to understand it.

A number of questions have, however, been out: Is the philosophical necessarily independent of the religious, spiritual, or mystical? Is there a role of non-conceptual intuition or insight in the ‘love of wisdom’? What are the methods for arriving at philosophical truth? Is there a single model for determining what is reasonable or rational? Indeed, how are we to distinguish the philosophical from, the religious, the literary, or even the scientific?

These questions focus on philosophy as a ‘rational’ enterprise within the limits of human reason – and it is here that philosophy in the West has been – and, in several chapters of the present volume, is – challenged. For some today, philosophy needs to be understood more broadly, as “a critical, reflective, rational, and systematic approach to questions of very general interest”<sup>24</sup> or as “an enterprise that seeks to examine the presuppositions of a subject and to provide general principles by which the most fundamental concerns can be understood and seen in relation to one another,” if not even more broadly.

As one reads the essays in this volume and reflects on the accounts given or implied of philosophy today, one should well ask what model of philosophy the author accepts or presupposes.

*Culture.* Like the term ‘philosophy,’ the term ‘culture’ has been contested. It, too, has been understood in different ways, and it is fair to say that the level of philosophical interest in the topic has varied as well.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, philosophers such as Friedrich Schiller,<sup>25</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder,<sup>26</sup> and Georg Simmel<sup>27</sup> made conspicuous contributions to the discussion of the nature of culture, and there has been a revival of interest in the topic in the last three decades. In the Anglo-American world, the topic has admittedly had a relatively small place in philosophy, but it has been an important concern of scholars in areas such as sociology, literary theory, and history.<sup>28</sup>

A classic definition of ‘culture’ is that provided by the anthropologist, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, at the beginning of his *Primitive Culture* (1871): “Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”<sup>29</sup>

This definition, not surprisingly, has raised many questions. What unifies a culture or makes it a ‘whole,’ and what exactly is ‘society’? Is a culture something that we can isolate from other cultures and observe at a precise point in time? Or is ‘culture,’ rather, a ‘dynamic’ notion, that is characterised by a *telos* or foundational characteristics, and in terms of which we can speak of a continuity and an integrity? Should a definition of culture seek to be purely descriptive, or must it have a normative element as well?

Some have insisted on just this latter point, and there have been a series of attempts at defining or describing culture that refer to it as “the best that has been said and thought in the world”<sup>30</sup> or “the disinterested endeavour after man’s perfection.”<sup>31</sup> Others, however, have not only demurred, but have come to use the term to describe almost any practice (such as a ‘culture of science’ or a ‘culture of health’).<sup>32</sup> It is, then, understandable how, in their *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952)<sup>33</sup>, Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn provide some 164 different senses of the term.

In reflecting on the essays in this volume, therefore, it is important for the reader to ask how the term ‘culture’ is used. If philosophy is to have a relation to culture – if it is to draw on culture, to challenge it, or to defend it, it is essential to have an understanding of what it is. Perhaps one can use something close to Tylor’s definition as providing a heuristic norm sufficient to allow one to reflect on the notion – though without insisting that ‘culture’ have the characteristic of being a ‘complex whole’ and without focusing on its attribution to persons as members of “society.” In other words, perhaps one can take the term ‘culture’ in a very broad sense as ‘a collection of representations or ideas shared by and pervasive through a group of individuals over time.’ Still, if authors are to advocate a (re)turn to culture, they must also be ready to address some of the concerns about how far culture is to be prescriptive or normative.

*The Global Era*

The essays in this volume seek to respond to how philosophy is to be done today, in an era marked by an increasing awareness of individuals, communities, and traditions both in one's own society and in those of others. The received view, in many corners, is that this reflects a shift from modernity, and that there needs to be a corresponding shift in philosophy.

As we have seen, for much of the modern era, philosophy had been marked by its emphasis on rationality, objectivity, precision, and the universality and necessity of principle and truth. The activity of philosophy, then, was to transcend or go beyond the 'local' and the cultural. But, it has been argued, as modernity entered its fourth century, things changed.

There are at least three phenomena, closely related, that characterize this change and that mark the present era.

The first is that people almost everywhere are much more aware of the diversity that the planet contains. Throughout the world, but also within many nations, difference of ethnicity, religion, culture, and tradition are matters of which people are increasingly conscious, even if this awareness is partial, flawed, or incomplete.

The second is that this awareness is, in part, the effect of globalisation – the action and interaction, across borders and across continents, and spread of cultural, economic, and political ideas (particularly by way of trade, industry, technology, the arts, letters, and music, and religion) throughout the world. Through the access to technology that comes with globalisation, individuals and groups have powerful ways of accessing information, communicating, and promoting their cultures and traditions.

The third is that, through this awareness and contact with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, we have witnessed significant change, in communities as a whole and at the level of individual persons' sense of identity. These changes may be celebrated in some places or suppressed in others, but on the whole it has led to the creation of a more pluralistic ethos and, arguably, also a stronger sense of the value of the individual human subject.

This awareness, and particularly the process of globalization, have also led to interdependency among economic institutions in different countries, and may even lead to the establishment of new (social, political, and cultural) institutions on a world-wide basis. It has also, not surprisingly, led to the fear that global consciousness threatens cultural identity – i.e., the 'unity' of ideas and beliefs, present in institutions and practices, that constitutes a system and a coherent 'way of life,' and that reflects the 'mind,' goals and aspirations of a group of persons – and, thereby, leads to the destruction of traditional values and local institutions.

Thus, on 'the received view,' as modernity entered its fourth century, there is an increasing gradual awareness of the local, the particular, the subjective, the contingent, and the cultural. These have come to be the

foci of new philosophical movements, most notably what has been called postmodernism.

### *Philosophy in Culture*

While the accuracy of the received view can be contested, it raises the question of the relation between philosophy and culture – the central question with which this volume is concerned. Is philosophy a discipline or enterprise where philosophies are independent of and go beyond their cultures of origin? What, exactly, is the relation of a philosophy to the particular culture or context in which it arose? Can it serve as a critique of culture – and of the values and traditions that gave rise to that philosophy itself? How should one see the relation of philosophy to culture in general?

As we have seen above, for many philosophers of the modern era, philosophy was regarded as being ultimately independent, and even an arbiter, of culture. Philosophy's role was to help people to think about, and to assess, culture and traditions – what a culture takes for granted, what constitutes a culture, and even whether a culture or way of life is worth preserving.

Inspired by the commitment to reason and proof, a number of philosophers saw their role as importantly one of judgement and critique – challenging the values or traditions of cultures and institutions, calling into question their claims to legitimacy, and casting doubt on such normative principles within the culture (including, 'truth', 'objectivity,' the 'good,' etc.) – but sometimes advocating the values or norms of other cultures. For example, the introduction of a philosophy into a new culture may suggest other ways of explaining or addressing a problem in one's own, or have us reread and reinterpret philosophical views that we take as givens. Philosophical analysis also seems to be the best tool available to assess cultures and philosophies themselves – and thus 'rise above' particular 'local,' cultural problems. In some cases, however, philosophers denied the significance of culture, particularly of the cultures of others – refusing to acknowledge the presence of local practices, values, forms of social organisation, and traditions. And some philosophers sought to blind others from the richness and diversity of cultures, by articulating and defending a vision of the world which predetermines what is to count as culture or what is to count as a value within a culture (e.g., the emphasis on the individual, on autonomy, on rights over responsibilities, and so on).

As 'judge' of what is rational and valuable, some scholars argued that philosophy – by which they mean its basic principles and concepts, the modes of reasoning and argument, and (properly speaking) its arguments – do and should in some way 'stand above' or transcend, cultures – and, by so doing, are able to evaluate cultures, for good or ill; for example, whether it is appropriate to leave room for the 'non-natural' in culture and in philosophy, how the nature and value of the person is to be understood, and

so on – and this, in turn, will plausibly have an effect on how a culture may change or develop.

Such a model of philosophy could lead (and has led) to the legitimation and the domination of certain cultures, by insisting that members of non-conforming communities respect at least the general exigencies of the culture, and by maintaining that other norms reflect private conceptions of the good, have no “external” value, and therefore should not be brought into the public sphere.<sup>34</sup> For example, it has all-too-frequently been the case that political philosophers have taken on the project of defending the value of the dominant political culture and the institutions that are broadly consistent with it, be this in Kant’s Prussia, Teodor Oizerman’s Soviet Union, Ai Siqi’s People’s Republic of China, or Richard Rorty’s United States.

Yet, in recent years, as they have become increasingly aware of difference and diversity throughout the world, many have found this model of philosophy – as ‘judge’ of what is rational and valuable – problematic. They argue, for example, that to do philosophy well, one must study and understand the culture that gave rise to it. This is not just to be better at understanding the arguments – to see how problems were identified, what made them *problems*, and how answers were *answers* – but to enable us to recognize that there is not just one approach to philosophical enquiry and, perhaps, how philosophical issues can be better grasped by seeing them in different contexts and perspectives.

Some have argued, then, that philosophy is a product of culture, and that the ‘modern’ model simply ignores this. Culture gives philosophers a language and values, and sets up the specific sorts of problems and questions that philosophers pursue. Culture influences the kind of material environment in which such questions are raised – economic production that permits the creation of goods and the opportunities for leisure (in which philosophy is done). Culture seems to determine, as well, what counts as philosophy (as distinct from religion, science, literature, and history) – and this is a far from innocuous matter because it presumes that it is possible or appropriate to distinguish philosophy from the religious, scientific (e.g., the scientific paradigm), the axiological, and the literary elements of one’s culture. Indeed, culture influences not only the ‘language’ in which philosophical questions are expressed and answered, but what counts as a satisfactory *philosophical* answer. Indeed, a culture may also obscure or marginalize philosophical issues by putting limits on the kinds of questions that can be asked – for example, by establishing norms of reason or values (such as the value of the individual, the value of the common good or of the good of communities such as the nation, the church, humanity, and the biosphere) that may have a different role—or no role at all – in the context concerned. Or it may lead philosophers to ignore other cultures (because their own philosophical views are so culturally-laden that they cannot recognise the dynamics of other cultures; or because they are so immersed in their own culture – in that medium – that they cannot see *where* they are).

In short, it is clear that philosophy is capable of ‘crossing’ and ‘transcending’ cultures – at least to the extent that it can ‘migrate’ from one culture to another – and that philosophy can affect culture.<sup>35</sup> Yet philosophy is clearly rooted in culture and there is a strong case for the claim that culture provides – and imposes – the discourse in which philosophical enquiry is pursued. What, then, is the relation between philosophy and culture? Does philosophy emerge from culture or does culture emerge from philosophy? Or is there a reciprocal or dialectical relation?

The authors in this volume argue that the answer to these questions is more complex – and certainly more complex than the received view would suggest. To help to address these questions, they focus on three principal issues: (1) The dynamics of change – understanding modernity, its strengths and weaknesses, and how to respond to it; (2) How culture can be a potential source for philosophy in this new era, and; (3) The challenges and opportunities for philosophy in a world in which there is global awareness and interaction – and, specifically, what philosophy itself can be in this new era.

## THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

In Part I, the authors address the issue of ‘The Dynamics of Change’ – that is, of the shift from the ‘modern’ paradigm of philosophy to one which is more attentive to culture. Yet, even if this modern paradigm is no longer adequate for philosophy in a global era, it arguably has some strengths, and there are aspects of modernity that should – and perhaps must – be retained.

In **Chapter I**, “What Remains of Modernity? Philosophy and Culture in the Transition to a Global Era,” William Sweet considers the putative dichotomy between modern philosophy, with its insistence on the independence of philosophical truth from culture, and postmodern philosophy, with its view that philosophy is fundamentally and inescapably rooted in culture. Both approaches recognise and articulate legitimate concerns, and yet both also have their critics. Sweet offers a response to this dichotomy, by suggesting a ‘third way’ that acknowledges strengths in each while avoiding the challenges raised against them. This response is based on the model of ‘critical history,’ found in late nineteenth and early twentieth century British philosophy. Such a model, Sweet argues, provides a way of recognizing and drawing on the diversity of culture while avoiding subjectivism, and a way of assuring that different cultures can and ought to form common cause, without collapsing into a monolithic universalism.

In **Chapter II**, “Principles of Western Bioethics and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Africa,” Workineh Kelbessa looks at some basic principles in modern and contemporary Western bioethics – beneficence/non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy – and the correlative accounts of confidentiality and informed consent. While these principles have, as their aim, the promotion of the well-being of the human person, Kelbessa’s essay suggests that we need to be careful and critical in applying them outside of

those Western cultures that reflect the modern paradigm of the rational, self-interested, and autonomous human subject. Kelbessa notes that ‘blanket’ application of the principles of Western bioethics to Africa not only has been of limited use in promoting well-being, but has actually contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS. He notes that that differences of culture – specifically, African communitarian culture, where individuals are seen as primarily members of groups – complicate issues of determining consent, and that too strong an emphasis on principles such as respect for patient autonomy and voluntariness undermines efforts to reduce the harms of HIV/AIDS.

Some principles characteristic of modernity – for example, the focus on rationality – are not just characteristic of the West. In **Chapter III** (“Rationality in Islamic Peripatetic and Enlightenment Philosophies”), Sayyed Hassan Houssaini compares modern/Enlightenment philosophy with Islamic peripatetic philosophy. Houssaini argues that there are many similarities between the Islamic peripatetics (e.g., Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, and Al-Farabi) and Enlightenment philosophers (such as Kant), and seeks to show this by focussing on the role that rationality plays in both traditions. Both traditions recognise universality, unity, and permanence of reason, but also that reason is fallible and needs correction. One of the strengths of these rationalist traditions, then, is that the recognition of this need for correction can, in fact, serve as the basis for a dialogue among cultures.

Philosophical hermeneutics has played an important role in the transition from Enlightenment modern philosophy to philosophies that seem more suited to a global era. In **Chapter IV**, “Theanthropy and Culture According to Karol Wojtyla,” Andrew N. Woznicki argues that there are elements in late modern philosophy – in phenomenology – but also in pre-modernity, that reminds us of the importance of culture and show how philosophy emerges from culture. Focusing on the writings of Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Woznicki presents Wojtyla’s views on the importance of the human being as the basis of culture, but also as a product of culture. Woznicki begins with a discussion of the ‘theanthropic’ dimension of human nature – i.e., as a being which is immanent but also has a virtual power or capacity for the transcendent. This theanthropic dimension is also, however, fundamentally moral – based on the conscience, freedom and desire for self-determination (i.e., self-possession and self-domination) of the human person. Woznicki notes, following Wojtyla, that culture, then, is fundamentally rooted in morality, and that the human person, as a theanthropic being, “makes culture, needs culture, and through culture creates himself.”

Philosophical hermeneutics can be used, as well, in understanding philosophical traditions and seeing connexions among them. In **Chapter V**, “Al-Fārābī’s Approach to Aristotle’s *Eudaimonia*,” Mostafa Younesie discusses two eminent pre-modern philosophers whose work has been called on in the critique of, and the transition from, modernity: Al-Fārābī and Aristotle. Younesie examines Al-Fārābī’s treatise “The Attainment of



Happiness” – a text that contains a number of different accounts of happiness (*eudaimonia*) as *telos*. He argues that, while there are few explicit references to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* in “The Attainment of Happiness,” a close reading reveals that Al-Fārābī adopts a hermeneutics of mediation, and that, in the mediation of these various accounts, he is able to provide a developed and nuanced account of happiness that extends across cultures.

In Part I, then, the some of the authors note the force of the contemporary critique of the understanding of philosophy, but also acknowledge the strengths of the ‘rationalist’ tradition. Other authors indicate the role of hermeneutics in uncovering the presuppositions of the ‘modern project,’ as well as offering a method in moving beyond it. It remains to be seen, however, what this implies for how we are to understand philosophy, and how philosophy can be rethought for a global era. Here, it is clear that one must take into account features central to understanding the contemporary world, and these include the nature of the human subject and the phenomenon of culture.

## THE NATURE OF CULTURE AND ITS POTENTIAL AS A PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCE

As noted above, one of the central characteristics of late contemporary and postmodern philosophy has been to remind us of the importance of culture and of the individual subject.

Among the principal characteristics of modernity is what has been called “the subjective turn” – that, beginning in the seventeenth century, there was a shift of focus in philosophy from exploring the nature of reality, with a priority on the metaphysical, to explaining how that human subject can know or understand that reality – which led to a focus on the individual, on human psychology, and on epistemology. In ‘postmodernity,’ as we become increasingly conscious of cultural diversity and difference in the world, this turn continues and extends to how we understand cultures. This arguably brings with this a new awareness of values or, at the very least, an awareness of ‘new’ values – values emphasizing the contingent, the particular, and the local.

In Part II (The Nature of Culture and its Potential as a Philosophical Source), then, the authors seek to provide an understanding of culture and of this new awareness of values and of culture, and then discuss how culture may give rise to philosophy.

In **Chapter VI**, “A Realistic Interpretation of Culture,” Jeu-Jenq Yuann presents a proposal to help the reader understand culture better. Yuann looks at culture from an epistemological rather than an anthropological perspective. Adopting a variant of Paul Feyerabend’s realism, Yuann argues that cultures can be seen as something ‘real,’ and that this confirms the ‘real’ differences among cultures. Nevertheless,

interpreting cultures realistically does not entail some kind of determinism and, as a result, cultural isolationism. In fact, such an interpretation shows how cultures can be open to dialogue with one another, while avoiding assimilation or uniformity.

In **Chapter VII**, “Rehabilitating Value: Questions of Meaning and Adequacy,” Karim Crow notes a new awareness of values from an Islamic perspective. The postmodern account of culture and philosophy often underlines their contingency and even radical uniqueness. Conceptions of value and truth in one tradition or culture are said to be, as such, incommensurable with those of other traditions and cultures. Crow responds to this view. We have to recognise, he says, the distinctiveness of cultures and values. Nevertheless, they are not incommensurable with one another, and we can draw on other cultures to introduce what we may see as ‘new’ values. This requires entering into those cultures in order to grasp their philosophies and values, and enables us not only to understand these values, but to bring them to bear on and to contribute to concerns outside their culture of origin. Crow argues that, by being attentive to language, we can find ways to enter into and, then, cross cultures and, thereby, achieve a unitary sense of value.

In **Chapter VIII**, “Globalization and the Emergence of Philosophy in Southeast Asia,” Tran Van Doan discusses the emergence of philosophy in the cultures of the Southeast Asia. Tran notes that it has been said that philosophy, in the strict sense, does not exist in the Asian traditions – that there may be wisdom or spiritual or cultural traditions, but not philosophy. Indeed, Tran notes that these views are not only widespread in the West, but are to be found in many contemporary Asian philosophers as well. Some attribute this to ideas and ideals associated with globalization, but Tran demurs. It is true that Western ideologies and cultures have come to dominate philosophy in Asia and throughout the global south, but this is a characteristic of what Tran calls ‘mondialization,’ which antedates globalization. Globalization, which provides a means of dissemination of ideas and culture, in fact gives Southeast Asian philosophers a means not only to recover their own philosophical traditions, but to bring these philosophies into contact with, and to contribute to, philosophy worldwide.

Part of the understanding of culture, particularly as we become more conscious of subjectivity, is a new awareness of underlying values. In **Chapter IX**, “The Natural, Moral, and Cultural Roots of Humanity,” Vasil Gluchman investigates the issue of the moral value of ‘humanity’ – i.e., the quality of being human. Gluchman argues that this value has its origin, not in the natural or biological character of human beings, but in something more. Although there are clearly ethically-relevant similarities between human beings and higher mammals, particularly the tendencies to preserve one’s life and to show concern for beings like oneself, Gluchman identifies several features unique to human beings, specifically concerning conduct towards strangers. He insists that this shows that human beings can transcend their ‘natural-biological’ framework and, thereby, possess a

unique moral character, which he calls humanity. This moral quality, Gluchman concludes, is distinctively human and is the basis of human dignity.

In **Chapter X**, “Ethical Education and the New Awareness of Values and Virtues in Modern Civilization,” Marta Gluchmanova examines some implications of the new awareness of values, specifically for ethical education. Gluchmanova considers ethical education in the context of science. Contemporary culture is permeated with (an interest in) the values of science and technology – but often these values go unexamined. Gluchmanova argues, then, that education, especially science education, should emphasise values, including non-instrumental values. She adds that, not only should science educators be aware of the values implicit in science and technology, but they should be trained to recognize such values, and to incorporate such a broader conception of value into the curriculum.

The new awareness of values, characteristic of the contemporary world, should not, some authors argue, exclude those which have a connection with the religious and the spiritual. In **Chapter XI**, “The Religious Essence of the Spiritual,” Anatoliy G. Kossichenko points out that the understanding of spirituality today is problematic – not just because it is not properly understood, but because its meaning has been distorted. Kossichenko calls for a return to a properly religious understanding of the spiritual.

In **Chapter XII**, “The Unity of Spiritual Cognition in the Different Cultures of Humanity,” Sergey Nizhnikov notes that the understanding of the spiritual has a fundamental relation to culture and, thereby, to the different cultures of the world. Nizhnikov maintains that not only is the spiritual at the root of culture, but that it is *completely* manifested in all cultures, though in diverse ways. There is, then, a unity of cognition of the spiritual in humanity. Moreover, though the traditions of East and West may differ in methods of cognition, if one looks at the sources of a culture – or if an individual looks deeply into himself – one finds that the result (i.e., an understanding of a sense of humanity) is the same. Thus, the spiritual is not only at the root of the unity of a culture, but at the root of the unity of humanity as a whole.

Some have argued that, with this new awareness of values that is part of the recognition of the importance of culture comes a new understanding of philosophy that is suited to the global era. In the final three essays of Part II, scholars from Vietnam, India, and Romania suggest how philosophy has emerged or can emerge from culture. In the process, they also call for a broader conception of philosophy than that characteristic of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment modernity.

In **Chapter XIII**, “Some Reflections on Key Orientations in Philosophical Research in Vietnam Today,” Pham Van Duc shows how philosophy in Vietnam can be found emerging from Vietnamese culture. Duc describes the principal orientations of research in philosophy in Vietnam today: philosophical responses to the challenges of globalization;

studies on the history of philosophy (understood as theoretical thinking and the search for wisdom) in Vietnam; and enquiries into philosophies of other cultures, particularly as they bear on issues in Vietnam (e.g., rethinking Marxist Leninist and Confucian thought). All three of these orientations of research, Duc argues, reflect how cultural interests and concerns give rise to philosophy.

In **Chapter XIV**, “Philosophy, Culture, and Human Experience,” S.R. Bhatt shows how philosophy is embedded in Indian culture, but also how this ‘embeddedness’ reflects a distinctive understanding of philosophy. Philosophy (understood in India as *darshana*) is distinct from that found in Western traditions, Bhatt maintains, because *darshana* involves reflection on lived experience, and is primarily an activity of systematic self-reflection that entails practices that have a purpose and an end. Culture (as humanly-formed nature) contributes to this activity and, so, is, in many respects, normative. Indeed, on Bhatt’s view, since *darshana* is rooted in Indian culture, it provides a model of philosophy that has emerged from culture and that can have broad relevance.

Marin Aiftinca provides an additional argument for philosophy being rooted in, and therefore emerging from, culture. In **Chapter XV**, “Philosophy, Cultural Autonomy, and Values,” Aiftinca argues that philosophy emerges from culture so far as it is the highest expression of a culture or ‘national spirit.’ Specifically, philosophy shows the values that guide human life as well as the ideas and ideals of its culture of origin. Yet while philosophies emerge from culture and cannot entirely escape their origin, as a fundamentally rational enterprise, a philosophy can go ‘beyond’ its origins and its ‘age.’ This, Aiftinca holds, suggests a model for the future development of philosophy.

In Part II, then, the reader finds a discussion of the nature and importance of culture, an acknowledgement of ‘new’ values and also of the values of local cultures and traditions, and a recognition of how culture may give rise to philosophy. If the authors are correct, it seems to follow that traditional conceptions and categories of philosophy need to be broadened. One is led to ask, then, *How* is such a philosophy to be developed? What are the challenges to such a new paradigm? and Where does this lead us?

### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHILOSOPHY IN A GLOBAL ERA**

In Part III (Challenges and Opportunities for Philosophy), the authors explain how culture is a source of philosophical thinking, and how philosophy can be expanded by the awareness of other cultures. This not only allows for a deepening in the understanding of philosophy, but also may lead to a new paradigm for philosophy that recognises and can properly respond to the diversity of persons and peoples.

Consider the case of metaphysics. Though in some quarters today traditional metaphysics is suspect, Oliva Blanchette (**Chapter XVI**, “Metaphysics and the Transcendence of Cultures”) argues that the increased awareness of the role of culture can give evidence that metaphysics is central, because the creation of culture involves a ‘transcending’ of the world. Indeed, by drawing on culture and new cultural horizons, philosophy in general comes to play a more significant part in the contemporary world. According to Blanchette, culture is the product of a transcendence because it signals the activity of human beings transforming nature and ‘humanizing’ it. Yet culture itself also has a role in this transcendence. The diversity of cultures and traditions can contribute to the continued transformation and humanizing of nature. There can, then, be a horizontal transcendence of cultures, in which cultures confront each other and are led to dialogue with one another in order to make each culture’s own ‘historical reasoning’ more complete. But, at the same time, there is a vertical transcendence at work, which moves cultures towards a deeper realm of meaning, and which, again, can lead to dialogue with other cultures for an awareness and understanding of this deeper meaning.

As an example of how, as a result of increased interaction with cultures around the globe, philosophy can come to have a greater role, G. John M. Abbarno discusses how, in the global era, the values of the more developed countries have had an impact on lesser developed countries. In **Chapter XVII**, “Exporting Values,” Abbarno discusses the challenges confronted by lesser developed countries in a world in which globalization is a major element, particularly where ‘invisible transparent’ forces seem to influence the ‘mental models’ that constitute the deep values of local cultures. Abbarno suggests that both the lesser developed countries and the more developed countries can play a role in determining the nature and extent of this influence, and that both lesser developed countries and more developed countries have responsibilities concerning the preservation of local cultures.

The awareness of, and interactions with, other cultures have enabled people to recognize the value of tolerance but also of the necessity of education for tolerance. In **Chapter XVIII**, “Concrete Humanity and Education for Tolerance of Cultures and Traditions,” Hans Lenk argues for the responsibility of philosophers to promote human rights education and, particularly, education for tolerance. Lenk distinguishes a number of different senses of tolerance, insisting that tolerance is not just an abstract moral principle but needs to be exercised concretely and in a practical way. Specifically, Lenk identifies tolerance with a concern for a “concrete or practical humanity” (*Humanität*) – an ethical notion, derived from J.G. Herder, based on the notion of human dignity. Lenk argues that this education for tolerance and promotion of ‘concrete humanity’ requires enabling individuals to participate and engage in social life – what he calls *Eigenactivity* – rather than merely not harming them.

Additional reasons to show that an awareness of new cultural horizons should lead to a more expansive view of philosophy are shown by Md. Sirajul Islam, Ivan Kaltchev, and Musa S. Dibadj.

In **Chapter XIX**, “Indian Culture and Its Global Outlook: A Philosophical Analysis,” Sirajul Islam reminds us that culture has a vital place in every nation. But in a world that is increasingly ‘globalized,’ small cultures have lost, or at least risk losing, their distinctive identities. Is it possible to build a global culture that nevertheless preserves and respects the distinctive contributions and values of local cultures? After a discussion of the meaning of culture, Sirajul Islam argues that Indian culture shows both a commitment to local values and a rationalistic character. In response to the current global challenges, then, Sirajul Islam calls for a cultural appreciation and (mutual) assimilation – insisting that, as has been shown in the Indian context, this is possible without losing the distinctiveness of local cultures.

Ivan Kaltchev (**Chapter XX**, “The Culture of Enmity against Tolerance in the Balkans”) notes that, in the Balkans, there have long been challenges to mutual dialogue. Yet, Kaltchev insists that the history of cultural diversity and conflict in the region suggests that these challenges can be overcome. Kaltchev surveys some of the challenges posed by the tensions between the centre of a culture and the periphery and, in particular, by the differences that one finds in the Balkans. In the past, such differences have led to cultural discontinuity, fragmentation, and a ‘culture’ of enmity. Kaltchev argues, however, that there are resources today for overcoming this enmity and for developing cultural dialogue and cultural integration throughout southeast Europe.

In **Chapter XXI**, “Globalization, Culture, and Ethics,” Musa S. Dibadj reminds the reader of the increasing awareness of cultural diversity and of the challenges of globalization, and identifies some of the tensions between internationalization and respect for local culture and values. Dibadj notes, however, some of the positive results of these phenomena. Moreover, he argues that, even if one cannot appeal to a system of global ethics to protect local cultures, there is a body of international precedent, reflected in United Nations documents, that can be of use here, and that can support a broader understanding of philosophy.

Given the above-mentioned awareness and influence of new cultural horizons as well as a broadening of the understanding of philosophy, where might philosophical research go from here?

In **Chapter XXII**, “Going Deeply into the Ground of Culture to Find a New Way: A Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Philosophy,” He Xirong offers a new paradigm, that of a genuinely comparative philosophy. He Xirong examines the claim that, since philosophy emerges from culture, there is an incomparability between Chinese and Western philosophy, and notes that efforts to reconstruct Chinese philosophy have generally been based on a Western paradigm. Instead of adopting such a Western approach, which tends to focus on texts

and concepts unduly preoccupied with ontology, He Xirong insists that we look instead at the activity of philosophers – at the philosophical approaches and methods used by scholars – and suggests that this gives evidence of shared or common space that can lead both to the articulation of an authentic Chinese philosophy and to a genuinely comparative philosophy.

In **Chapter XXIII**, “Philosophy and Culture: The Role of Religion?,” Edward J. Alam discusses another new approach to, or paradigm of, philosophy – that offered by the Spanish theologian and mystic, Fernando Rielo (1923-2004). Alam begins by considering how philosophy and culture have been intertwined, and notes the difficulties in determining the precise cause/effect nature of this relation. Then, turning to the classical Thomistic approach of Jacques Maritain, Alam insists that metaphysics is necessary here. He reminds the reader of the importance of both human freedom and the existence of universals; these are metaphysical matters, but also bear on religious traditions and cultures. Alam concludes that the articulation of a new metaphysics by figures such as Rielo provides a basis for defending the unity of culture and the cultivation of a new humanism.

Another paradigm of philosophy that has been proposed to respond to the challenges of a global age is that which Warayuth Sriwarakuel calls “holistic postmodernism.” Postmodernism has often been seen as a philosophical movement that insists not only on the rootedness of philosophy within culture, but on the impossibility of philosophy transcending culture. Moreover, while it is generally regarded as providing a radical critique of the status quo, postmodernism has also been seen as profoundly relativistic, incapable of providing any constructive model of culture. In **Chapter XXIV**, “Holistic Postmodernism: A New Paradigm for the Integration of the One and the Many,” Sriwarakuel reviews two models of postmodernism, one described by Lawrence Cahoon and the other by David Klemm, and argues that both are unable to provide a satisfactory response to the question of how to reconcile unity and diversity in culture. Sriwarakuel proposes a third model of postmodernism that employs a ‘new’ logic of “both...and.” He argues that this latter model, which draws on Buddhist thought, is not only more coherent, but has potential to solve the problem of ‘the one and the many’ in culture.

One of the major objections to drawing on the insights of other traditions – or communicating one’s own insights to other cultures – is the claim that there is no cross-cultural, shared discourse. In **Chapter XXV**, “Emplotment and Culturation: a Discourse of Emergent Philosophies,” Cristal Huang writes that there can be such a discourse, and that it is to be found in narrative: that when we wish to re-write a text from our own culture for use in another’s culture, we take account of differences and, as we do so, come to understand others. Drawing on Paul Ricoeur’s notion of narrated time, Huang discusses how it might be used in “intercultural writing.” When we undertake such writing, we form and reform our stories and, thereby, become more aware of the cultures and values of others as

well as our own. In particular, attention to narrative time in writing ‘across cultures’ will provide insights that will assist philosophers in engaging in inter-cultural dialogue.

The global interaction of cultures reminds us that the distinction between philosophy and religion is not as great as many think, and that any new approach to philosophy might have to take this into account. In **Chapter XXVI**, “Truth as Equality in a World Cultured by Difference,” Ogbo Ugwuanyi begins by noting the differences among cultures, the influence of culture on identity and difference, and how philosophy is a ‘cultural achievement’ that is ‘local.’ There are, he believes, significant differences between ‘Western’ philosophy and philosophies ‘outside’ the West – and he challenges Western philosophy for what he calls its rationalistic and dualistic character as well as for its account of objective and universal truth. Yet Ugwuanyi also recognises that, by themselves, non-Western philosophies have limitations as well. Truth, he writes, is a product or consequence of dialogue achieved by ‘defying difference,’ and no existing philosophy has a place for such a view. Thus, Ugwuanyi appeals to a model of divine truth and trust that can form the basis for such a dialogue.

Despite the putative limitations of existing models of philosophy, it seems rash to suggest that the new forms that philosophy may take in responding to the challenges of a global world give up all the features of the philosophies of modernity – that the traditions and values of humanism, reason, and philosophy as an analytical tool should be altogether abandoned.

For example, although philosophy can be said to emerge from culture, it also continues to be called on to be a critic of culture. In **Chapter XXVII**, “Facing the Global Crisis: The Role of Philosophy in Challenging Economic Powers,” Silja Graupe notes how economic systems have come to be regarded by many today as objective natural processes and, in this sense, as beyond critique. Graupe maintains, however, that philosophy can not only challenge this view of economics and of the culture that it brings with it, but can provide ways of directing or reorienting economic life.

Moreover, while there are, as we have seen, grounds for suspicion of modernity’s emphasis on rational argument and proof, as Jānis Ozolins points out (**Chapter XXVIII**, “Religion, Science, and the Culture of Credulity”), we must also be wary of the apparently corresponding growth of credulity. This has implications for ethics, but particularly for science and religion. All too often, reason and argument yield to emotional appeals, empty rhetoric, and manipulation by politicians, cultural icons, and the media. Ozolins traces the philosophical roots of this – arguing that the emphasis on autonomous choice and the primacy of the individual leads to the view that all opinions are equally legitimate, and that there is no objective way to choose among them. Ozolins insists that any ‘new’ paradigm of philosophy must still be one in which reason plays a leading role.



Can a humanism serve as a new approach to, and paradigm of, philosophy? In **Chapter XXIX**, “Humanistic Traditions in Russian Philosophy, Past and Present,” Vasiliy Gritsenko suggests that it can. He introduces the reader to the humanistic (i.e., idealistic and religious) tradition of Russian philosophy and its motivation to ‘rescue’ humanity. Gritsenko surveys Russian thinkers from Skovoroda and Dostoevsky, through Solovjev, to Vernadsky and Chizhevsky, and finds that the solution to humanity’s problems has to be on a cosmic scale. He claims that this has culminated, in recent thinkers, in an ‘anthropocosmism’ (or transhumanism).

In the concluding chapter in this volume, Joseph C. A. Agbakoba notes that a new approach to philosophy need not – and should not – entail the abandonment of universal values. In **Chapter XXX**, “Building Cultural Bridges in the Era of Globalization,” Agbakoba allows that, even if philosophy emerges from culture, it can cross cultures and contribute to the building of universal values. While there is merit to some of the postmodern challenges to universalism, Agbakoba signals that these challenges are more to universalist ideologies than universal values. Taking the example of African philosophies and showing how they have a reach beyond the African context, Agbakoba argues that there are universal values. Nevertheless, this does not mean that any existing set of values is universal, and Agbakoba signals the need for philosophy to allow the development of cross-cultural dialogue and thereby the articulation of shared values.

Thus, in Part III, we see that philosophy in a global era is beset by challenges, but that this era may also provide a number of opportunities and the prospect of a new understanding of philosophy. The authors in this volume note that culture has been and is a philosophical resource, and so philosophy can be expanded to and by culture. Specifically, the awareness of other cultures – and, in general, by our awareness that we are in a global era – not only deepens our understanding of philosophy, but can lead to new paradigms for philosophy that exhibit and yet can also harmonize the radical diversity of persons and peoples. The way in which the authors suggest this is to be done, varies significantly, and it requires, in particular, understanding what the awareness of culture in a global era implies, how in the present era a philosophy can be expanded and deepened, and what philosophical activity concretely should involve.

## CONCLUSION

The authors in this volume provide studies that show an effort to rethink the philosophical enterprise, and to examine the nature and presuppositions of the model of philosophy dominant in modernity. Key issues here are how philosophy relates to culture, whether the apparent move towards culture reflects a new dynamic, and what a new dynamic or paradigm might look like. The authors are, as well, attentive to, and broadly supportive of the claim that philosophy is rooted in and a product of culture. Nevertheless,

they resist the views that philosophies cannot go beyond their cultures of origin, that philosophies – and cultures – are incommensurable, and that philosophy cannot provide tools for analysis and communication among cultures

Some authors suggest that there may be common ideas and concerns on fundamental issues – the nature of the real, the principles of value, and the nature and destiny of humanity – that provide a core of questions for philosophical discussion. Some would also note that there may be questions, common to different cultures, or intuitions (e.g., about justice or the value of the human person) at the root of all human experience that can provide a starting point for dialogue. Finally, given the geographical range and scholarly breadth of the contributors to this volume, at the very least one may be able to have some idea of the benefits of investigating how certain philosophical questions have been pursued in different cultures, of how philosophical traditions and texts can migrate, and what this implies for philosophy in a global era.

Readers of the essays that follow are invited to consider the issues raised in this volume, and how far the analysis provided and the options proposed require a new paradigm of philosophy or a return to a classical model of it. Readers would also do well to be attentive to the varied and charged meanings of terms such as ‘philosophy’ and ‘culture,’ but also ‘modernity,’ ‘philosophical hermeneutics,’ and ‘the global era.’

The hope of this volume, as of the conference on which it is based, is that this new dynamic of philosophy will reflect moving from a modern, ‘top-down’ approach that imposes broad principles, to a bottom-up approach. In doing so, it seeks to be a witness to the breadth of human experience and creativity and to contribute to a richer vision of philosophy that can liberate and guide.

## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> Justin E.H. Smith, "Gödel in Hong Kong," *NIBR*, Issue 7, 19 May 2010 <http://nplusonemag.com/goedel-in-hong-kong>

<sup>3</sup> Kai Nielsen, "Philosophy as Critical Theory," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, Vol. 61, No. 1, Supplement (Sep., 1987), pp. 89-108.

<sup>4</sup> H. Gene Blocker, and Christopher L. Starling, *Japanese Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Blocker and Starling, *Japanese Philosophy*, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Désiré Mercier, *Logique*, Vol. 1 du Cours de Philosophie (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1897), p. 23; cited in Maurice De Wulf, "Philosophy." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 12. New York: Robert

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- <sup>7</sup> Emphasis mine. See Descartes, *Principes de la philosophie*, in *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (nouvelle presentation) (Paris: Vrin, 1974-83), Vol. IX/2,2.
- <sup>8</sup> Maritain, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1944).
- <sup>9</sup> Emphasis mine. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012), Part IV, chapter xlvi.
- <sup>10</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, collated and annotated, with prolegomena, by Alexander Campbell Fraser, in two volumes (New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1959), "Epistle to the Reader," Vol. I, p. 14.
- <sup>11</sup> Kant, *Critique of Judgment* [1790], ed. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), p. 9.
- <sup>12</sup> William Earle *Evanescence: Peri-Phenomenological Essays* (Evanston, IL: Caxton, 1989), p. 52.
- <sup>13</sup> In Kant's Remarks on the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, ed Gerhard Lehman (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co: 1942), Akademie edition (vol. XX, 1—192), p. 181; see Ronald Beiner and William James Booth (eds.), *Kant and Political Philosophy: The Contemporary Legacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 94.
- <sup>14</sup> Hent De Vries, *Religion: Beyond a Concept* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), p. 68.
- <sup>15</sup> Andrew Seth, "Philosophy as Criticism of Categories," *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*, ed. Andrew Seth and R. B. Haldane (London: Longman, 1883).
- <sup>16</sup> Herman Philipse, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Being: A Critical Interpretation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 94.
- <sup>17</sup> François Zourabichvili, "Deleuze et le possible (de l'involontarisme politique)", in *Gilles Deleuze: Une vie philosophique*, ed. Éric Alliez (Presses universitaires de France, 1998), p. 338.
- <sup>18</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 4.112
- <sup>19</sup> W. Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," in *Science, Perception and Reality* (The Humanities Press: New York, 1963), p. 1.
- <sup>20</sup> Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1920), p. 413.
- <sup>21</sup> Radhakrishnan *The Reign of Religion*, p. 412.
- <sup>22</sup> James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p. 7.
- <sup>23</sup> <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/philosophy>
- <sup>24</sup> Blocker and Starling, *Japanese Philosophy*, p. 16.
- <sup>25</sup> Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), *On the Aesthetic Education of Man:*

in a series of letters [*Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*] ed., tr. introd, and commentary, Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

<sup>26</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* [*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*] abridged ed, with an introd. Frank E. Manuel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

<sup>27</sup> Georg Simmel (1858-1918), *Philosophische Kultur: gesammelte Essays* (Leipzig: W. Klinkhardt, 1911).

<sup>28</sup> I have in mind scholars such as Ernest Gellner, Fredric Jameson, Edward Said, Clifford Geertz, and Terry Eagleton.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom*. 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1871), p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew Arnold, 'Culture and Anarchy' and *Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (New York: Cambridge UP, 1993), p. xx.

<sup>31</sup> Arnold, 'Culture and Anarchy' and *Other Writings*, p. 205.

<sup>32</sup> Eliot cites, by way of reporting common understanding, that culture is "the way of life of a particular people living together in one place." See T.S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 122.

<sup>33</sup> *Culture: a critical review of concepts and definitions*, A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, with the assistance of Wayne Untereiner and appendices by Alfred G. Meyer (Cambridge, MA: The Museum, 1952).

<sup>34</sup> See Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 236.

<sup>35</sup> See William Sweet, *Migrating Texts and Traditions* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2012).

**PART I**  
**THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE**



## CHAPTER I

# WHAT REMAINS OF MODERNITY? PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE IN THE TRANSITION TO A GLOBAL ERA

*WILLIAM SWEET*

### INTRODUCTION

A view often attributed to many of the major thinkers of the modern period, such as Descartes, Hobbes, and Kant, is that philosophy goes beyond particular cultural or historical or contingent concerns – that it seeks to provide arguments that all rational beings, regardless of their culture or tradition, can recognize as sound, and that it proposes to arrive at certain, universal, timeless and absolute truths. On this ‘modern’ view, then, while philosophy may emerge from cultures, it seeks to leave cultural specificity behind, and to abstract itself from the particularities of these cultures.

This view of philosophy has been challenged, especially since the early nineteenth century and the development of hermeneutics – and it has come increasingly under fire during the late twentieth century, largely as a result of an increasing global awareness and the recognition of the diversities in ethical practice and in ways of knowing. How conclusive are these challenges to modernity and to ‘modern’ approaches to philosophy? Is there anything characteristic of modernity that remains in philosophy after the contemporary critique?

In this paper, I wish to focus principally on issues related to this latter question, namely, What, if anything, remains of modernity in philosophical thinking in the global era? To respond to this question, I begin by explaining what it means to say that philosophy emerges from culture. Next, I outline what is generally considered to be the contrary view – one that is allegedly characteristic of ‘modernity’ – and explain why philosophy’s relation to culture has been described as merely incidental and contingent, and as telling us nothing about the philosophical enterprise itself; I give a brief illustration of this view drawn from ethical theory. I then present a critique of this account and give a constructive alternative, taken from the perspective of ‘postmodern’ thought – showing how one might conclude that philosophy not only emerges from culture but can never separate itself from it. Again, I illustrate this by an example from ethical theory. Finally, I note some criticisms of this postmodern approach, and offer another constructive alternative to both the modern and the postmodern views which allows us to say that philosophy emerges from culture and yet retains many of the characteristics of modern thought – an alternative which has an affinity with philosophical ‘idealism.’

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR PHILOSOPHY TO ‘EMERGE FROM CULTURE’?**

One finds today a thesis that philosophy emerges from culture, and can never free itself from it. This thesis is not universally accepted, but it is nevertheless widely held.

But before one can assess this thesis as a whole, one needs to consider the first part of it – i.e., what it means to say that philosophy emerges from culture – and what evidence we have for thinking so.

I think that this can be understood in a number of ways.<sup>1</sup>

At the most mundane level, one can say that philosophy emerges from culture in the sense that culture is part of, or influences, the material environment in which philosophical questions are raised; for example, culture determines the opportunities for and character of leisure, and it is generally only where people are freed from constant effort to obtain what they need to live that they have leisure time in which philosophy can be done.

One may go further and say that cultures set up the specific sorts of problems and questions that philosophers pursue. For example, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the West – where we have an increasing individualism, where science and technology made traditional forms of labour obsolete, and where there was not simply a search for more resources, but a search to expand markets – we find philosophical enquiries concerning human nature, the rights of the individual, political order, and conceptions of the good.

Perhaps, more controversially, one may say that culture seems to determine, as well, what counts as philosophy (as distinct from literature, science, history, or religion), and how to distinguish philosophy from the religious, scientific, axiological, and literary elements of one’s culture. For a number of years, in the West, the writings of figures such as Laozi, Confucius, or Sankara, or the traditions of thought in Asia or Africa or of American aboriginal tribes, were regarded by many as not being philosophy, but matters of religion or ‘social practice.’ Such an emphasis on the influence of culture has affected how even some western authors are regarded today. There is certainly debate whether Nietzsche or, in our day, Judith Butler, is a philosopher, and opinions may shift over time; Paracelsus (Phillip von Hohenheim; 1493-1541) was regarded as a philosopher in his time, but today almost certainly would not be.

Further, and more concretely, some have argued that culture influences in what ‘language’ philosophical questions are expressed and answered – and what counts as a satisfactory answer.<sup>2</sup> For example, by establishing norms of reason or emphasising values (such as the value of the individual, the common good, and the good of communities such as the nation, the church, humanity, and the biosphere), a culture provides a ‘language’ that puts limits on the kinds of philosophical questions that can meaningfully be asked.



And finally, more broadly, some may say further that ‘philosophy emerges from culture’ in the sense that culture provides – or imposes – the conceptual framework in which philosophical enquiry takes place.

In short, to say that philosophy emerges from culture can mean many different things – and some would say that it means all of the above; that culture determines the very possibility of philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

### **ARGUMENTS FOR PHILOSOPHY EMERGING FROM CULTURE**

What is the evidence for such a view – i.e., that culture determines the very possibility of philosophy? Interestingly, there are several arguments that might lead us to this conclusion, but today the most influential of them come from followers of postmodern hermeneutics. (It is also a claim of philosophical idealism – a point that I will return to, later.)

The argument here is primarily a negative one – that the view of the relation between philosophy and culture that is typical of modernity (though also typical of much of Western philosophy from the time of Plato), and which holds that philosophical work is independent of or transcends culture, is defective. And so, the argument goes, the opposite position must be true – i.e., that philosophy not only emerges from, but can never free itself from, culture.

To see how strong this argument is, a brief survey of the modern view will be helpful.

#### *The Modern View*

How do critics of the modern view understand modernity?

Modernity has generally been described as reflecting a number of basic principles.<sup>4</sup>

1. It rejects tradition and custom as *a priori* authoritative; everything must be subject to rational criticism.

2. It seeks objective truth and knowledge – ideally, absolute, law-like, ahistorical principles that can be known by reason, employing a formal, rational method.

3. Modernity is, therefore, rationalist at least in a broad sense, meaning that all reasonable beliefs and claims to knowledge must have ‘sufficient evidence’ for them. This evidence is, ideally, provided using demonstrative deductive arguments that start from self-evident or indubitable premises. In this sense, it is usually foundationalist in its epistemology.

4. It acknowledges that the conditions of knowledge are, in some way, determined by the capacities of the knowing subject; we have, then, a ‘turn to the subject,’ and epistemology has a priority over metaphysics.

5. This priority of the subject is also reflected in an emphasis on the value of the individual over that of the community.

6. According to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, modernity sees reason as ‘instrumental’ – that is, as a tool to be used, not only to understand, but to master or control, the world.<sup>5</sup>

7. Modernity is, however, ‘optimistic’ – it suggests that knowledge is ‘progressive’ and ‘emancipatory,’ and that the knowing subject is (self) perfectible.

As a result, then, contingent matters of tradition or history or culture are not of fundamental importance – at least, not to philosophy.

Broadly construed, philosophical ‘modernism’ is said to have begun in the early seventeenth century (e.g., around the time of Descartes), and to have had its most complete statement in the work of the eighteenth-century enlightenment philosophers and, principally, Kant. These philosophers rejected having culture or context or tradition play a determining role in knowledge, seeking instead law-like, absolute, foundationalist principles, and ahistorical, timeless, objective truths.

As an illustration here, consider the ‘principle based’ (deontological) ethics of Kant.<sup>6</sup> Kant, as we know, rejected any ethics based on custom or tradition or past practice, or any external sanction. For there to be a genuine ‘moral philosophy,’ it must be law-like – that is, it must be *a priori*. Kant’s approach is not to look at culture or context or tradition – doing this would be sociology, not philosophy – but to ask what a rational being, reflecting on what one ought to do, would discover and ‘assent to.’

His answer, as we know, is ‘Law’ – something that can be rationally grasped and recognised as true (and obligatory) by all rational beings, not just human beings. Autonomy is simply assenting to or giving this law to oneself.

The moral law which Kant seeks is, *qua* law, objective, universal and absolute – it is *a priori* and without exception. It is ‘recognized’ and enacted by reason alone – specifically, the reason of each individual agent – hence, it is (though only in this sense) subjective. It does not matter if people like it, agree to it, or not; it does not – indeed, it cannot – depend on an external lawgiver. Neither does morality depend on consequences or results; only on conformity to reason.

It is clear, then, that the moral law is what it is, independent of any contingencies of culture, history, or tradition. Indeed, it is for this reason that it applies to all rational beings *qua* rational beings, and not just to human beings.

The very point of modernism, then is that one had to put all claims of culture, custom and tradition under the light of reason and, if they are found wanting, reject them. Thus, there was no significant relation between philosophy and culture – or, what relation there was, was purely incidental.

### *Criticism of the Modern View*

Critics of the modern approach to philosophy – and those employing a

hermeneutical method here have played a key role – have argued that there are several problems with this view:

1. To begin with, these critics challenge the view that there are any absolute, universal, ahistorical, objective truths or principles – or, at the very least, they deny that we could ever know them.

2. There are no neutral, unprejudiced ‘subjects’ who can make objective judgements, independent of their interests. Indeed, there can be no privileging of the human subject because, really, there are no ‘subjects’ – and, in any event, there is no reason to prefer the human subject over any other being. In fact, the modern privileging of the subject (anthropocentrism) is itself the source of a wide range of contemporary problems – philosophical, political, social and economic.

3. The modern ideal of rationality is problematic; there is no neutral, formal method of arriving at objective truth. Reason or rationalism is not independent of tradition and culture; it is just another tradition. Empirical observation and history reveal that there are many different models of rationality, each rooted in distinct historical periods and each reflecting different social and cultural conditions —and there is no means of establishing any one as ultimately preferable. In other words, there is no single model of rationality in terms of which one could show that anything is ‘true’ or can be ‘known.’ Reason is contextual. As Richard Rorty has argued, there can be no ‘grounding’ — no ‘foundation’— outside of a context or (what Wittgenstein called) a ‘form of life’.<sup>7</sup>

4. Epistemological foundationalism is, therefore, arbitrary. Indeed, the principle of foundationalism is not only arbitrary but self-defeating. It is arbitrary because there is no reason for believing that it is true, and there are other, equally plausible models of ‘knowledge’ that are available. (In fact, few, if any, of our knowledge claims could ever satisfy this standard.) It is self-refuting because it cannot measure up to the standard that it sets – i.e., it is neither derivable from principles we know independently to be true, nor is it self-evident. In short, there is (and there can be) no ‘ground’ for our common-sense beliefs or knowledge claims.

5. (Therefore) There is no objectivity; there simply are no impartial, objective absolute truths or principles upon which all informed, mature, intellectually competent individuals can or must agree.

6. We cannot know nature or reality as it is ‘in itself’; indeed, such an ideal is illusory. Thus, truth cannot be the correspondence of statements to the world (since, at the very least, we can never make sense of such a ‘correspondence’). All that we can have are interpretations of texts or (more broadly) interpretations of experience.

7. There is, therefore, no essence or ‘nature’ or natural law of anything, including any human nature.

Thus, these critics claim, we need to reject the modern tradition altogether – or, at least, to recognise that modernity (and its accompanying rationalism and dismissive attitude towards culture and tradition) are simply

part of another tradition. Philosophy can never be separated from tradition and culture.

But if the modern approach fails, what is the alternative?

### *Postmodern Views*

Some philosophers offer what we may call the ‘postmodern’ response, which draws extensively on the insights of the hermeneutical movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Postmodernism describes, and even celebrates, the disintegration of the cultural, political, and philosophical views typical of modernity. Philosophers as Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous, Michel Foucault, and Richard Rorty challenge the ‘modern’ view that there is a community of discourse or an epistemological model that allows for rational and objective knowledge. In the words of another of its principal representatives, Jean-François Lyotard, postmodernism is an “incredulity towards metanarratives”<sup>8</sup> – an incredulity towards the claim that there is or can be ‘one story’ into which all truth or knowledge can be placed. More specifically, within Anglo-American and German philosophy, postmodernism is considered to be anti-foundationalist, anti-realist, anti-essentialist, highly pluralistic and pragmatist.

What does philosophy look like ‘after modernity’? What is its relation to culture? One suggestion is provided by the late Richard Rorty, who proposed a postmodern approach to (modern) philosophy.

In a recent tribute to Rorty by Raymond Geuss – a tribute widely circulated on the Internet<sup>9</sup> – Geuss mentions a pet project of Rorty’s. Rorty apparently was long interested in giving an undergraduate course that would be called “An Alternative History of Modern Philosophy,” starting with the end of the Middle Ages and proceeding up to the beginning of the twentieth century. It would focus, not on the major canonical figures, but on some of the lesser known – though, from Rorty’s perspective, equally or more philosophically powerful – figures.

Rorty may have had a number of reasons for proposing such an ‘alternative approach.’ But Geuss conjectures that one in particular reflects Rorty’s view of the activity of philosophy.<sup>10</sup> Geuss notes that Rorty held that what some people called ‘philosophy’ at certain times in history, was, at other times, not regarded as philosophy at all. Geuss writes that, according to Rorty:

There is no such thing as a universal set of philosophical questions or issues; Paracelsus wasn’t remotely interested in asking or answering questions like those we find “philosophical,” still lots of people at the time thought his work a paradigm of what a philosopher should be doing. The assumption here would be that the longer and more deeply one reflected on this fact, the more one would see that “philosophy” at different times and places referred

to different clusters of intellectual activities, none of which formed a natural kind and none of which had any “inherent” claim to a monopoly on the “proper” use of the term “philosophy.” Doing a history in which Paracelsus figured centrally but not Descartes, could be seen as a part of trying to give a history, not so much of philosophy, as of historically differing conceptions of what philosophy was.<sup>11</sup>

For the ‘postmodern’ philosopher like Rorty, then, philosophy is clearly a product of culture, and what philosophy is, is also a matter of culture. There is no one model or one approach into which all philosophical knowledge can be placed or to which all philosophical knowledge aspires.

But the position of the postmodernist, such as Rorty, is not just that there is no transhistorical or ahistorical conception of philosophy, or that there are no essences or natures outside of cultures and contexts which philosophy should seek. It is also the case that, if philosophy is contextually determined, then what counts as ‘reasonable,’ or ‘reason,’ or ‘a good argument,’ is also contextually determined; there are no universal standards of rationality. Terms like ‘objectivity’ and ‘true’ do not mean what the moderns took them to mean. ‘Objectivity’ does not mean “corresponding to what there is”<sup>12</sup>, but “a property of theories which, having been thoroughly discussed, are chosen by a consensus of rational discussants.”<sup>13</sup> ‘Truth’ is not a correspondence between a statement and reality, but is the product of the widest consensus or agreement within our set of social practices. (Thus, for Rorty, we cannot provide proofs, only explanations and narratives.)

According to Rorty, then, we are fools if we spend our time looking for some neutral, universal conception of reason, or of truth, or of human nature, or essences.

This critique seems to be particularly corrosive of ethical theory.<sup>14</sup> For example, Rorty finds the language of universal human rights at best question begging, and at worst incapable of any clear justification; it is simply an ideological approach that appeals to those, like him, who are liberals living in the West. There is no ‘external’ justification of rights or argument or proof requiring the equal consideration of others. Instead, Rorty says that we need “sentimental education”<sup>15</sup> – an education of the sentiments – so that people come to see the world less in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’ or, at least, so that they are willing to enlarge the sphere of ‘us,’ and thus extend their moral communities. The aim of ethics is not to construct a theory of the good or the right, but to promote ‘solidarity.’ Instead of seeking argument and proof in ethics, then, we should try to ‘awaken’ or ‘educate’ the sentiments. To the extent that we do so, Rorty writes, there is moral progress.

If the postmodern view is correct in its critique of modern philosophy and in its recognition of the place of historicity, context, and interpretation, then the modern claim that philosophy somehow transcends its origins and is not essentially a product of the culture in which it arises,

simply fails. This, postmoderns would note, is simply to inject humility and perspective into the juggernaut that the modern view has been. Philosophy emerges from culture. We should henceforth focus on ‘philosophies’ rather than ‘Philosophy,’ so that our philosophical investigations will be more modest, but also more respectful, of other cultures and traditions outside our own cultures of origin.

### CRITICISMS OF POSTMODERN VIEWS

Is this generic postmodern view plausible? There is of course a great danger in talking of *the* postmodern view, since the accounts that one finds in Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Cixous, Foucault, Rorty and others vary widely indeed. Still, it is fair to say that there are two parts to this approach: its critique of modernity, and its own ‘positive’ view.

Clearly, postmodern views have their advantages. They draw our attention to problems in modern thought, such as the emphasis on the powers of human reason and the exclusion of any role for the sentiments in knowledge. Moreover, by focusing on particulars rather than universal principles, postmodernism reminds us that certain features of ‘reality’ have been long marginalized or overlooked (e.g., the experience of non-western cultures, of women, and of propertyless classes). Postmodernists such as Rorty are oriented towards practice and the practical. Moreover, because of its attention to particulars, to difference, and to the marginalized, postmodernism seeks to be open to diversity, whereas modern philosophies – which seem to focus on a totalizing or a reductionist approach – presumably were not.

But postmodernism has been severely and extensively criticized itself. In general, its arguments against modernity have been challenged for being inconclusive, inconsistent, or based on over-generalizations.

Thus when we look at Rorty’s views on ethics and human rights, for example, we find that his own positive account seems to be at least as problematic as the views he challenges.

For example, it is certainly true that philosophical demonstrations are far from the most effective tools to address ‘front line’ (ethical) conflict. But this does not mean that they have no role. And while Rorty’s appeal to sentimental education is not without its benefits, it is far from an adequate alternative.

An ethical response cannot be just a feeling that what we are doing is appropriate to the situation; we must believe that we *must do* something in this situation – and this requires justification, argument, and proof. By itself, nothing follows from ‘feeling’; one might show compassion in a particular case, but one might just as well (depending on one’s sentiments) show indifference. Besides, the feeling of compassion can be acted out in different ways; some people focus on the immediate needs of the suffering individual, others may try to address what caused the suffering, and so on. And if what is central is *one’s own* ‘feeling’ or sentiment, then how can we

call on others to take an ethical position – to be in solidarity? Such a postmodern approach results in emotivism and in ethical confusion.<sup>16</sup>

There also seems to be a deep-rooted inconsistency in Rorty's ethics. Presumably, the aim of sentimental education is to make us *more* aware, not just *differently* aware. If Rorty's 'sentimental education' is indeed an 'education', then there must 'better' and 'worse' ways of understanding the world for which reasons need to be given. Rorty does not, however, seem to recognize this. (And, as we will see below, there is no inconsistency in promoting sentimental education and yet also insisting on giving reasons and proof.)

Though Rorty rejects the charge, there do seem to be grounds for saying that his position is relativistic – and some would hold that postmodernism as a whole is not only relativistic, but, as a result of this, fundamentally conservative, because it can provide no clear argument to challenge cultural norms or the status quo.

The preceding criticisms are, of course, at a very high level of generality, and there have been responses to them. Nevertheless, at the very least, it seems plausible to say that the postmodern approach is problematic. Even if a postmodern philosopher can respond to these criticisms, one might still argue that there are arguments for both modernism and postmodernism; that there are reasons for and against the notion of philosophy as embedded in, and emerging from, culture; and that 'modernism' and 'postmodernism', as philosophical approaches, are on a par.

## AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW: RECOVERING MODERNITY

Are we, then, at a stalemate?

I would argue that there is another critical approach to modernism that avoids at least some of the challenges to postmodernism and yet retains several of modernism's central principles. In this way, we can speak of philosophy as emerging from culture and never being separate from it and, at the same time, of modernism still having an important place and still being able to make an important contribution in a world where we recognize the pluralistic character of philosophy.

### *The Model of Critical History*

At approximately the same time as hermeneutics was being developed by thinkers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), and Friedrich Ast (1778-1841), we find significant critical reflection on history by British 'idealist' philosophers. For example, in his *Presuppositions of Critical History* (1874), F.H. Bradley (1846-1924) raised a number of fundamental questions about history and the role of the historian. No doubt influenced by German Biblical scholarship and criticism (and perhaps, indirectly, by Biblical hermeneutics), Bradley argued that (historical) texts do not stand on their own, but must be interpreted and

evaluated from the perspective of the historian. History, then, must be 'critical' – it cannot pretend just to seek to provide a 'copy' or 'mirror' of what happened in the past. The historian must select from the available data and, in the process, must also be aware of the presuppositions of the approach she or he brings to the selection process or historical enquiry. Bradley argued that it is the historian – and the historian's judgement — that is the basis for history; "The historian ... is the real criterion."<sup>17</sup> Bradley does not deny that there are facts; he simply rejects the view that these facts exist independently of the historian and are there for scholars just to 'collect' and repeat. While Bradley's position is not (narrowly) historicist, it recognises the importance of understanding historical events within their contexts, and that the historian is engaging in a normative, and not just a descriptive, activity.

Bradley's contemporary, Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923) took an even more cautious and sceptical view. When confronted with 'mechanistic' accounts of history or accounts that emphasized the fundamental role of "great individuals," Bosanquet was struck by their "fragmentary" and dead quality. He was suspicious of any history *qua* narrative or *qua* chronicle of the contingent events of the past, which proposed to give a "total explanation"<sup>18</sup> — and he was also suspicious of the view of the historian as one who provides an explanation of "the minds and natures of great men as if he was God's spy."<sup>19</sup>

We see this 'critical' approach to history in R.G. Collingwood (1889–1943) as well. Influenced by Bradley<sup>20</sup>, Benedetto Croce<sup>21</sup> (though he rejected many of Croce's views<sup>22</sup>) and, later in life, by Wilhelm Dilthey, Collingwood is best known for his *The Idea of History* (posthumously published in 1946). Here, Collingwood develops some of the insights of the idealist tradition by insisting that historians focus on thought – that is, on what was going through the minds of the historical actors at the time. Collingwood argued that "All history is the history of thought ... and therefore all history, is the re-enactment of past thought in the historian's own mind"<sup>23</sup>; "the scientific historian ... reenacts the evidence making the thoughts of his subject [i.e., the historical actor] his own"<sup>24</sup> and, thereby, comes not merely to understand the reasons for, but knows, what happened. Collingwood also argued for a closer relation between history and philosophy than was generally held, and insisted that philosophy must understand itself as a historical discipline. Philosophy's task was to articulate the 'absolute presuppositions' characteristic of each age or way of thinking, and the truth and falsity of philosophical claims can and must be determined only by understanding them in their original context.

Collingwood provides another important methodological insight – claiming that philosophy rests on a "logic of question and answer."<sup>25</sup> (It is interesting that Hans-Georg Gadamer sees a link between Collingwood's view and Gadamer's own logic of question and answer, which he develops in *Wahrheit und Methode [Truth and Method]*.<sup>26</sup>) Thus, in order to understand what exactly a philosopher said or meant, we need to see the



question that she or he sought to answer. Collingwood writes that “Every statement that anybody ever makes is made in answer to a question”<sup>27</sup>, and that “In order to find out [a philosopher’s] meaning you must also know what the question was . . . to which the thing he [or she] has said or written was meant as an answer.”<sup>28</sup> (This also suggests that genuine disagreement may be less common than we might think, for “two propositions do not contradict each other unless they are answers to the same question.”<sup>29</sup>) Collingwood’s method is, in a sense, backward looking (and hence reflects a kind of hermeneutics), but it is also forward looking, for it provides a way of pursuing future enquiries on a topic. And this, together with the theory of re-enactment, shows us the importance and the role of context and culture in historical knowledge that is nevertheless consistent with a rejection of relativism, subjectivism, and historicism.<sup>30</sup>

I have outlined here what has been called “critical history,” but this approach is not idiosyncratic or *sui generis*, and it is particularly congenial with doing the history of philosophy. With elements of both empiricism and rationalism, and of both objectivity and subjectivity, this “critical” view is also quite ‘modern.’ Yet it anticipates and addresses many of the criticisms later raised by postmodernists against modernism.

### *Lessons from Critical History*

How does the preceding model of critical history help to see the place of modernity in contemporary philosophy?

In the first instance, this model recognises that certain elements of modernism are problematic. It rejects attempts to understand history – and, in light of Collingwood’s remarks on the relation of philosophy to history, philosophy – in abstraction from specific, concrete concerns; historical truth is not ‘out there’ in the world, waiting to be discovered by the scholar. Critical history insists on knowing the particular situation and understanding the underlying issues in order to make sense of historical and philosophical claims. It is, like many postmodern views, an approach that is sensitive to context – taking account of the perspective of the person carrying out the investigation, and the situation in which it is being carried out. The logic (or ‘dialectic’) of question and answer is based upon just this insight.

But there is more to critical history than this. While it does not see tradition and custom as providing a ‘last word,’ critical history does hold that they provide essential insights, and it sees them as containing truths that need to be recognized in arriving at a more complete account of an event.

Critical history would certainly challenge the ‘foundationalist’ model of reason and argument – that knowledge can be had only by starting from self-evident or indubitable premises and using deductive modes of argument. Hence, its employment of ‘question and answer’ and re-enactment. It also sees investigation and analysis as collective processes – as social practices. Thus, it would reject the view that, in our knowledge of the world or of what is of value, the individual historian – or his or her

subject – is central. Proponents of critical history challenge modern tendencies to individualism and atomism. In these ways, then, a critical history – and, by extension, a critical philosophy – would call into question some of the key assumptions of modernism.

Yet a theory of critical history satisfies many of the principles of modernism.

Critical history holds that there is objective truth and knowledge – though it may be more of a challenge to arrive at them than many moderns have assumed. It is through the model of ‘re-enactment’ and the method of ‘question and answer’ that critical history enables one to reach truth. Consequently, in critical history, the historian looks at the particulars and attempts to rethink the thoughts of the historical actors – and, by doing so, achieves a (more comprehensive) view of reality.

Thus, while critical history is attentive to context and contingency, and is aware of the role of the particular interests of the historian, it is not obviously historicist (as postmodern views tend to be), for it does not reduce truth claims to statements about what is true ‘*in a context.*’ Indeed, while there is no single method across the disciplines that can be used to arrive at objective truth, critical history does hold that there are arguments whose validity is not limited to the cultures, traditions and practices in which they first arise. There can be absolute, universal truths – but the critical historian (and the critical philosopher) recognise that these are not easily reached and, indeed, can only be reached once we have a comprehensive grasp of reality. And, underlying its method, there is a commitment to reason, coherence, evidence, and argument, and to the claim that there are truths that all *should* see, even if some *do not*.

There is an important place for the subject in this view – though, again, it is reducible neither to the purely modern view nor to a postmodern view. Instead, it is a view that sees individuals as ultimately intelligible only when in relation to other individuals – i.e., when seen as being what some have called ‘the concrete universal.’

Finally, this view is broadly optimistic. Admittedly, it does not claim that history is essentially and inevitably progressive from moment to moment, and it rejects the view that individuals can be passive and unengaged in the world, comfortable in the knowledge that all will gradually, and inevitably, improve. Nevertheless, it does hold that, overall, there is progress, and that the elimination of incompleteness or conflict in ideas leads increasingly to a more rational conception – and development – of the world.

The approach adopted by critical history – one which we may describe as a broadly idealist approach – acknowledges that modernity fails in certain respects. But idealism also affirms that these failures are just what we should expect – that coherence and consistency are goals to be achieved, not simply features of the world as it is. The solution to this incoherence and inconsistency, so to speak, is not to abandon the modern view, but to recover it by addressing its tensions and contradictions, thereby arriving at a

more comprehensive and complete understanding of the world that reflects unity amid diversity. For such a result to be attained, then, there needs to be a recognition of diversity and cultures, and a recognition that philosophy itself is a product of culture that can, in turn, inform and challenge culture.

What would this approach imply, for example, for ethics? How could an ethics retain characteristics of modernism and yet also be seen as emerging from, and being dependent on, culture?

Consider the view of the idealist, Bosanquet. Bosanquet – like many of the British idealists, though not all – wrote little on ethical theory, focusing more on questions of practical ethics and particularly on questions of social and public policy and of education. Bosanquet held that what was needed most in the contemporary world was concrete moral action – i.e., practice and conduct that focussed on specific moral, social, cultural, and political issues – and the development of the moral character of the individual moral agent. Thus, he emphasised moral training and education, and he repeatedly wrote on and spoke of the importance of ‘being adequate to the situation.’<sup>31</sup> He would have had little hesitation in endorsing a kind of sentimental education, for feelings as well as reason are relevant to moral action. As Bosanquet’s teacher Edward Caird wrote: “if, in order that reason may rule, all such impulses have to be driven out, reason will rule in an empty house.”<sup>32</sup>

Yet Bosanquet did not reject moral theory – he simply recognised that its place was not to address concrete issues directly and immediately. And while Bosanquet, in his applied philosophy, focussed on the specifics of situations, he in no way rejected moral objectivism. Underlying his views on moral education and moral action, Bosanquet held that there is a moral theory which focuses on human flourishing, and which has both deontological and teleological elements. It has, moreover, basic principles concerning human nature, for culture and tradition, the value of the individual and its ends, the existence of a common good, a recognition of the role of reason, and criteria for moral progress. He acknowledged, however, that our knowledge of such principles is, as it were, in progress. These principles were manifest in traditions and culture and, hence, one *ought* to be aware of them; indeed, Bosanquet insisted that tradition and culture often serve as important indicators of these principles at the various stages of moral development.

Like the modern philosophers, then, Bosanquet held that there were moral principles and proof of them – that moral action was rational action and that what is right or good is something that all rational beings can come to recognise. But Bosanquet would not claim that any particular articulation of a (moral) ‘law’ could be absolute and applied to all rational beings at all times. Again, the value of the individual was not to be found in that being as distinct and separate from others, but through – though not necessarily in – one’s relations to them.

Like postmodern philosophers, then, Bosanquet had an expansive view concerning what is relevant to and appropriate in ethics, and he was

critical of abstract models of how people should act. Moreover, our standards of rationality, argument, and proof clearly reflect our histories and cultures; not surprisingly, then, he was also critical of a correspondence theory of truth and of justification. We can also find in his work reasons for why we should enlarge our moral communities and why we should ‘awaken’ and educate the sentiments.

Unlike the postmoderns, however, Bosanquet would insist on the existence of standards of rationality and on a robust account of objectivity and truth, and hold that there are proofs and principles in ethics – and, of course, in epistemology and metaphysics – that are more than consensus. He admits that, when it comes to ethics, proofs – i.e., moral theory – cannot settle many concrete moral conflicts; one cannot stop evil just by arguing against it. Nevertheless, if one is going to try to stop evil, one needs to know what the nature and goal and purpose of morality are, and why morality is important.<sup>33</sup>

Bosanquet held that one can, in short, adopt many of the principles of modernism as goals to be achieved while, at the same time, recognise that much needs to be done to realise them, and that, in the meantime, we can rightly be ‘satisfied’ with less.

The preceding model – which I have called the model of critical history – has had its critics. Nevertheless, it acknowledges the challenges to modernism – especially the relation of philosophy to culture and tradition – while, at the same time, recognises the positive elements in it. It reminds us, then, that modernism has features that are necessary for any view – even the postmodern view – to be plausible, and it shows us how modernity has a place as we negotiate the transition to a global era.

## CONCLUSION

In a world in which there is an increasing global awareness, as well as a growing recognition of different ways of knowing and ways of living, the paradigmatic ‘modern’ approaches to philosophy no longer seem appropriate to the task. There is, moreover, good reason to believe that philosophy emerges from culture – that philosophy’s relation to culture is not a merely incidental and contingent matter. The culture or tradition from which we come tells us about both the meaning of the questions that we raise and seek to answer, and the methods or ways in which we seek to answer them.

Does anything, then, remain of modernity in the transition to a global era? I have claimed that a critique of modernity does not entail the validity of ‘postmodern’ approaches – for example, that while each philosophy emerges from a particular culture, it can never separate itself from it, and that there is no objectivity or truth. To show this, I have drawn on some of the insights characteristic of critical history and, more broadly, of late nineteenth century British idealism. Such a view challenges some of the key theses of modernity while, at the same time, embraces others. Thus,

philosophy can be recognised as emerging from culture and yet, because of the possibility of going beyond the particular and local, can seek to satisfy some of the goals of modernity. In the current transition to a global era, such a model of philosophy may well provide a way of allowing us to draw on the resources provided by various cultures and traditions while, at the same time, giving assurance that all cultures can and ought to form a common cause. Only in so doing will humanity be adequately prepared to address the many challenges arising in an increasingly pluralistic world.

*St Francis Xavier University,  
Antigonish, NS, Canada*

### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> For more on this, see “Culture and Pluralism in Philosophy,” my Introduction to *Philosophy, Culture, and Pluralism* (Aylmer, QC: Editions du scribe, 2002), especially pp. x-xii.

<sup>2</sup> Some would insist, for example, that political philosophy in the United States frequently reflects assumptions and principles that are virtually uniquely American.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, such claims about how philosophy emerges from and is affected by culture are quite consistent with claims about how philosophy affects *culture*. For a discussion of this, see my *Philosophy, Culture, and Pluralism*, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>4</sup> What follows is a generic view of what ‘modernity’ has been commonly understood to involve. It does not claim that all modern philosophers – or, indeed, any – held all of these principles, although the more of them one adopts, the more plausibly one is what many call a ‘modern.’

<sup>5</sup> See their *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* [1944], tr. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

<sup>6</sup> Another modern (enlightenment) theory which is alleged to be paradigmatically rationalistic is the natural law theory of John Locke. Locke writes: “The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it ...” *Two Treatises of Government*, Second Treatise, section 6.

<sup>7</sup> See Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979). See also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, section 19: “To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.”

<sup>8</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Minuit, 1979) [*The Postmodern Condition*, tr. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. xxiv].

<sup>9</sup> Raymond Geuss, “Richard Rorty at Princeton: Personal Recollections,” *Arion*, 15 (2008); internet text at

<http://www.bu.edu/arion/Geuss.htm>

<sup>10</sup> For more on this point, Geuss refers us to Rorty's 1984 paper, "The Historiography of Philosophy" [in *Philosophy in History: Essays in the Historiography of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)].

<sup>11</sup> Geuss, "Richard Rorty at Princeton: Personal Recollections."

<sup>12</sup> Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 339.

<sup>13</sup> Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, p. 338.

<sup>14</sup> In his 1981 *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press), Alasdair MacIntyre draws on some of this criticism: he writes that a demand for proof in ethics is odd, if not impossible; that modern ethics combines many cultural traditions and norms – and leads to relativism or emotivism or skepticism; and proposes that we should focus on moral practices, the traditions in which they appear, and on people of practical wisdom. (This is the basis for MacIntyre's 'resurrection' of Aristotelian 'virtue ethics.')

<sup>15</sup> Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," in *On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, ed. S. Shute and S. Hurley (New York: Basic Books, 1993), pp. 111-134. See also Rorty's "Solidarity or Objectivity," in his *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 21-34.

<sup>16</sup> For a development of this criticism, see my "Solidarity and Human Rights," in *Philosophical Theory and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*, ed. William Sweet (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2003), pp. 213-231.

<sup>17</sup> F.H. Bradley, *The Presuppositions of Critical History*, ed. with introduction and commentary by Lionel Rubinoff (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), p. 78.

<sup>18</sup> See Bernard Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (London, Macmillan, 1912). While Bosanquet was somewhat skeptical of the discipline of history – that history was "the doubtful story of successive events [which] cannot amalgamate with the complete interpretation of social mind, of art, or of religion" (p. 79) – his objection was not that history could not be done. It was that histories – when they are understood simply as a series of contingent events in a narrative – ignore the general; they are not a concrete universal. And so Bosanquet proposes that, rather than concern ourselves with histories that focus on listing events, we turn to art and religion, which bring together the particular and the general. Thus, he could write a history of aesthetic – of the development of aesthetic consciousness in and through particular works of art – without being interested in a history of art itself.

<sup>19</sup> Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 79.

<sup>20</sup> Bradley's view, R.G. Collingwood later wrote, was a "Copernican revolution in the theory of historical knowledge." See Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 240.

<sup>21</sup> Croce, *Teoria e storia della storiografia* (*Theory and History of Historiography*), tr. Douglas Ainslie (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1921).

<sup>22</sup> See "Croce's Philosophy of History," *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 19 (1921), pp. 263-278.

<sup>23</sup> Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, p. 215.

<sup>24</sup> David Boucher, "The Significance of R. G. Collingwood's 'Principles of History'," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (1997), pp. 309-330, at p. 326.

<sup>25</sup> Collingwood, *The New Leviathan or Man, Society, Civilization, and Barbarism* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1942), p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzuge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tubingen: JCB Mohr Verlag [Paul Siebeck], 1960); See the English translation, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 333.

<sup>27</sup> Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> Collingwood, *Autobiography*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> Collingwood, *Autobiography*, p. 33

<sup>30</sup> For claims that Collingwood is adopting a form, of historicism, see Leo Strauss, "On Collingwood's Philosophy of History," *Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 5 (1952), pp. 559-586; Louis O. Mink, "Collingwood's Historicism: A Dialectic of Process," and "Collingwood's Dialectic of History," in Louis O. Mink, *Historical Understanding*, ed. Brian Fay, Eugene O. Golob, and Richard T. Vann (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 223-45, 246-85.

<sup>31</sup> See Bernard Bosanquet, *Some Suggestions in Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1918), p. 146.

<sup>32</sup> See Edward Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: J. MacLehose, 1904), Vol. 2, p. 125. (Caird is here discussing Stoicism, in comparison with Kantian ethics.)

<sup>33</sup> For a more extensive discussion here, see my "Social Policy and Bosanquet's Moral Philosophy," in *Collingwood Studies*, Vol. VI (1999), pp. 127-146.





## CHAPTER II

# PRINCIPLES OF WESTERN BIOETHICS AND THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC IN AFRICA\*

*WORKINEH KELBESSA*

### INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses principles of biomedical ethics and ethical issues related to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa. It will provide a preliminary analysis, not a full articulation, of ethical principles related to medicine and health care. There are four basic principles that guide moral deliberation in bioethics: respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. These, and other related principles are being used in the analysis and resolution of moral problems encountered in the clinical delivery of health care, medical resources, and the distribution of health care resources in the world. Although the doctor/patient relationship and other factors relevant to health may be different in different societies, these principles are universally used in different parts of the world. This chapter examines how such blanket application of biomedical principles has influenced the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa.

The first part briefly outlines guiding ethical principles in biomedical ethics. Part two discusses the negative effects of medical principles on Africa. Part three explores global injustice, ethical problems and the treatment of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Part four looks into ethical issues and pharmaceutical companies. The last part concludes the paper.

### GUIDING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN BIOMEDICAL ETHICS

Biomedical ethics has become popular in Western countries since the 1970s. It has been instituted in universities; ethicists are integrated into hospitals, and ethics committees have participated in the review of biomedical research and health policy-making.<sup>1</sup> The rapid growth of modern technologies since the 1960s (e.g., chronic haemodialysis, transplantation surgery, modern methods of reanimation, the life-sustaining techniques of intensive care, and in vitro fertilisation), the involvement of lawyers, moral philosophers, theologians, and sociologists in the hitherto privileged doctor-patient relationship, and the movements for civic rights, equality of ethnic minorities, and women's liberation in the United States have influenced the move from medical professional ethics to bioethics.<sup>2</sup> Patients' rights and autonomy receive new attention among those who are involved in biomedical ethics.

Tom Beauchamp and James Childress developed four principles of biomedical ethics – beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, and respect for autonomy.<sup>3</sup> These are taken as guides to decision-making in modern bioethics. Nonmaleficence and beneficence are based on utilitarian considerations, whereas autonomy and justice are related to deontological considerations. Although nonmaleficence and beneficence have played a central historical role in medical ethics, respect for autonomy and justice were not given sufficient attention until recently.<sup>4</sup> The Hippocratic Oath contains an obligation of nonmaleficence and an obligation of beneficence as proper behaviour for doctors: “I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but I will never use it to injure or wrong them.”<sup>5</sup> Although patient autonomy is a traditional value, it has become of increasing concern of medical ethicists in recent years.<sup>6</sup> The growing awareness of the autonomy of patients in the West led to a paradigm shift from the traditional paternalistic, general belief that “doctors know best” to the recognition of the rights and self-determination of patients.

The principle of autonomy refers to self-governance or personal freedom, respect for confidentiality, and full disclosure to patients – which is seen to be in the best interests of patients. The word *autonomy* is a combination of two Greek words: *auto* (“self”) and *nomos* (“rule,” “governance,” or “law”). Originally, it was used to refer to the self-rule or self-governance of independent city-states. Its meaning has since been extended to cover self-governance of individuals, liberty rights, privacy, individual choice, freedom of the will, causing one’s own behaviour, and being one’s own person. Although they disagree over the meanings, all theories of autonomy agree that autonomy needs two essential conditions: (1) *liberty* (independence from controlling influences) and (2) *agency* (capacity for intentional action).<sup>7</sup>

Beauchamp and Childress analyse autonomous action in terms of normal choosers who act (1) intentionally, (2) with understanding, and (3) without controlling influences that determine their action. “For an action to be autonomous in this account, it needs only a substantial degree of understanding and freedom from constraint, not a full understanding or a complete absence of influence.”<sup>8</sup>

The principle of autonomy is based on the principle of respect for persons, which holds that individual persons have the right to make their own choices and develop their own life plan.<sup>9</sup> Beauchamp and Childress stress that health professionals should respect the autonomous choices of their patients, and they should never assume that, because a patient belongs to a particular community, he or she affirms that community’s worldview and values. “The fundamental requirement is to respect a particular person’s autonomous choices. Respect for autonomy is not a mere *ideal* in health care; it is a professional *obligation*. Autonomous choice is a *right*, not a *duty* of patients.”<sup>10</sup>

Although the principle of respect for autonomy is central to medical ethics, it is not a new phenomenon. Immanuel Kant recognises the importance of respect for autonomy. For him, individuals are ends in themselves. Also, John Stuart Mill argues that society should permit individuals to develop according to their convictions, as long as they do not interfere with a like expression of freedom by others. He recommends the avoidance of interference and promotion of autonomous expression.

In a health care setting, the principle of autonomy translates into the principle of informed consent.<sup>11</sup> The Declaration of Nuremberg, a positive legacy of the Nuremberg trials following World War II, today forms the basis of the ethics of clinical trials and informed consent. The World War II war crimes tribunal enacted the Nuremberg Code in 1947 in reaction to the unethical use of subjects by Nazi physicians on concentration camp inmates before and during the war.<sup>12</sup> The Nuremberg Code of Ethics in Medical Research contained ten principles safeguarding subjects in research. Among others, it states that the human participant should be able to give voluntary informed consent to take part

without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, overreaching, or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision. (Principle 1).<sup>13</sup>

It stresses that human subjects have the right to withdraw from an experiment at any time. Moreover, in 1964, the World Medical Association adopted the Helsinki Declaration as its official set of guidelines for research involving human subjects. This declaration is based on the Nuremberg Code.<sup>14</sup> It emphasises the rights of individuals and the responsibilities of physicians in medical research. However, “[t]he Helsinki Declaration is only a set of guidelines for medical research, and as such, they are not enforceable.”<sup>15</sup> In spite of the presence of the above-mentioned declarations, the term ‘informed consent’ has received detailed examination only since the early 1970s.<sup>16</sup>

Although reducing risk and avoiding unfairness and exploitation are still important, since the mid-1970s, the protection of autonomous choice has become the primary justification advanced for requirements of informed consent.<sup>17</sup> Informed consent protects and promotes the ethical principle of autonomy or self-governance, by requiring physicians to obtain the voluntary informed consent of the patient or his or her lawful surrogate before requiring his/her patient to be tested, and before disclosing the medical record of his/her patient. The health care provider must provide and make understandable necessary information for making a free, intelligent treatment decision and must make sure that the patient or surrogate understands the information. Although physicians have the obligation of promoting the health of individuals and society, role morality requires them

to protect their patients' interests often at the expense of common morality that favours the interests of the majority of the people. However, "[l]egal exceptions to the rule of informed consent allow the health professional to proceed without consent in cases of emergency, incompetency, and waiver."<sup>18</sup>

The principle of informed consent requires that the patient or surrogate must be competent, that is capable of understanding the consequences of the consent, capable of making a free choice, and free from coercion or undue influence. Persons who lack decision-making capacity should be protected. According to this principle, persons are expected to be treated with respect by maintaining confidences and keeping promises.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, infants, prisoners, economically or educationally disadvantaged persons, irrationally suicidal individuals, drug-dependent persons and those with dementia require additional protection, as they have limited autonomy and cannot act in a sufficiently autonomous manner.

When physicians disclose information disclosed to them by their patients to third parties without first-party consent, an infringement of the patient's right to confidentiality occurs. Failure to protect the information will have similar consequences. Moreover, a physician who violates confidentiality is aware of the potential for eroding the system of trust and fidelity.

However, rules of confidentiality should not be taken as absolute shields, for doing so can result in outrageous and preventable injuries and losses. Rules of confidentiality in ethics and law should be treated as *prima facie*.<sup>20</sup> Some conditions can override obligations of confidentiality. When third parties face serious dangers, rules of confidentiality can sometimes be overridden by competing moral considerations. "Examples include the following: If our choices endanger the public health, potentially harm others, or require a scarce resource for which no funds are available, others can justifiably restrict our exercise of autonomy."<sup>21</sup>

The principle of beneficence requires health professionals to take positive steps to promote their patients' or research subjects' health and well-being, and prevent and avoid harm to them. Beauchamp and Childress distinguish two major principles of beneficence: positive beneficence and utility. The former requires agents to provide benefits, and the latter requires that agents balance benefits, risks, and costs.<sup>22</sup>

The principle of nonmaleficence refers to doing no harm. It has been related to the ancient maxim *Primum non nocere*, which means "above all [or first] do no harm."

The principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence rest on the fundamental importance of what is in the patient's interest. The first is the positive requirement to further the patient's interest. The second is the requirement to refrain from doing what damages the patient's interest. In other words, the difference between the two principles rests on the character of the avoidance of positive harm and the demand for positive benefit.

Beauchamp and Childress explained the difference between principles and rules of beneficence and nonmaleficence as follows:

rules of nonmaleficence (1) are negative prohibitions of action that (2) must be followed impartially, and (3) provide moral reasons for legal prohibitions of certain forms of conduct. By contrast, rules of beneficence (1) present positive requirements of action, (2) need not always be followed impartially, and (3) rarely, if ever, provide reasons for legal punishment when agents fail to abide by the rules.<sup>23</sup>

Justice is often regarded as being synonymous with fairness and can be summarised as the moral obligation to act on the basis of fair adjudication. The principle of justice requires that we distribute goods and services, including medical goods and services, fairly. The formal principle of justice requires that health care practitioners and society in general treat equal cases equally. For example, two patients with the same medical need ought not to be treated differently.<sup>24</sup> However, there are some exceptions. When the future contribution of a particular patient to a society is expected to be greater, that person can be given priority. Thus, we are required to follow due process in order to determine just limits on health care that will be generally accepted. In the case of research, the principle of justice seeks an equitable distribution of the burdens and the benefits of research. In short, the principle of justice includes many different principles for distributing benefits and burdens, such as distribution based on need, equality, contribution, and merit.

In addition to the above moral principles, veracity, privacy and fidelity are important in medical ethics.<sup>25</sup> Obligations and virtues of veracity were missing from codes of medical ethics in the past. However, contemporary biomedical ethics considers veracity, virtues of candor, honesty, and truthfulness as essential character traits of health professionals and researchers.<sup>26</sup> The principle of veracity requires comprehensive, accurate, and objective transmission of information.<sup>27</sup> However, this is not always possible, and that veracity is not absolute. The conflict between veracity and other obligations can lead to the justifiable use of nondisclosure, deception, and lying to carefully manage medical information.

Albert R. Jonsen, Mark Siegler and William J. Winslade for their part claim that their method is different from some health care professionals who analysed cases in the light of moral principles, such as respect for autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and fairness.<sup>28</sup> They argue that health care professionals can identify, analyse, and resolve ethical issues in clinical medicine using what they call the four topics approach (medical indications, patient preferences, quality of life, and contextual features). Medical indications include the diagnosis and treatment of the patient's pathological condition (i.e., what is the nature of the patient's condition and

what are the goals of treatment?). The relevant ethical principles here are beneficence and nonmaleficence. The patient's preferences are evaluated on the basis of the patient's own values, and personal assessment of benefits and burdens. At this stage of the decision making process, the following questions need to be answered: Is the patient competent? What are the patient's (actual or prior) preferences and when a decision is made has the condition of informed consent been met? The principle of respect for patient autonomy is the central ethical principle. Quality of life is examined in relation to the patient's condition before or after the disease or accident. The relevant ethical principles here are beneficence, nonmaleficence and respect for patient autonomy. During the last phase of the analysis of contextual features, questions such as possible family issues, financial and economic factors, religious and cultural issues, and not least, legal matters, should be raised. The ethical principles that guide this phase are loyalty and fairness. Jonsen and his co-authors are of the opinion that without reference to these topics, a case cannot be adequately discussed, as the four topics help clinicians understand where the moral principles meet the circumstances of the clinical case. The meaning and relevance of the moral principles can be affected by circumstances under all four of the topics. Thus, an ethical analysis of a case should begin by an orderly review of the four topics. The analysis of the factual features of the case should be given priority over principles and rules. In order to deal with an ethical dilemma, one must carefully describe the facts and circumstances related to a dilemma. Nevertheless, the application of the four topics method in the real world may not be as simple as the authors believe.

Most of the above guiding principles are commonly used in the West and, to some degree, in 'developing' nations. However, the attempt to universalise these and other ethical principle in the profession of medicine has had a number of practical problems particularly in Africa and other 'developing' nations. In the next section, I will discuss some of these problems in relation to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

### **ETHICAL CHALLENGES RELATING TO HIV/AIDS**

Although medical principles have had important roles in both Western and non-western countries, blanket application of these rules in Africa and other 'developing' countries has had many disadvantages. One of the most important and difficult ethical questions is how to strike a balance between the utilitarian aim of promoting public health, on the one hand, and libertarian aims of protecting privacy and freedom of patients, on the other in the age of HIV/AIDS.

As noted earlier, medical ethics requires that the maintenance of confidentiality is necessary in order to preserve the confidential relationship between physicians and patients. Thus, reporting/disclosing patients' HIV serostatus to other people may diminish patients' confidence in physicians. Patients may feel that the physician or researcher has betrayed their trust.

This requirement has contributed to the expansion of HIV/AIDS in Africa. It has been a tradition that unless the patient asks the physician to inform his/her HIV status to his/her partner and family members, the physicians do not do so. Medical codes of conduct require physicians to keep the medical record of their clients from those intimately concerned with it.

On the one hand, by failing to disclose their status to their caretakers, HIV/AIDS patients effectively issue a death sentence to their sexual partners and family members. Many African parents have been at risk of exposure. I have observed that because of a lack of such information many family members have been infected with the virus while taking care of AIDS patients in Ethiopia. In particular, mothers of HIV/AIDS patients do not refrain from touching the bodies of their children even when they are bleeding. They clean their children without taking any protection. This process continues when their children die, and they in turn become HIV/AIDS patients. The surviving children, sisters and other close relatives continue to take care of these mothers without using any protection or taking precautions. Far worse, it is possible that individuals who are not aware of their HIV status unknowingly continue to spread the virus. This can lead to the death of many family members in some families. I personally noted the disappearance of most of the family members of AIDS patients in Ethiopia, particularly in rural areas where there has been very little information and awareness about the HIV/AIDS epidemic. On the other hand, because of lack of information about the nature of HIV/AIDS, family members could not properly treat the patient. Strict confidentiality prevents the people from understanding the nature of the disease and taking care of themselves. Thus, the observance of professional ethics has had a serious effect on the African population through withholding information about a person's HIV status to a sexual partner, and close family members.

What is more, most of the time, the causes of the death of AIDS patients are not acknowledged as AIDS. Instead, tuberculosis, pneumonia, gastroenteritis and other related diseases are mentioned as the real causes. The public and physicians perceive AIDS as a unique disease that should not be clearly acknowledged. And yet various groups are claiming to teach the people about its negative consequences. Although some of its symptoms are mentioned during educational campaigns, the real cause of the death of millions remains hidden to the local people. One of my informants in Borana, southern Ethiopia, mentions that, in the past, there were very few deaths due to disease in the region. These days, however, people are dying at an alarming rate. He stresses that the cause of their death is not known. He suspects that it should be what the Borana people call *dhibe bara* (the disease of the current epoch, that is AIDS). Yet the real cause of the death of the local people remains unspeakable. As Leana R. Uys persuasively argues, "it is a contradiction to try to educate the community on the one hand while keeping all the indications of the rampant destroyer that is active in the community under wraps on the other. It is difficult to convince the

public that this is just another disease, not a shameful thing to be hidden, when it is treated so differently by health workers and policy makers.”<sup>29</sup>

As many writers note, some principles of medical ethics are incompatible with the reality of African family values. An African person is seen as a person in a group, not as an individual. In most parts of Africa, peace and health are fundamental values. In the Oromo society in Ethiopia, for example, when people meet the first question is whether family members, animals and other members of the community are well and healthy. Peace is not merely an environment without war. It refers to a harmonious relationship within the localities and with *Waaqa* (God). So, there is no reason to hide the disease of a particular person from other members of the family and community. “Secrets are kept within families but not from families.”<sup>30</sup> In Africa, in most cases, medical decision-making is a family issue. Here, the Western conception of confidentiality of patients does not apply regarding common ailments. In fact, some patients may want to hide some special diseases, such as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS. From the African perspective, an individual patient is not a completely autonomous being outside his/her family, and community. His/her well-being depends on the well-being of his/her society. The African culture of care has helped Africans to keep the family together. Accordingly, in traditional rural African communities, a form of communitarianism dominates. The strong emphasis on family relationships in African families makes it difficult to maintain the principle of confidentiality. Thus, “[t]he individualistic approach to beneficence, which looks only at the primary client and ignores the needs of the family and community, cannot be sustained, especially in such as the communal African society.”<sup>31</sup>

However, African communitarian culture does not necessarily inhibit the possibility of voluntary expression of informed consent of individuals. Individualistic values exist in Africa despite its communitarian culture. Africans also protect the interests of individuals, as African social culture embodies communal and individual features.

In some African communities, leaders must give permission for a person to contact researchers. According to Augustine Frimpong-Mansoh, the intervention of community leaders to obtain the voluntary informed consent of potential research candidates is not necessarily a maleficent paternalistic intrusion or inhibition of research subjects.<sup>32</sup> Instead, it is an important step to safeguard and foster the wellbeing of vulnerable research candidates.

Some studies have also shown that there is a tension between the need to protect patients’/research participants’ privacy and the desire of others to have access to personal information/the need for information in research.

Ethically, a balance must be struck between the principle of respect for persons (which requires that individuals should be treated as autonomous agents who have the right to control their own destinies), and



the pursuit of the common good (which requires maximizing possible benefits and minimizing possible harms, to society as well as to individuals.) Legally – be it by statute, policy, or regulation – subjects, researchers, and institutions must be protected from involuntary disclosure of information. Those entrusted with confidential information must be prohibited by law from unjustifiable disclosure. As a society, we must express our moral commitment to the principle that all persons are due a full measure of compassion and respect.

Any investigation involving a possibly communicable disease poses a tension between an individual's desire to control personal information and the desire of others to have access to that information. Although this tension is not unique to AIDS, it is particularly sharply drawn in this case because those groups that have been identified as at high risk are also highly vulnerable socially, economically, and politically.<sup>33</sup>

Although I believe that privacy and confidentiality are basic rights that must be protected, the African situation and the cross-cultural character of the contemporary world force us to reconsider these rights, and even to limit them to protect large numbers of people from unnecessary infection. As Frimpong-Mansoh notes, the orthodox model of the principle of voluntary informed consent takes a person as an independent individual. It ignores the social and communal attributes and contexts of a person. Some writers have challenged this model, and offer a new "thick definition of the self, a deeper conception that ontologically acknowledges the communal or relational nature of our humanity."<sup>34</sup> Consider the definition given by Jacquelyn Kegley:

Persons, whether patients or other-decision makers, must be seen as complex relational networks, composed of a variety of public physical aspects – material, neural, genetic, behavioral, social, cultural, political, economic – sensual, emotional, mental and intentional. Further, all these aspects must be seen as interacting with, and influencing each other in complex and multiple ways. Individual persons are holistic and should not be reduced to any one of their aspects.<sup>35</sup>

Human nature itself, the social nature of highly infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and the survival of the social community give us good grounds to restrict the rights accorded to patients in some instances. The survival of both individuals and communities is important. Medical decision-making should be understood "as involving more than an isolated individual right-bearer and autonomy and responsibility, individual and community need to be more carefully balanced."<sup>36</sup>

The principle of beneficence requires us to give attention to an HIV/AIDS patient and her/his sexual partner, close friends, and family. It would be unethical to restrict medical decisions about HIV to individual patients and their egoistic interests at the expense of their sexual partners

and other close friends and relatives. The duty of care should expand to cover both the patients and their partners. Failure to notify the partner of the patient's HIV status can represent a breach in duty of care.<sup>37</sup>

We need to balance two ethical principles, respect for persons and nonmaleficence, if we are to seriously address the problem of HIV/AIDS in Africa and other parts of the world. First of all, it is important to raise public awareness about the nature of the virus and the significance of knowing the HIV status of a family member or a partner. It is important to carefully treat the patient and protect all members of the family involved in the treatment of the person. The serostatus of one's friend, relative, or child should not be taken as a reason to avoid the patient, for the information is to the advantage of all family members and partners who are the patient's guardians in hospital or at home. Disclosing information about a person's HIV status to a sexual partner and close family members will have an important role to reduce harm.

It is thus important that the physician advise HIV-infected individuals to notify their current sexual or needle-sharing partner, and the close family members who are caring for them. This notification has the important role of interrupting the chain of HIV transmission.

Several issues can hinder the realisation of this suggestion. The patient can lie to the physician, and fail to inform her/his partner. It would be difficult for the physician to confirm that his advice has been accepted. One possible solution to this problem is raising public awareness and changing people's attitudes to HIV/AIDS. Another problem is that it may be difficult to identify the closest family members who should be informed about the HIV status of an individual. If patients are willing to disclose their health information, they can discuss this with their physician, and inform those family members and partners who care for them. It is worth noting that patients' cooperation in providing information will positively contribute to the reduction of risk of HIV infection.

If patients are not willing to inform their spouses, sexual partners, and close family members, physicians should consider this and, possibly, inform some of them. As Beauchamp and Childress note, sometimes "health care professionals have an obligation to warn spouses or lovers of HIV-infected patients who refuse to disclose their status and who refuse to engage in safer sex."<sup>38</sup> The disclosure of this information is necessary to prevent harms to the spouses or lovers of the patients and their family members. This is ethically justifiable.

Until the current understanding of the HIV/AIDS epidemic changes in Africa, it may be inconvenient to inform all members of the society. I hope that the situation will improve, that HIV/AIDS will be regarded as one of the common diseases, and that there would be no need to hide it from the public. Thus, I would argue that we should do whatever we can, even at the risk of violating the principle of autonomy, to ensure that those parties are not infected with the virus. The doctor-patient privilege of protecting confidentiality should not be absolute.

There are some historical cases where physicians released the health records of their patients without the consent of those patients. For example, around 1900 in Germany and Britain, the right of the individual patient to medical confidentiality was challenged, in particular in cases of venereal diseases.<sup>39</sup> Considering the negative impacts of venereal diseases on the public, British and German courts authorised doctors' disclosure of confidential medical information without the consent of patients.

A similar policy can be applied to HIV/AIDS. State law can require physicians to reveal HIV seropositivity or an AIDS diagnosis for the purpose of disease surveillance. "A court may issue a subpoena for the records relating to a particular individual. A researcher may potentially have a duty to disclose an individual's HIV status to another because of duty to warn laws."<sup>40</sup> A subpoena is an order from a court or administrative body to compel the appearance of a witness or the production of specified documents or records.<sup>41</sup> For instance, in the United States of America, clinical ethics involves confidentiality, and informed consent for HIV testing. There has been a legal and ethical obligation to maintain the confidentiality of HIV-related information. However, there are exceptions to this obligation. The law in the U.S. requires health care providers to report HIV infections and AIDS cases to public health authorities. The interests of the public are given priority over the risk to individuals.<sup>42</sup>

One can still object that the violation of the principle of autonomy can lead to the rejection of the patient by his relatives and sexual partner(s), and that the marital bond would come to an end. The patient can also lose his job and home and face discrimination, expulsion from the community, and segregation. I certainly agree that if the current situation continues without any change, these problems can happen. The following examples are illustrative. In some Western countries, insurers exempt certain conditions and illnesses, including AIDS, from coverage, and refuse to accept persons in specified occupations or with certain lifestyles.<sup>43</sup> The US government does not allow HIV/AIDS patients to join the defence department. Some studies also indicate that some organisations in South Africa unfairly treated people diagnosed with AIDS, and refused to train and promote them.<sup>44</sup> Another example is that in December 1998, the members of her community killed Gugu Dhlamini, a female AIDS activist, in South Africa, for "they believed that her open disclosure of her HIV-positive status brought dishonour to the community in which she lived."<sup>45</sup> One of my informants also reported that when she informed her brothers about her serostatus, they condemned her for bringing the virus to herself. They said that she is responsible, and that she can no longer be their sister. She was forced to leave her village, though she then actively participated in the campaign against HIV/AIDS in another region.

Accordingly, in Africa and other parts of the world, those infected with HIV face serious psychological and social risks. The psychological risks include anxiety and depression, followed by a higher rate of suicide than for the population at large. Social risks include stigmatisation; rejection

by family; discrimination; restricted or no access to health care, insurance, and housing; and violence and breaches of confidentiality. They may face stigmatisation from family or friends to whom they disclosed information. I believe that these potential consequences hamper participation in prevention and treatment programs. As I argued earlier, it is important to raise public awareness and consider this disease as simply a treatable one.

Governments have an obligation to reduce these risks by formulating relevant laws. The law should protect the wellbeing and the rights of patients who have disclosed their HIV status. One's HIV/AIDS status should not be a prerequisite for housing, insurance and employment in any avenue of government services. Each government should formulate clear laws to protect the rights of all of its citizens without any discrimination on the basis of their health status.

In this regard, some positive measures are being taken in Africa. The African Network on Ethics, Law, and HIV, which was established in 1991, identified ethical issues related to this problem. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's), 'HIV and Development programme', the Network reaffirmed in July 1994 the fundamental value of respect for human rights, life, and human dignity, by producing guiding principles on ethical and human rights aspects of HIV/AIDS. This is known as the Dakar Declaration 1994. On the principle of non-discrimination, the Dakar Declaration states: "every person directly affected by the epidemic should remain an integral part of his or her community with the right of equal access to work ... justice and equality."<sup>46</sup> It further states: "every person directly affected by the epidemic has a right to confidentiality and privacy." Similarly, the South African government has abolished all screening for HIV/AIDS as a prerequisite for employment in any avenue of government services. All public service centers, including national defence, the police, hospitals, and schools are required to observe this rule.

On the other hand, requiring housemaids and baby sitters to have an HIV test is important. Many urban families in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa have house servants who engage in preparing food and cleaning houses. Housemaids and baby sitters also take care for one or more children in the absence of parents or guardians. If they are HIV positive, the risk of transmitting the virus to children and other members of the family is high. Some of my informants mentioned that there were cases in Addis Ababa where baby sitters transmitted the virus to children by using their own toothbrush to help children brush their teeth. It should be noted that most housemaids are poor girls. Some of them are widows, sex workers, or street girls, and it is possible that their past working environment exposed them to the risk of HIV. Thus, it is important to check the HIV status of housemaids and baby sitters before hiring them. Some families in Addis Ababa have already started to do so. Others may oppose this suggestion on the ground that this requirement for work challenges the autonomy of housemaids and that preparing food is not the common route of HIV transmission. One

possible answer to this opposition is that humanity has to try to block all possible routes of HIV/AIDS.

There should also be a law that requires all people who are aware of their positive HIV status to disclose it to their sexual partners without fail. Those who failed to do so should be punished. This is very important to curb the expansion of the virus. The question is, however, how can such a law be put into practice? What will be the consequences? The concerned authorities should design all the necessary mechanisms that help reduce the expansion of HIV/AIDS.

Another argument against my suggestion is that, since a person may have already infected her or his sexual partner, there would be no use of disclosing the information. But this objection does not hold water. It is possible that one's sexual partner may still be free from HIV. If so, the disclosure of one's HIV status to one's current or potential partner will serve to protect that person. If one's partner does turn out to be positive, he or she can take all the measures necessary to prolong her or his survival before it is too late. It is equally important that pregnant women know and – as appropriate – disclose their HIV status for the wellbeing of the fetus. If a woman has the virus, she can be given medicine that will prevent her child from being infected by it.

It can still be objected that breach of confidentiality may discourage others to have a blood test. If we consistently raise public awareness and change the attitude of the people towards HIV/AIDS patients, and treat the latter with all available means, this problem may not happen. This can encourage many people to voluntarily take the test for HIV.

### **GLOBAL INJUSTICE, ETHICAL PROBLEMS AND THE TREATMENT OF HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA**

The treatment of HIV/AIDS patients is not satisfactory in Africa for various reasons. Among others, physicians in Africa face various problems in discharging their responsibilities. According to Soyinka, three types of dilemma confront physicians in Africa. 1. The patient's fear of disclosure of an HIV seropositive status. 2. The physician's inability to cope with issues of character and cultural, social, or psychological impediments. (Soyinka reported that the majority of doctors interviewed in Nigeria admitted that they gave priority to their own safety over their patients, and that the interest of the patient is secondary in this matter.<sup>47</sup>) 3. The social environment of the physician. (The environment of abject poverty, scarcity or total absence of basic needs, and glaring inequality of resources distribution and justice, in which the doctors and the majority of their patients live, discourage them from discharging their ethical responsibilities.)

Moreover, it has been difficult for African countries to translate human rights and ethical principles into practice because of lack of resources. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948

states that citizens are entitled to “a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing, including food, clothing, housing and *medical care*” and to “enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health.” A similar idea is found in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, a legally binding instrument concluded in 1966, and ratified by all OECD countries, with the exception of the US: “States Parties recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health” (Article 12.1), which includes “the creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness” (Article 12.2). The UDHR also states: “everyone has a right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”. The World Health Organisation further recommends that individuals must be “assured that testing is linked to accessible and relevant treatment, care and other services.” Moreover, the International Conference on Primary Health Care, meeting in Alma Ata (today, Almaty), Kazakhstan, in 1978, proposed a Primary Health Care Strategy that aims to achieve the objective of ‘Health for All by the Year 2000’. The World Health Assembly endorsed this proposal in 1979. Unfortunately, this proposal was not translated into practice owing to the ideological conflict between the North and South, and the reluctance of industrialised countries. Later in the 1980s, the concept of Selective Primary Health Care was favoured in health activities where specific diseases in developing countries were targeted.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, the above ethical principles and recommendations could not be met in many poor countries because of severe resource constraints. In the so-called ‘developing’ nations, many people are dying of AIDS because of a lack of antiretroviral treatment. With increasing disparities in health care between wealthy and poor countries, therapy that has been shown to be effective is often unaffordable in resource-poor countries. Drugs are expensive, have side effects, and require some level of development of the health infrastructure for the purpose of monitoring and administration. Moreover, although the World Health Organisation declared health as a universal human right in 1978, Africans have been denied their health because of global injustice and poverty. Very few Africans have the privilege of health care.

The ethical concerns surrounding prenatal and neonatal HIV testing are also serious in ‘developing’ countries. In theory, screening pregnant women is justifiable, because it helps a woman to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV infection to the fetus if she is HIV positive and takes azidothymidine (AZT). Likewise, neonatal screening for HIV would have a positive role, for it enables treatment for newborns that will possibly extend their life expectancy at a higher quality. However, the cost of antiretroviral prophylaxis makes prenatal and neonatal HIV testing ineffective. In poor countries, routine HIV testing is not always followed by effective treatment programmes because of the weak health care infrastructure, and poor access to antiretroviral treatment. Even the availability of antiretroviral therapies is

not enough to effectively treat HIV-positive individuals. An adequate and balanced diet, contraception or the treatment of sexually transmitted and opportunistic infections, and spiritual, psychological and social care, affect the effectiveness of antiretrovirals. Also, using bottle-feeding instead of breastfeeding is difficult because of cost and lack of access to clean water. The water needed for bottle-feeding often carries diseases. Besides, HIV-positive pregnant women can face social and psychological risks if the testing is mandatory, and their privacy and autonomy are not respected. In some places, clinics and hospitals are required to reuse syringes and needles, and thereby aggravate the spread of the virus instead of reducing it.

Accordingly, determining HIV status may be of limited benefit. However, in 'developed' nations, HIV/AIDS has become more of a chronic, manageable disease because of access to antiretroviral treatment. Hence, the fact that HIV positive patients in 'developed' nations have access to antiretroviral treatment, and face less HIV/AIDS related stigma "cannot be used as an argument in favour of implementing routine testing in African or Asian countries where antiretroviral treatment coverage is currently dismal, and where it may be years before accessible appropriate treatment, care and other services become widely accessible."<sup>49</sup>

This practical problem compels us to raise the following question: is it really necessary to conduct routine testing where there is no treatment? Routine HIV testing involves all patients in a clinical setting that are willing to be tested. A particular patient can prefer not to be tested. The Botswana government began routine, opt-out HIV testing in antenatal and other health-care settings in 2004.<sup>50</sup> In June 2004, WHO also recommended the use of routine HIV testing in certain circumstances for certain reasons.<sup>51</sup> UNAIDS/WHO adopted the following Policy on Routine offers of HIV testing:

A routine offer of HIV testing by health-care providers should be made to all patients being:

- assessed in sexually transmitted infection clinic or elsewhere for a sexually transmitted infection – to facilitate tailored counselling based on knowledge of HIV status.

- seen in the context of pregnancy – to facilitate an offer of antiretroviral prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

- seen in clinical and community-based health service settings where HIV is prevalent and antiretroviral treatment is available (injecting drug use treatment services, hospital emergencies, internal medical hospital wards, consulting etc.) but who are asymptomatic.

There are two arguments for and against instituting a routine testing regimen for HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Kevin M. DeCock and his coauthors argue that treating HIV/AIDS differently from other diseases as an exception (which they term 'HIV exceptionalism') would likely to enhance the stigma surrounding the disease, and thereby hinder transmission prevention efforts that rely upon an individual's knowing her or his serostatus.<sup>52</sup> They lament that the proponents of human rights

approach to treating the pandemic advanced the idea that people have had to have counselling as a prerequisite for having a test. Whereas with other diseases counselling might be offered or made available if requested, with HIV a patient has had to undergo counselling in order to have a test.

DeCock and his coauthors are of the opinion that routine testing is preferable to mandatory testing. The specific contexts in which routine testing is desirable are: in the delivery of preventive service, for example, the pregnant women, to those who are breast feeding, and to those who are infected with other sexually transmitted diseases; and in diagnosis setting where the benefits of subsequent antiretroviral treatment and the prevention of opportunistic infections could reach the people. They suggest that the individual's specific consent or pre-test counselling is not necessary to perform routine testing, for all clients are given the information that it is part of the package of services for which they are voluntarily attending. They think that a greater good can be achieved by suspending pre-test counselling and informed consent.

Joanne Csete and Richard Elliott do not support routine testing, because they think that it is against the human rights of the individual being tested and that its benefits do not outweigh its harm.<sup>53</sup> They argue that individual pre-test counselling is necessary and that informed consent must be explicit, and individually articulate for each case. Any testing regimen that fails to meet this is a violation of the human rights of the tested subject. Thus, they conclude that routine testing as envisaged by DeCock and his coauthors fails the test of "minimising harm and maximising benefits;" which any ethical test regiment must pass.

George M. Brockway for his part proposes an alternative method of dealing with this problem. He argues that both approaches can be accommodated and translated into practice by instituting a universal campaign of public education in the affected countries, a society-wide programme with the goal of convincing people of their right to know and of the urgency of knowing both their own and their partner's HIV serostatus. This campaign would involve what should be done to HIV-positive persons. The political leaders of the country should lead this campaign for it to be successful. Brockway is aware that there will be a lot of problems that can hinder this campaign. Besides the unwillingness of political leaders to participate in this campaign, "problems abound in logistics and technology, in differences of language and basic understanding, in people's scepticism of government-sponsored programs, and in vast discrepancies in the availability and quality of post-testing services, both within countries and across sub-Saharan Africa."<sup>54</sup> Brockway maintains that implementation of this general education for some period might work as a substitute for individual pre-test counselling so that a person's consent to be tested would be considered informed, and her or his autonomy respected.<sup>55</sup> According to Brockway, the general public education in preparation for routine, mandatory, or mass-administered medical interventions support the informed consent of individuals. He thinks that this alternative method



might enable countries test a large majority of the population while still respecting their human rights to autonomy and freedom from unnecessary harm.

Brockway points out that, compared to HIV-positive persons in 'developed' countries, those in the 'developing' world can be physically and socially affected by the potential consequences of stigma. However, he did not clearly show how poor African countries could successfully provide post-test services to those who need them.

Thus, one can still oppose routine testing. One reason is that if there is no effective treatment, routine testing is unnecessary. The outcome of this testing may lead to the polarisation of HIV-positive and negative individuals, and the breakdown of families.

Although I believe that routine testing can have short-term negative effects, I would argue that it can have long-term positive effects. Knowledge about one's HIV status severely affects one's quality and direction of life despite the fact that it is not sufficient by itself to control the spread of the virus. Possible benefits of HIV testing to those who test negative (seronegative) include reassurance, the opportunity to make future plans, and the motivation to make behavioural changes to prevent infection. Some of its advantages to those who test positive (seropositive) include pursuing treatment and counselling; access to antiretroviral agents, prophylaxis or other treatment of associated diseases where possible on one's own or through governmental and nongovernmental intervention; avoiding the transmission of the virus to sexual partners; declining from offering blood to transfusion; preventing mother-to child HIV transmission, and a clearer sense of the future.

The disadvantages to those who test positive may include mental stress, depression and despair; stigmatisation; discrimination; and rejection by family, friends and sexual partners. As I stated earlier, the disadvantages of knowing one's serostatus can be reduced through persistent educational campaign. The benefit that would be gained from the knowledge of one's serostatus is greater than the injury that would result from it.

Repeke and Ayensu for their part suggest that we can fight the domino effect that is the cause of the exponential spread of HIV infections by implementing a nationwide system of 'Shielded Testing and Counseling (STC Program)'<sup>56</sup> They are of the opinion that this method can help us to provide the knowledge of the individual HIV status to every citizen on a voluntary basis, "but in a completely confidential context that eliminates any chance of stigmatisation for program participants."<sup>57</sup> They propose mass screening and counselling programmes. They believe that the spread of HIV/AIDS can only be reduced by national Shielded Testing and Counseling programmes.<sup>58</sup> Repeke and Ayensu argue that knowledge has a protective power.

The only way to contain the spread of HIV is to know whether or not a person is HIV-positive. This knowledge is remarkably protective as it liberates the impulse to change behaviour as proven by several scientific

studies. Those found free of infection experience an enormous sense of relief. Long suppressed fear and anxiety vanish. Statistics show that most of them use safe sex practices from that moment on. Actually, HIV-positive individuals do the same because nearly all of them are unwilling to kill others in cold blood by infecting them through unprotected sex.<sup>59</sup>

They said that the first shielded HIV mass screening in the open took place in Ghana in September 1999. About 1000 individuals participated in the test.<sup>60</sup>

One can doubt whether Shielded Testing and Counseling is feasible and can have positive impact in a short period of time. Assuming that all individuals volunteer to be tested, how can African countries afford to treat those who have the virus? The authors were aware that their position can be challenged. They state that although 'developed' nations can use the 'Wilson Argument', it is not an ethical standard and cannot be applied to all in the 'developing' world.<sup>61</sup>

The Wilson requirement essentially advises against mass screening for a disease for which no treatment is available. Again, this is a tool for reaching an ethical goal: the prevention of stigmatisation and rejection of those infected. It is meant to prevent the division of the society into inferior (infected) and superior (non-infected) people. Since HIV infection can now be minimized, but not cured, one might argue that this rule does not apply. However, effective HIV/AIDS treatment will not be available for the vast majority of individuals in developing countries ... Therefore, it has been often pointed out that this situation would preclude large-scale testing programs. However, this attitude ignores that HIV is an easily preventable disease. In other words, if the knowledge of one's HIV status causes a change in behaviour which reduces the likelihood of becoming infected or infecting others, this benefit is overriding all other concerns.<sup>62</sup>

But still one can object that HIV-positive individuals can spread the virus in order to retaliate against the opposite sex if they believe that the latter is the cause of their infection. There are some cases where AIDS patients do not want to die alone. Knowledge alone is not sufficient. Economic conditions and cultural values can force one to sacrifice his/her life. Ways should be found to comprehensively address related factors.

In spite of the significance of knowing one's serostatus, some persons may refuse to be tested for HIV because of fear of rejection and discrimination. As has been discussed above, their refusal is in line with the principle of autonomy. Accordingly, emphasis on the right to refuse can erode the acceptance and significance of voluntary testing. "However, refusing to be tested (opting out) is ethically equivalent to affirmative consent (opting in) only if the refusal is adequately informed and if the patient has sufficient liberty to say no."<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, disadvantaged and vulnerable communities may not benefit from the ethical principle of informed consent. They may agree to be tested because of fear and lack of alternatives. To put matters another way, the voluntariness of consent may be secured because of coercion or duress.

In some cases, some persons may not make a reasonable decision, and could totally refuse to be tested without any good reason. They may be mentally ill, and/or lose interest in life and ignore adequate and helpful information and advice. If their action poses a visible and clear threat to the society, the society should take all necessary measures to control their action and if need be, force them to be tested for HIV even if this is infringement of personal autonomy. As has been discussed earlier, the interests of the community can be protected at the expense of the autonomy of patients.

There are also cases when conditionally mandatory screening is justifiable. Blood donation, sperm donation, and organ donation are some examples.<sup>64</sup> However, unless exposure to bodily fluids could transmit the virus, mandatory screening in the workplace is not appropriate.<sup>65</sup> In this connection, it is worth noting that some states in the US mandated compulsory HIV testing for perpetrators of sexual assault.<sup>66</sup>

If the evidence shows that the presence of HIV patients can aggravate the spread of HIV in other special working environments, mandatory HIV-testing should be justifiable. Peter Clark even boldly argues that the current crisis in Botswana makes compulsory treatment of pregnant mothers necessary.<sup>67</sup> He is of the opinion that even the latest model of routine HIV testing adopted by the World Health Organization does not go far in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa, because some patients may refuse to be tested. He thus favors a public health-centered model of non-voluntary HIV testing over the autonomy-centered model of voluntary testing and counselling.

However, it may be difficult to ethically justify compulsory HIV testing, in high-prevalence countries where treatment of identified patients has not proved sufficiently effective in the past. As I have said earlier, even in such countries the knowledge of one's HIV/AIDS status is very important although there is no adequate treatment. However, it may not be advisable to make mass HIV test as it may lead to unforeseen crisis. In the absence of proper treatment, HIV-positive will suffer from the negative consequences outlined earlier. Although universal testing is not wrong in principle, it may not be easy to justify it for HIV infection in the contemporary world. Voluntary HIV testing seems to be more successful and justifiable than mandatory testing.

Africa needs financial and material assistance to successfully control the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, as I will show later, the International community has not yet fully committed itself to assist Africa. Even when some countries support Africa, their conditionalities have seriously undermined poor African countries.

Another related ethical problem arises when a surgeon and/or other physicians are HIV/AIDS patients. Surgeons who are HIV positive can infect other patients and health care workers during operation. I suggest that if physicians are AIDS patients, their role should be restricted to advising and teaching patients, and other non-risky activities. This is not the violation

of the autonomy of HIV-positive physicians. The question is, however, how can health centres identify HIV-positive physicians? There is no simple answer for this. It is only after such physicians get sick, and go through HIV test that their serostatus can be known. Before that time, it is possible that they might be contributing to the spread of the virus. Then is it necessary to require physicians to have HIV test before starting to discharge their responsibilities? If so, can countries particularly 'developing' countries afford to have sufficient number of voluntary physicians?

### **ETHICS AND PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES**

As has been stated earlier, many people in the 'developing' world have not yet benefited from antiretrovirals and other treatments because of lack of resources. Although they have not made sufficient efforts, some transnational corporations have supported some African and other 'developing' countries. Pharmaceutical companies such as Boehringer-Ingelheim and Pfizer have pledged to donate essential AIDS medication free of charge to 'developing' countries.<sup>68</sup> Other organisations such as Merck and Bristol-Myers Squibb gave money to various institutes. "Merck provides US\$3 million to the Harvard AIDS Institute to develop and implement a care programme in Senegal and Brazil, and Bristol-Myers Squibb provided US\$100 million to its own 'Secure the Future' programme, which involves setting up a large number of programmes in African countries, and training of African health care professionals at US tertiary institutions."<sup>69</sup> The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has participated in the global fight against AIDS. Merck CEO Raymond Gilmartin, and the Gates Foundation have supported Botswana.<sup>70</sup> The Bill Gates is the biggest single philanthropist, and his Foundation also supports other causes. His Foundation alongside the Merck Pharmaceuticals Company Foundation and the Ministry of Health in Botswana developed Africa's first national antiretroviral treatment programme.

Stephen Lewis lamented that the private sector did not make sufficient contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa. "Not even the oil companies, not even the resource companies, not even the diamond companies that have taken so much out of Africa have found it in their hearts to give something back to the Global Fund to fight the pandemic."<sup>71</sup> Lewis, however, acknowledges the attempts made by the members of the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS to fight against the pandemic. Among others, "Pfizer builds a training center in Uganda, Merck engages in treatment with the Gates Foundation in Botswana, Bristol-Myers Squibb builds child centers of excellence in Lesotho and Swaziland."<sup>72</sup> The big multinational corporations in Southern Africa, Anglo-American, De Beers, Debswana mines in Botswana have begun to address the epidemic among their workforces and families although they did not go beyond the self-interest of dealing with the pandemic within their corporate confines, their own corporate culture, to make a contribution to the larger struggle.<sup>73</sup>

Regrettably, some pharmaceutical multinationals are not willing to allow 'developing' nations to produce cheap essential AIDS drugs or import drugs from producer countries of high-quality generics. For instance, in 1997 when the government of South Africa, where the rate of AIDS is rising fastest, passed legislation to enable the domestic production of generic drugs, the USA and the EU immediately applied pressure to have the legislation rescinded, on the grounds that the South African legislation violated the international patent rights of the big international pharmaceutical firms.<sup>74</sup> It was only when the US government study identified the AIDS pandemic in Africa as a potential national security problem for the USA that pharmaceutical companies were compelled to make their drugs available at very low concessionary prices, on condition that the recipient countries would refrain from violating established international trade laws.<sup>75</sup> The strong protest of the international health community, especially by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) such as Oxfam and Médecins sans frontières (Doctors Without Borders) forced the transnational pharmaceutical companies (TNPCs) to withdraw their case from South African High Court against Medicine and Related Substances Control Amendment Act. Although a coalition of 39 pharmaceutical multinationals dropped court action against the South African government, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) was asked by the US-based pharmaceutical industry lobby organisation, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), to put South Africa on the watch list of countries suspected of breaching TRIPS.<sup>76</sup> The reaction of pharmaceuticals and the US government against South Africa was incompatible with World Trade Organisation's policy. According to WTO, in countries hard hit by a disabling or fatal disease, companies can be allowed to manufacture essential drugs without the authorisation of the patent holders but with compensation of 1-10 percent of sales of the drug to the patent holder.

Ghana was another African country that was prevented from importing cheap drugs from India. In letters to a drug distributor in Ghana and an Indian generic-drug maker, Glaxo said sales of generic versions of its drug, Combivir, in Ghana would be illegal because they would be violating company patents. As a result, the company, Cipla Ltd. of Bombay, has stopped selling its low-cost version in Ghana, a small country in West Africa. However, officials at the multilateral African agency that issued the Glaxo patents in question said they are either invalid in Ghana or don't apply.<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, pharmaceutical firms, such as Pfizer tried to prevent India and Brazil from selling copies of their drugs in Botswana and Gabon on the ground that the companies cannot raise prices because of their low prices. The two countries were accused of being 'pirates' and 'thieves'. The companies suggested that poor countries should be given money by the Gates Foundation, the aid agencies and others so that they can buy the drugs

at higher prices.<sup>78</sup> As Bhagwati states, the proposal is harmful to the poor countries.

Resource-poor countries are not attractive markets for pharmaceutical companies. The production of medicine is, to a large degree, market driven. Of 1223 pharmaceutical products developed to fight disease between 1975 and 1996 only 11 are aimed at tropical illnesses.<sup>79</sup> Most of the major pharmaceutical companies had closed their research labs for tropical and other diseases affecting poor people in the 1980s and 1990s because of the decline of the rate of return.<sup>80</sup> Pharmaceutical corporations are reluctant to undertake any serious efforts to develop medicines for the treatment of tropical ('neglected') diseases owing to the absence of profitable markets. Health researches on diseases that affect 10 percent of the world's population receive 90 percent of annual funds spent worldwide.<sup>81</sup> Far worse, AIDS vaccine research in the West aims at HIV subtypes more common in North America and Western Europe.

Pharmaceutical companies rely on the logic of free-market and are interested in profit rather than in philanthropic activities. International trade laws favour their interests. World Trade Organisation (WTO) aims to regulate and facilitate world trade rather than to promote global welfare. Free trade has been promoted as one area that can have positive impact on welfare. However, it has not yet fulfilled this goal. Instead, global trade and other forms of globalisation have contributed to the spread of HIV/AIDS through four ways: labour migration to export-oriented industries; African states' adoption of neo-liberal economic policies; the increased power of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement; and donors' increasing volatile interest in Africa after the Cold War.<sup>82</sup> Among others, Southern African countries such as Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho have been negatively affected by migration. African healthcare professionals have emigrated to the 'developed' world partly because of declines in spending on health in Africa. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), four million additional healthcare workers are needed to adequately fight AIDS in the world. Currently, Africa has only 3 percent of the world's healthcare workers although it is home to almost two-thirds of all people with HIV/AIDS.<sup>83</sup> African states reduced their health budget by adopting neo-liberal economic policies. They suspended many healthcare services that in turn assisted the spread of HIV. IMF and the World Bank, the proponents of these policies, have encouraged countries to dismantle social safety net. In 1995, pharmaceutical products were included alongside other products and services in the TRIPS (Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement) regulations within the World Trade Organisation structure which guaranteed protection of patents across global markets, a set of rules since relaxed somewhat to allow countries to produce generic copies of patented drugs under conditions of national emergency.

However, we need to challenge the idea that "the business of business is profit not welfare... In the same way that HIV/AIDS is about

more than health, so business has responsibilities beyond profit.”<sup>84</sup> Corporations have a moral duty to maximise the prevention of preventable deaths by making AIDS drugs cheaply available.<sup>85</sup> In other words, pharmaceutical companies have *moral responsibility* to make drugs freely available on the basis of need rather than affordability. Otherwise they have to justify the promotion of their interests at the expense of the people. Human well-being in the world requires the attention of all powerful and poor nations as well as corporations. Both a heightened sense of altruism and a more enlightened sense of self-interest are required to enlarge our sense of responsibility for fellow human beings in the direst of needs.<sup>86</sup> As Benatar argues: “Crucial to a new approach will be the recognition that it is not merely altruism that is called for, but rather a long-term perspective on rational self-interest in an increasingly interdependent world.”<sup>87</sup> Besides promoting their interests, pharmaceutical firms and other corporations have social responsibility and should contribute more to the global fight against HIV/AIDS. As many writers suggest, multinational pharmaceutical companies should incorporate ethical criteria into the mechanics of pricing and calculations of profitability, to make therapies more widely available where need is greatest. Besides profit, they have to assist ‘developing’ countries to treat AIDS patients, and control the spread of HIV. Otherwise it won’t be possible to save the life of HIV/AIDS patients in the ‘developing’ world.

Another ethical concern is related to HIV vaccine trials. Western sponsored vaccine trials are being carried out in Africa. Companies use patients in poor communities to participate in vaccine trials largely because they are easily exploitable and tend to be poor, illiterate and desperate.<sup>88</sup> Most patients are not aware of their rights and the risks associated to clinical trials. Also, their hopeless health conditions and lack of alternatives tend to dictate and compel them to accept request for participation in vaccine trials when even they are not aware of the potential risks involved. This indicates that the bioethical principle of voluntary informed consent is not effectively implemented in some places in Africa.

## **CONCLUSION**

Various ethical problems have challenged Africans to make a real difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It has been stated that the application of western biomedical principles have aggravated the expansion of HIV/AIDS. Far worse, the unjust policies and activities of global powers have increased African vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

The forgoing discussion suggests that Africans should not blindly apply these principles. Respect for autonomy, informed consent, confidentiality and other abstract principles should not be taken as absolute. African cultural values should also enter into medical practices and decisions in order to provide more culturally appropriate medical care. Voluntariness should not always be central to all HIV policies. As has been

discussed earlier, physicians should try to persuade the patient to allow notification about their serostatus to their partners and family members. Seropositive persons have a moral obligation to notify contacts whom they place at risk. The principle of respect for individual autonomy can be compromised for the sake of preventing harm and of safeguarding the public health and of interrupting the routes of HIV transmission. Thus, this paper and the contributions of many writers suggest that the orthodox medical principles, the Nuremberg Code, and the Declaration of Helsinki for bioethical guidelines and requirements developed on the basis of Western culture need to be modified if humanity has to address the problem of HIV/AIDS and other diseases that have been attacking humanity across cultures.

Moreover, the current global injustice should be addressed if humanity has to make a real difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Pharmaceutical companies have social responsibility in the fight against HIV/AIDS. They should not compromise this responsibility in favour of unlimited profit.

*Department of Philosophy  
Addis Ababa University  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

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## CHAPTER III

# RATIONALITY IN ISLAMIC PERIPATETIC AND ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHIES

SAYYED HASSAN HOUSSAINI

### INTRODUCTION

Studying the history of philosophy is a kind of philosophizing, provided that we engage in it in a contemplative way. Thus, this paper sees this study as an invitation to thinking, rather than just a historical report.

Many of us live in a world influenced by modernity, and Enlightenment philosophy is the main source of modernity. Of course, Islamic civilization and cultures also make up a great part of this world. An important school in Islamic philosophy world is that of what has been called “peripatetic philosophy.” This philosophy is associated with Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr (c.870-950), Ibn Sina, Abu ‘Ali al-Husayn (known in Latin as Avicenna) (980-1037), and Ibn Rushd, Abu’l Walid Muhammad (known in Latin as Averroes) (1126-98).

We can find a common point between the Islamic peripatetic and Enlightenment philosophies based on their use of rationality. The overall objective of this paper is to present some of the different aspects of rationality in these two philosophies. We can find a kind of congruence between these philosophies. They commonly defend universality, unity, and permanence of reason. They do not accept *a priori* truths, and emphasize the limits of rationality. On their respective views, rationality corrects its mistakes gradually. This suggests that we can have a dialogue between Western Enlightenment and Islamic cultures through rationality.

The overall objective of this paper, then, is to reconstruct Islamic peripatetic and Enlightenment philosophies on the basis of their notion of the rationality. It tries to show this by referring to the major Muslim peripatetic philosophers and to Enlightenment philosophy as described by Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945).

### BACKGROUND

Before proceeding to the main objective of this paper, by way of background let me mention two important points:

1. We can find three philosophical schools in Islam:

a) The Peripatetic school. This is the golden age of Islamic philosophy, in the three centuries from Al-Kindi, Abu Yusuf Ya’qub ibn Ishaq (d. c.866-73) to Ibn Rushd.

b) The Wisdom of Illumination or Al-Hikmat Al-Ishraq school. The illuminative school of Islamic philosophy is associated with al-Suhrawardi, Shihab al-Din Yahya (1154-91)<sup>1</sup>

c) The school of Transcendent philosophy or Al-Hikmat al-mutaa'liyah. This is a special type of scholastic philosophy based on the existential intuition of Reality, a result of philosophizing about the mystical ideas and visions obtained through rational contemplation.<sup>2</sup> This school is also known by the name of Mulla Sadra (Sadr al-Din Muhammad al-Shirazi) (1571/2-1640).<sup>3</sup>

The school that is closest to Western Enlightenment philosophy is the peripatetic school. Philosophers, such as Etienne Gilson and Henri Corbin, made this comparison in some of their works, basing this comparison on the method used.<sup>4</sup> This is one reason why I focus here on the peripatetic school exclusively. Moreover, the mark of the peripatetic school, distinguishing it from those two other Islamic schools, is the emphasis on pure rationality.

2. There are many different interpretations of the nature of the Enlightenment, but here we adopt the reading of Ernst Cassirer because he is a defender of the Enlightenment and interprets it as a great philosophy. In other words, instead of simply emphasizing some aspects of Enlightenment philosophy, he explains the main force and direction of it. He is a neo-Kantian, and follows Kant's motto: *Sapere aude* (Dare to know!). Cassirer writes:

The age which venerated reason and science as man's highest faculty cannot and must not be lost ever for us. We must find a way not only to see that age in its own character, but to release again those original forces which brought forth and molded this character.<sup>5</sup>

These forces are reason and its facilities and its source.

It is will also be useful to explain the meaning of rationality in these two philosophies.

## **RATIONALITY IN ISLAMIC PERIPATETIC PHILOSOPHY**

In Islamic peripatetic philosophy, rationality and philosophy are closely related to each other. Al-Kindi, the first philosopher in the Islamic world, presents a single definition for philosophy and rationality: "*the knowledge of the truth of things.*"<sup>6</sup> We will say more about the "truth of things" later. Furthermore, peripatetic philosophy distinguishes itself from other sorts of knowledge by emphasizing pure rationality.

Peripatetic rationality is both self-sufficient and immanent. It is self-sufficient because it does not accept anything without understanding its origins and growth. The treatise of Ibn Tufayl, Abu Bakr Muhammad (before 1110-85), *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* [The Living Son of the Vigilant], is a

good example of this. It is immanent, because it does not transcend the limitations of human reason. Moreover, Al-Kindi did not use the word “active intelligence” and did not accept a separate being for intelligence, as Professor Al-Yasin shows; the separate intelligence is the divine part of human soul only.<sup>7</sup> Ibn Sina seems to have accepted the existence of a separate intellect, but presented a description of obtaining rational knowledge that did not depend on that.<sup>8</sup>

To begin, let us consider reason within the Islamic peripatetic tradition.

### *Reason*

In general, we can find two meanings for reason in Islamic peripatetic philosophy: as a separate being within creation, and as the highest potential of the human soul. (It is known as Reason for one of these reasons: it is capable of reasoning; it understands and reasons actually; it has intelligible ideas and knowledge). It is clear that we are focused on the second meaning of reason here.

Human reason does not have any a priori ideas or knowledge.<sup>9</sup> It is a pure faculty increasing by sense datum. Our ideas first originate from our senses. We arrive at judgment by the combination and comparison of our sense data. Al-Farabi, a father of Islamic philosophy, says that:

The soul understands the sensational forms by senses and rational forms by their sensational forms...the human can find knowledge by senses only, and the perception of universals, can obtain by perception of sensational perception of individuals.<sup>10</sup>

Ibn Sina continues the above remark by Al-Farabi by saying:

Only God and the separate intelligences can reach a rational perception without sensational perception. The human does not have this possibility.<sup>11</sup>

The logic of Ibn Sina is obviously empirical, as Gilson showed.<sup>12</sup> We can also show this by analyzing the nine parts of his logic: the five universals, definition and description, proposition, and the content of the syllogism and its form.

We cannot find the five universals, however, without empirical perception of their referents. Ibn Sina says that we can get to definitions by composition only. This composition takes place by the observation of some referents, and the correspondence of the ideas of our mind to what is objective.<sup>13</sup> We can also understand the truth or falsity of propositions by referring to the objective world. The form of the syllogism does not give us any information about the realms of reality. It gives us information about the mind only. What is important in the discussion of the syllogism is the

demonstrative syllogism. This syllogism originates from sense data. The Mulla Rajab Ali Tabrizi (one of the commentators on Islamic peripatetic philosophy), in describing this idea of Ibn Sina, writes that not only actual propositions, but the factual propositions will be based on perception by the senses alone.<sup>14</sup>

In the logic of Ibn Sina we can see an empirical source for the philosophy of Ibn Tufayl. Ibn Tufayl showed the gradual growth of rational knowledge in the *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. At first, the child, Hay, did not have special ideas any more than animals. However, he eventually arrives at the existence of the soul by analyzing the body of a gazelle that he knows as his mother.<sup>15</sup> He believes in celestial substances by seeing fire. Ibn Tufayl then shows how Hay arrives at perception of unity and diversity by analyzing sense perceptions and so on.<sup>16</sup>

We see this approach throughout this treatise. When Ibn Tufayl strays from empirical rationality, he falls into an ambiguous situation. For example, he cannot prefer eternity to the non-eternity of the world, because he does not have an empirical conception of it.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Reason and the Abstraction of Universals*

If we accept that all knowledge begins with sense perception, and we do not have any knowledge without general ideas and judgments, then how do particular sense perceptions lead to general and universal knowledge? The “Theory of Abstraction” answers this question. We get to universals by gathering several ideas from a single object, comparing them to another, abstracting characters, and removing some personifications.<sup>18</sup>

However, the criterion of truth is not the corresponding of ideas with universals, but in their correspondence with our experience of external and internal facts. We can see this attitude expressly in Ibn Rushd. He seeks to return philosophy to its original source – i.e., he explains nature and physics, and seeks to base metaphysics on physics. On his view, the philosopher is the one who contemplates all beings, gets to common sense from sensation, and does not find any knowledge without basing it on sense perceptions.<sup>19</sup> Ibn Rushd criticizes the views of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina of an objective distinction between essence and existence. This distinction, Ibn Rushd says, originates from a theological perspective.<sup>20</sup> This perspective has a conception of truth as that which corresponds to the noumenal, instead of that which corresponds to the object.

#### *The Limitations of Reason*

The first philosopher in Islamic world, Al Kindi, noted the “limitations of human ability” in the definition of philosophy: specifically, the limitations of human knowledge and human character of this knowledge. He continued that reason cannot have a positive knowledge of God. It can have only a negative knowledge of Him.<sup>21</sup> We can see this view, from another



perspective, in Ibn Khaldun, the last philosopher of Islamic peripatetic thought. He focuses on the limitation of our cognitive reason.

Furthermore, Al Farabi, in his important treatise *Al-Talika't* (The Annotations), emphasizes that the ideal of philosophy is not arriving at the truth or essence of things, but simply obtaining some implications and accidental features of things, because our abilities are limited.<sup>22</sup> Ibn Sina repeats Al-Farabi's view in his *Al-Taliq't*. Also, Al Farabi and Ibn Sina both express the view that real wisdom only belongs to God. We can merely approach the truth; we cannot reach it.<sup>23</sup>

### *Rational Progress*

In the history of Islamic philosophy, there is a famous view that states that, in his last period of his life, Ibn Sina moved towards the Al-Hekmat Al-Mashreqiye (Eastern wisdom) from peripatetic philosophy. On my view, I see this as meaning that he does not see his philosophical school as the end of knowledge and that he seeks other approaches to knowledge. In the first part of his work (*Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*), Ibn Tufayl emphasizes that his ideas correspond to Ibn Sina's eastern wisdom. What follows for us from these two points is that Ibn Sina believes in the insufficiency of his formal philosophy and that knowledge requires further progress.

This opinion clearly appears in Ibn Rushd.<sup>24</sup> In his important book *Al Fasl Al Maqa'l*, he writes that we can gradually get to a better state of knowledge in the practical sciences, as well as in the theoretical disciplines. No one can engage in a technique if he is alone, and so the same holds about the technique of techniques, namely philosophy. Muslim scholars must learn and criticize their predecessor's ontology and epistemology, by accepting their valid inferences and overlooking the erroneous, because the cognition is a human thing and has its limitations as well as a process for correction and evaluation.<sup>25</sup> Ibn Rushd adds that this accords with Islamic jurisprudence – namely that God connives at the accepting of a rational conclusion; even it is wrong.<sup>26</sup>

## **RATIONALITY IN ENLIGHTENMENT PHILOSOPHY**

Rationality in Enlightenment philosophy is opposed to fideism, voluntarism, and even the rationalism of the Cartesians. It emphasizes the self-sufficiency of reason for knowledge, progress, and happiness. For a deeper explanation, let us begin by discussing reason itself.

### *Reason*

The age of Enlightenment calls itself the age of reason. But what is reason? This age says more about what it aspires to, than what it is. Ernst Cassirer writes:

the age senses that a new force is at work within it; but it is even more fascinated by the activity of this force than by the creation brought force by that activity, It rejoices not only in results, but it inquires into, and attempts to explain, the form of the process leading to these results.<sup>27</sup>

In this approach to philosophy, we see a force vigorously dealing with facts, rather than a static entity having some necessary or *a priori* knowledge and ideas. Here, the criterion of truth is not the correspondence of objective and sense data with rational principles and rules; it is in the correspondence of rational principles and rules with objective and sense data. Truth, such as philosophy, thus becomes more extended and flexible.<sup>28</sup> The task of reason is approaching the truth, not arriving at it, as Lessing declared in his famous motto. If we cannot arrive at the essence of a thing, we are at least on the way to it. From this viewpoint, the Enlightenment exhibits a lust for knowledge (*libido sciendi*). Philosophy became a main and necessary quality of the human soul and is restored to its original rights.<sup>29</sup> This philosophy attempts to show how to approach, not to obtain, truths. We see this approach even in the *Encyclopedia* itself; in contrast to the previous century, "Reason is now looked upon rather as inquisition than as a heritage."<sup>30</sup>

However, we know reason by its function, not by its results. Its most refined function consists in its power to bind and to dissolve. It dissolves everything merely factual, all simple data of experience and everything believed on the evidence of revelation, tradition and authority; and it does not rest content until it has analyzed all those things into their simplest component parts and into their minutest elements of belief and opinion. Following this work of dissolution, the work of construction begins.<sup>31</sup> Reason, then, builds a new structure, a true whole. It creates this whole and fits the parts together according to its own rule. Thus, we have a human and temporal knowledge, but no divine or eternal knowledge.<sup>32</sup> In addition, philosophical reason is immanent and self-sufficient. Against the relapse into transcendence, this philosophy proclaims the pure principle of immanence for knowledge, as for cosmology. Both must be understood in terms of their own essence.<sup>33</sup>

### *The Possibilities of Reason*

The first and main source of our knowledge is sense data. On the Enlightenment view, the human being is a perceiving or sensing animal as well as a thinking animal. Enlightenment philosophy begins with sense but does not remain with it. It seeks to evaluate all things by relating them to objective facts. The logic of the facts becomes the replacement for the logic of the scholastic and of the purely mathematical concept. Principles are merely points for further research, than the terminal points that declare the

final essence of things. Rational rules are the aim of philosophy, not the starting point of philosophical investigations.<sup>34</sup>

There are two persons who are particularly important for later Enlightenment philosophy; John Locke and Isaac Newton. The first comes with a new reading of the famous scholastic principle: "Nothing is in the intellect which was not first in sense."<sup>35</sup> The latter argues against Aristotelian physics. The common point of these two great scholars is emphasizing knowledge based on experience and sense. After a discussion of the Newtonian pattern of rationality, Cassirer states:

Thus it is evident that, if we compare the thought of the eighteenth century with that of the seventeenth, there is no real chasm anywhere separating the two periods. The new ideal of knowledge develops steadily and consistently from the presuppositions which the logic and theory of knowledge of the seventeenth century had established. The difference in the mode of thinking does not mean a radical transformation; it amounts merely to a shifting of emphasis. This emphasis is constantly moving from the general to the particular, from principles to phenomena. But the basic assumption remains; that is, the assumption that between the two realms of thought there is no opposition, but rather complete correlation... The rationalistic postulate of unity dominates the minds of this age. The concept of unity and that of science are mutually dependent.<sup>36</sup>

Cassirer sees Enlightenment philosophy as dynamic, not as static.<sup>37</sup> He writes:

Yet if one wishes to grasp the entire intellectual structure of the eighteenth century and see it in its genesis, one must clearly separate the two streams of thought which converge at this point. The classical Cartesian form of analysis and that new form of philosophical synthesis which originates in Leibniz<sup>38</sup> are now integrated. From the logic of "clear and distinct ideas" the way leads to the logic of "origin" and to logic of individuality; it leads from mere geometry to a dynamic philosophy of nature, from mechanism to organism, from the principle of identity to that of infinity, from continuity to harmony.<sup>39</sup>

#### *The Limitations of Reason*

On the Enlightenment model, the powers of reason are more modest. As Locke says, our minds are not made so that we can reach all truth. He is not an essentialist, but he allows that we can arrive at the inner order of a thing.

We must, of course abandon all hope of ever wresting from things their ultimate mystery, of ever penetrating to the absolute being of

matter or of the human soul. If, however, we refer to empirical law and order, the inner core of nature proves by no means inaccessible. In this realm we can establish ourselves and proceed in every direction. The power of reason does not consist in enabling us to transcend the empirical world but rather in teaching us to feel at home in it.<sup>40</sup>

However, this philosophy emphasizes that our reason can find a kind of unity and permanence beyond diversity and change:

the rationalistic postulate of unity dominates the minds of this age. The concept of unity and that of science are mutually dependent. All sciences put together, says d'Alembert repeating the opening sentences of Descartes' *Rules for the Conduct of the Understanding*, are nothing but human intelligence, which always remains one and the same, and is always identical with itself, however different the objects may be to which it is applied.<sup>41</sup>

This originates from our reason, the main and unique feature of man.<sup>42</sup> From this standpoint, philosophy can arrive at natural laws and rights, natural religion, and so on... and their unity. Rational knowledge is human knowledge and has its limitations.

#### *Rational Progress*

Although, progress is one of the main principles of Enlightenment philosophy, Cassirer does not deal with it separately. Progress means the gradual development and founding of human knowledge in all its aspects.<sup>43</sup> If reason is nothing except a force that develops by confrontation with facts, it can become more intelligent by confronting more facts, addressing them, and exploring their possibilities. Cassirer adds an important note:

But we mistake the essence of this conception (Progress), if we understand it merely in a quantitative sense as an extension of knowledge indefinitely. A qualitative determination always accompanies quantitative expansion, and an increasingly pronounced return to the characteristic centre of knowledge corresponds to the extension of inquiry beyond the periphery of knowledge.<sup>44</sup>

We can, then, find a basic understanding of the idea of progress if we attend to three points: the unity of philosophy and reason; the unity of philosophy and philosophizing; and the limitations of human knowledge.

## **A COMPARATIVE APPROACH**

The father of Islamic philosophy understands philosophy as a move from primary nature to second nature. Here, a comparative approach using a dialogical language may be able to accomplish more than ordinary or logical languages. As mentioned above, western Enlightenment and Islamic peripatetic philosophies emphasize the *process* of thinking, more than the ideas and opinions arrived. They claim that they are returning to the approach of earlier philosophies and to the main meaning of philosophy too. But here we will concentrate on their notion of rationality.

Plato taught us that exoteric similarities can lead us to error. So allow me to note some differences before proceeding.

Islamic peripatetic philosophy frequently looks at reason as a kind of being, as what makes the human soul of the highest rank. In other words, this is an ontological view of reason. But in Enlightenment philosophy, we have an epistemological view of reason. Here, reason is a function and potential, rather than a kind of being or actual thing.

Again, peripatetic philosophy speculatively tells us about the impossibility of obtaining perfect definitions of things, but practically it remains in the hard framework of categories. Furthermore, this philosophy argues about the ontological aspects of real entities, rather than of abstract entities such as culture, civilization, and history. But Enlightenment philosophy moves from categories to abstract entities, and analytical and conceptual logic changes to synthetic and genetic logic.

Finally, although peripatetic philosophy speculatively emphasizes sense data and concrete object, practically it remains in the realm of the theoretical and conceptual. Enlightenment philosophy, however, forms its ideas and judgments in the concrete and empirical world. Then it can reflect on the state, politics, culture, history, art, and technology.

Nevertheless, there is much common ground between these two philosophical traditions that link them to one another and which can help us to address a number of difficulties. Let me identify a few common similarities between the two philosophies:

1. Self-sufficiency of Reason; The two philosophies believe in the autonomy of reason in approaching truth and refuse to accept any authority without justification.

2. Immanent reason. Rationality, in these two traditions, does not seek to transcend its limitations. They engage in investigation within the limitations of reason.

3. Correspondence of object and subject. Both philosophies believe that reason can know the external world and add that our minds also are aware of the limits of this knowledge. They believe in common sense and start with it.

4. The unity and permanence of reason. Both philosophies believe that all human minds ultimately follow the rules, and that they can come to agreement if people follow philosophical method rigorously. Thus, there is

a permanent element beyond all ethical, religious and theoretical differences. This shows the permanency of reason.

5. Approaching, not attaining truth, even though they offer theories on cosmology, anthropology and the like. Both philosophies hold that we do not get to essence of things, though we must strive constantly to approach it. Nevertheless, both have been accused of dogmatism and totalitarianism.

6. Humanization of knowledge. Both philosophies emphasize that philosophy is a human knowledge. They deny that philosophers can have access to any divine knowledge. Philosophical knowledge has limitations.

### **RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT ERA**

Why do we pay attention to peripatetic philosophy in the Islamic world and to Enlightenment philosophy in the era of globalization? Because both philosophies emphasize rationality as the sole ground for dialogue and sympathy. Let me explain this by making two points:

Globalization is a reflection of the universal rationality of Enlightenment philosophy. We showed that such a rationality is a common ideal of the two philosophies discussed above. It is arrived at by emphasizing the unity and permanence of reason in all cultures and nations. But we must not confuse ideal and reality, process and project. The Enlightenment philosophers paid special attention to the gradualness of this process and its relation to rational progress. Similarly, Al-Farabi emphasized the gradual realization of philosophy in society. He thought very much about the difference between philosophers and prophets. But the Islamic rational tradition was political from the start, as Professor Mehdi shows.<sup>45</sup>

We see this position more clearly in Enlightenment philosophy. Those philosophers were not utopian doctrinaires, as Cassirer clearly notes:

Their craving for reality and their flexible sense of the real are indisputable. They all want to set to work immediately, for they are aware that the road from theory to practice is long and toilsome. Even such a fanatical theorizer as d'Holbach (in his *System of Nature* for instance) does not attempt as a political thinker to transplant his speculations directly into realities. In his *Social System* he rejects all revolutionary solutions of problems, declaring that such cures are always worse than the disease. The voice of reason is neither mutinous nor bloodthirsty; the reforms it proposes are gradual but thereby all the more effective. On the other hand, all these thinkers are convinced that reason must bear the torch on the way to political and social betterment. The ability to overcome the evils of the state and of society can only arise from a real "enlightenment", from a clear insight into the grounds and origins of abuses.<sup>46</sup>

Islamic culture is a rationalistic culture. The Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims, repeatedly emphasizes rationality, thinking, knowing and contemplation. The words knowledge, reason and reasoning, and thinking appear there more than a hundred times. The first chapters of great Islamic books (such as *Al usole ka'fi* and *Al sahih-e bukhari*) have titles like 'the book of reason' or 'book of knowledge.' The first theological school in the Islamic world was a rational school: Al- Mu'tazilah. In this intellectual sphere, great Muslim philosophers have appeared. The peripatetic philosophy was the first philosophical school in the Islamic world. Ibn Rushd is the culmination point of this manner of thinking. He wrote an excellent treatise on the relationship between Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy. As an important Muslim jurist and a legal treatise, not as a philosopher and a philosophical treatise, he establishes the obligation for Muslims to learning philosophy, based on a verse of the Qur'an -- the first verse that descended on Islamic Prophet, Muhammad. But after this golden age of Islamic civilization, Islamic thought fell into mysticism and the revelatory approach called Al-Ash'ariyya. Both of these deny pure rationalization, and give currency to divine inspiration and mystic intuition. We can find these two schools together in the ideas of Al-Ghazzali.<sup>47</sup> Ibn Arabi (the greatest Sufi in Islamic mysticism) taking part in the funeral procession of Ibn Rushd is a sign of the burying of pure rationalism in Islamic culture. The event changed the fate of Islamic world.<sup>48</sup>

So, if we come back to our time, it seems that we do not have any choice except accepting rationality. Rationality in Islamic peripatetic and Enlightenment philosophies has a common meaning. It gives us a ground of dialogue and fellow-feeling. It reforms itself, and it is aware of its limitations. About Enlightenment philosophy, Cassirer says:

The consideration of the philosophic past must always be accompanied by philosophical re-orientation and self-criticism. More than ever before, it seems to me, the time is again ripe for applying such self-criticism to the present age, for holding up to it that bright clear mirror fashioned by the Enlightenment.<sup>49</sup>

I would emphasize, too, that we need Islamic peripatetic philosophy to critique the situation of the Islamic world. The age of globalization and the situation of Muslims both require confronting rationality and engaging in self-criticism. Remember what Cassirer says:

But we should be guilty of hasty judgment and dangerous self-deception if we mere simply to ascribe these distortions to opaque spots in the mirror, rather than to look elsewhere for their source.<sup>50</sup>

*Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan*  
*Gharjistan University*  
*Afghanistan*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See: Suhrawardi. Shihab al-Din. *Hikmat al-ishraq* (The Theosophy of Illumination, Qum, 1313 (A.H. Lunar) /1895).

<sup>2</sup> For this character, H. Corbin and S.H. Nasr name this school as the Transcendent Theosophy, not Transcendent philosophy (S. H. Nasr, "The concept and meaning of philosophy in Islam," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, S.H. Nasr and O. Leaman (eds) (Tehran: Hekmat, 1383(A.H. Lunar)), p. 47).

<sup>3</sup> See Mulla Sadra, *al-Hikma al-muta'aliyah fi'l-asfar al-arba'ah* (The Transcendent Theosophy concerning the Four Intellectual Journeys of the Soul (Tehran 1378 (A.H. Lunar) /1958).

<sup>4</sup> See Etienne Gilson, *Aql va vahi dar qurone Vosta* (Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages). Translated into Persian by Shahram Pazuki, Tehran: Pazhoheshgah, 1371 (A.H.solar); Henry Corbin, *Historie de la philosophie islamique* [Paris, 1964], translated into Persian by Javad Tabatabaai (Tehran: Kavir, 1373 (A.H. solar)).

<sup>5</sup> Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, translated by Fritz Koelln and James Pettegrove (Boston; Beacon Press, 1955), p. xi.

<sup>6</sup> Jafar Al-Yasin, *al-Filsofan al-raedan: Al-Kindi va Al-Farabi* (Two great philosophers: al-Kindi & al-Farabi) (Baghdad: Dar Al\_andolos, 1980), p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Yasin, *al-Filsofan al-raedan*, 42-4)

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Ghavam Safari (Professor of philosophy at Tehran University) has done independent and valuable research on the emergence of this notion of "active intelligence" in Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy, and its noncorrespondence with the foundations of Peripatetic philosophy: see Mahdi Ghavam Safari, *How Is Metaphysics Possible?* (Tehran. 2008), pp. 149-163.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Rushd (Averroes), *Talkhis Ketab al-burhan* (The Summary of demonstration book), edited by Mahmud Qasim (Egypt: Hayat mesri al-amma lel-ketab, 1982), pp. 182-3; Nasir al-Din Tusi, *Asasul al-eqtebas* (The Basis of abstraction) (Tehran.1326 (A.H. solar), p. 375.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Farabi, AL-TA'LI'KAT (The Annotations), edited by Jafar Al-Yasin (Tehran: Hikmat,1371 (A.H.solar)), pp. 128-9.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Sina (Avicenna), AL-TA'LI'KAT (The Annotations) (Qum: The Centre of publication of the office of Islamic Propagation of the Islamic Seminary of Qum, 1379 (A.H.solar)), p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> See Gilson, op. cit. for the part of Arabic and Jewish philosophy; Muhammad Saeid Shaikh, *Comparative studies on Islamic philosophy*, translated into Persian by Musfata Muhaqqeq Damad (Tehran: Kharazmi, 1369 (A.H.solar)), p. 133.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Sina (Avicenna), *Al-NEJAT* (The Salvation) (Tehran: Tehran University, 1364 (A.H.solar)), pp. 147-150.

<sup>14</sup> Gholam Hossein Ibrahimi Dinani, *General Philosophical Principles in Islamic philosophy* (Tehran: Cultural Studies and Research Institute,



1987), 2/437.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan (The Living Son of the Vigilant)*, tr. into Persian by Foruzanfar (Tehran: B.T.N.K., 1972), pp. 55-67.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, p. 84.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, pp. 92 and 97.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Sina (Avicenna). *Al-ESARAT VA AL-TANBIHAT (The References and the Remarks)*, researched by Mijtaba Zarei (Qom: Bustan-e Kitab 1381(A.H.solar)), p. 238; Ibn Rushd (Averroes), *Talkhis Kitab al-burhan*, pp. 182-3.

<sup>19</sup> Dominique Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd (Averroes)* (London; Routledge, 1991), p. 70.

<sup>20</sup> Jean Wahl, *Bahs dar mabad al-tabi'at (Traite de Metaphysique)*; Paris, 1953), translated into Persian by Yahya Mahdavi (Tehran: Kharazmi, 1380 (A.H.solar)), p. 150.

<sup>21</sup> F. Klein-Frank, "Al-Kindi," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. S. H. Nasr and O. Leaman, Translated into Persian by a group of philosophy professors (Tehran: Hikmat, 1383 (A.H.solar)), p. 284.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Farabi, *AL-TA'LI'KAT (The Annotations)*, pp. 1,130-1,141; Ibn Sina, *AL-TA'LI'KAT (The Annotations)*, p. 94.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Farabi, *AL-TA'LI'KAT (The Annotations)*, p. 136; Ibn Sina, *AL-TA'LI'KAT (The Annotations)*, pp. 16 and 69.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Kindi emphasizes that we cannot get to the Truth alone; this is a task that has to be done by all scholars and thinkers from around the world and over a lengthy temporal process; see: Al-Kindi, *rasa'el al-Kindi al-Falsafiyah* (Al-Kindi's philosophical treatises), edited by Abu Ryda (Gahera, 1369(A.H.solar)), pp. 103-4.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Rushd (Averroes), *Fasl al-maqal va taqir-e ma bayne al-shariat va al-hikmat men al-ettesal (Decisive treatise On the harmony of religion and philosophy)* (Beirut: Dar al-fekr al-lubnani, 1994), pp. 38-40.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Rushd (Averroes), *Fasl al-maqal va taqir-e ma bayne al-shariat va al-hikmat men al-ettesal*, pp. 52-3.

<sup>27</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 13-14.

<sup>30</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Cassirer presents a detailed account of this approach in physics, psychology and theory of the state (politics) and society (sociology) of this age. See Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, pp. 12-19.

<sup>32</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 45.

<sup>34</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Nihil est in intellectu quod non antea fuerit in sensu.

<sup>36</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p.22.

<sup>37</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. vii.

<sup>38</sup> "While opposing the principles of Leibniz's metaphysics,

d'Alembert shows the deepest admiration for Leibniz's philosophical and mathematical genius. And Diderot's article on Liebtiz in the Encyclopedia bestows enthusiastic praise on the philosopher. Diderot agrees with Fontenelle that Germany has gained as much honor through this one mind as Greece did through Plato, Aristotle, and Archimedes together" Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 35.

<sup>39</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, pp. 35-6.

<sup>40</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 22-23.

<sup>42</sup> From this viewpoint, Enlightenment philosophers arrive at the unity of Philosophy and Reason, and the unity of Philosophy itself. As Cassirer says: "Thus it is evident that, if we compare the thought of the eighteenth century with that of the seventeenth, there is no real chasm anywhere separating the two periods. The new ideal of knowledge develops steadily and consistently from the presuppositions which the logic and theory of knowledge of seventeenth century – especially in the works of Descartes and Leibniz – had established...the basic assumption remains; that is the assumption that between the two realms of thought there is no opposition but rather complete correlation... The self-confidence of reason is nowhere shaken..." (Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 22). There are remarks about Aristotle's influence on Christian Wolff (the main representative of the second stage of the German Enlightenment) in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy; Wolff to Kant*, Vol. 6 (London, 1977), p. 6. Also, we note the paper by Jonathan Israel, "Spinoza vs. Locke in the Later French Enlightenment Controversies (1760-1789)," in *XXII World Congress of Philosophy; Rethinking Philosophy Today* (Abstracts) (Seoul: Korean Organizing Committee, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Farhad Daftari (ed.), *Sunnathaye aqlani dar Islam* (Intellectual traditions in Islam) (Tehran: Farzan, 1380 (A.H.solar)), p. 62.

<sup>46</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 267.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid (1058-1111) is one of the most outstanding and influential figures in the thought and culture of the Islamic world. His character and works have been praised by many thinkers. Nevertheless, there are many criticisms of his ideas and opinions. A recent book offers a novel assessment of Ghazali's epistemic and religious views. The method which is used in this article is different from the method employed by Averroes and other philosophers. Using this method, the author identifies Ghazali's positive and negative influences on humanity's thought, status, knowledge and justice. See Yahya Yasrebi, *Naqde Ghazali* (The Critique of Ghazali) (Tehran: Kanon-e andishe-e Javan, 1384).

<sup>48</sup> After this period, there are three great scholars in the Islamic world who appear to emphasize the role of rationality in Islamic theology; Abu Jafar Tahavi (d. 321.A.H.lunar), Abu Mansur Maturidi (d. 333.A.H.lunar)

and, in Islamic mysticism, Mulla Sadra (1571/2-1640). But I think that they were not successful from a theoretical standpoint.

<sup>49</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. xi.

<sup>50</sup> Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. xi.



CHAPTER IV

**THE ANTHROPOLOGY AND CULTURE ACCORDING  
TO KAROL WOJTYŁA**

ANDREW N. WOZNICKI

To explain the concept of theanthropy, I propose to consider both nature and culture in terms of virtuality. However, they should not be understood as simple logical possibilities and/or simple potentialities – as is often argued by those who are following modern scientific thinking and mathematical deliberation. I wish to argue, the concept of virtuality should be explained as being in the state of *active potentiality*, which is very close to its actualization, as having both efficacious and causative ontic character, that is a real force with an ability of something to unfold from its state of a *real potentiality* to the state of its factual actualization – just like the effect in this view which is found in a particular cause.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I will concentrate on the virtual power which can be found in cultural phenomena. However, in view of the fact that all virtual existences of truth are, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, found in God's Mind absolutely, no created human mind can attain any absolute certainty, though it can have knowledge of an analogical nature.

**1**

In his speech at the headquarters of UNESCO, John Paul II underscored the educating role of culture, by saying that any genuine culture makes *man – human*. He stated that “the first and most fundamental purpose of culture in general, and each and every culture specifically, is the formation of a man.”<sup>2</sup> In *Pamięć i tożsamość* [Memory and Identity], regarding the phenomenon of culture, John Paul II formulated a fundamental definition of human culture:

*Fill the earth and subdue it* (Gen 1, 28). These words are the foremost and the most complete of human culture. Subduing the Earth means discovering and confirming the truth about man's *humanness*. ... By the same token God gave man specific mission; man has to realize the truth about himself and about the world. Man has to govern himself accordingly to the truth about himself, in order to be able to design the visible world, so man would be able to use the world properly, without abusing it.<sup>3</sup>

In his other works, John Paul II often discusses morality as a foundation of/for culture, thus evaluating the whole realm of human

spirituality as being founded on man's conscience. In his *Veritatis Splendor*, the Pontiff writes: "As a matter of fact, the very essence of culture is based on the moral behavior of man which is the very foundation of self-realization of his religious consciousness." Therefore, while writing about man's conscience, John Paul II states that the essence of culture consists in moral sense. In other words, religion by its very nature is the foundation of any genuine culture.

The primary task of the apostolic action of the Church lies in cultivating the religious and moral life of individual persons. The religious-moral life cannot be separated from an individual's values, since it stems from all the values of a particular person. In cultivating religious-moral life then, the Catholic Church needs to be aware of, and grant to man the right to personal views and occupation which support his own personal responsibilities and self-dependence. In the words of Wojtyla:

We are referring here not to a presence of Christianity in the works of cultural in its material, but in its formal content, namely, in its style or mode. We are referring to the Christian standard of the very act of creating, which obviously admits of countless variants and individualisms. Indeed, the Christian culture as found in the innermost core of each particular person is, in a way, different and unique<sup>4</sup>.

In its pastoral action, the Church affects individuals in various ways by influencing their socio-cultural life. Historically it is possible to distinguish in the Christianization of a given society two types of action:

- Transforming an entire indigenous system of values and adapting it to the requirements of the Catholic religion;
- Incorporating the precepts of the Catholic religion into the collective cultural values.

These two types of apostolic action cannot be divided and/or separated in a concrete social situation, of course, since in real life these two actions are interwoven and complement each other. This is a result of man's very nature as an individual and from the fact that, living in time and space, he is an environmental creature.

Christianization is a very complex and prolonged process. In evaluating the religious needs of a given society, the whole system of its present cultural values must be taken into consideration. Only from this wider perspective can the Church in a particular society apply appropriate methods of action or establish suitable tasks and goals.

2

One can distinguish in man both stable and changeable characteristics. It is this “double” nature through which man can become not only an immanent but also a transcendent being; a being who is endowed not only with immanent and transcendent ontological capacities, that is, ontic qualities. Therefore, man must have specific *virtual powers* through which he can be able to develop himself as being *capax Dei*.

This two-fold virtual power enables man to participate in divinity both in the form of the act of believing *in* the factually existing God and in the form of self-discovering of one’s own being as divine. In the former, we are dealing with the phenomenon of religion *sensu stricte*, while in the latter he is endowed with the phenomenon of spirituality and culture.

Man experiences the *sacrum/profanum* as it is manifested in religion, in spirituality, and in cultural life, thus reflecting the theanthropic dimensions of the nature of human life. The threefold levels of nature can be approached in a negative and a positive way. Concerning culture, Wojtyla says that it is:

one of those terms which are most intimately connected with man, and which defines his existence, and in a sense points to his very essence. Man makes culture, needs culture, and through culture creates himself. Culture consists of a set of facts, through which man expresses himself more than through anything else. He expresses himself to himself and to others. All works of culture that last longer than man’s life are witnesses to him. It is a testimony to spiritual life, and to the human spirit which lives not only on the account of mastering all matter, but lives in itself by ideals accessible to him alone, and only for him meaningful. He expresses its own spiritual life and objectivizes it in his deeds. Man then, as a maker of culture gives witness to the very humanness.<sup>5</sup>

The manifestation of moral/religious/cultural life of man takes place not only in individual but human social life as well. In view of this each person is responsible not only before himself but towards others as well.

However, in evaluating the Christian religion and its place in the formation of civilization and culture, one ought to be aware of the fact that in reality there never was (nor can be) a universal and never-changing Christian concept of the ideal social life. In other words, there cannot exist in Christian doctrine any specific or ideal vision of the world, or of a social entity. To expect the opposite leads to an ontological heresy, according to which that which is particular in the realm of human life can be limited to that which is general and universally bound forever, and therefore what is particular would, in fact, be that which is general and can be expressed in norms. The realization of the fact that there is no adequate and exclusive

vision of Christian reality, and that there cannot be one, is of utmost importance since it also implies that there is no specifically Christian culture, civilization, state, political system, economy, political party...

In view of this we may say that in the history of the world and contemporary culture, no particular social group (including the Church) can claim either to be the adequate Christian realization of the precepts of faith and morality, or to provide a full solution to a given historical situation. In every situation, there are many various possible appropriate reactions and methods of reacting. To make a choice from among the different possibilities is of utmost personal significance for a given individual or particular social group.

### 3

In classical philosophy, the concept of virtuality does not include only pure potentiality and/or actuality; it also includes the notion of virtuality, and as such it can be analyzed in a two-fold order that is immanent in nature and transcendent in character. In the former, virtuality is analyzed in the immanent order in terms of static *disposition*, and in the transcendent order as a dynamic *inner power* as being and thinking. While defining knowledge as both 'habitual' and 'virtual' experiences of the mind/intellect, Duns Scotus explains these two supplementary aspects of the human experience of the divine as being *habitual* in nature and *virtual* in character:

In regard to habitual or virtual knowledge, I [shall] first explain what I mean by the terms. I call knowledge habitual when the object is present to the intellect [that is to the thought] in an act of its intelligibility in such a way that the intellect have elicited act about that object. That [knowledge] I call virtual, when something is understood in something [else] as a part of the prior [thing] understood in something [else], as a part of the prior [thing] understood as a totally defining understanding [of that thing]; just as when 'man' is understood, 'animal' is [also] understood in the name as part of what is understood, not as the first thing or as totally defining understanding. This is properly called understanding 'virtually' because it is close enough to what is understood in actuality. For it could not be more actually understood unless it were understood with its own intellection, which is of the very [thing] itself of the total term.<sup>6</sup>

Defining "virtuality" as the mutual "inner workings" of the theanthropic bifurcation process of both actual and potential spiritual powers (e.g., any factual genuine belief in the World Spirit, or an actual surpassing transcendent Divine Being), leads to questions as to the ontic status of human religious beliefs. Therefore the power of mutual "inner working" of human and divine in man cannot be merely actual or potential.



In his personalistic view of man, Wojtyla explains human specific way of ontic existence not only in terms of ancient and medieval Christian philosophical anthropology according to the Aristotelian hylomorphism on *actus-potentia*, but also in terms of human habitual and spiritual inner power. In this paper, I will try to apply and to analyze the ontic status of human religious belief as it has been related to culture and spiritual life.

Referring to human *praxis*, Wojtyla distinguishes in man a twofold aspect of his actions through which an individual person reveals himself, namely 'transitive' and 'non-transitive' ways:

According to my opinion, founded on St. Thomas Aquinas, a human act is an act which is simultaneously 'transitive' (*transiens*) and 'non-transitive' (*non-transiens*). It is transitive inasmuch as it goes to the other side of the subject, seeking an expression or an effect in the external world, and thus objectivizes itself in some product. It is non-transitive in the measure in which, 'remaining in the subject,' it determines its quality and value, and establishes its own essentially human '*fieri*'. Therefore man, acting, not only fulfills some actions, but in some way realizes himself and becomes himself.<sup>7</sup>

In view of this twofold aspect of man's action, Wojtyla asserts "the priority of man as a subject of the act as having a fundamental significance for the forming of culture through human praxis."<sup>8</sup> Properly understood, the priority of man over nature consists in finding a proper balance between the transitive and non-transitive aspects of our activity. In this respect, Cardinal Wojtyla comes to the conclusion that "the intransitive is then more important than that which is transitive, which is objectivized in some products and which serves the transformation of the world or its exploitation; otherwise man would be subjected to frustration."<sup>9</sup>

To avoid this frustration, Wojtyla, referring to the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel's distinction between 'having' and 'being', argues that the priority of intransitive characteristic of man as a person over/against the transitive one leads to the acceptance of the postulate as a categorical imperative, that it is more important of "being more" than "having more" (*Redemptor hominis*, II, 16).<sup>10</sup> By postulating of "being more" rather than "having more," John Paul II proclaims the priority of ethics over things and technology. In his own words: "The development of technology and the development of contemporary civilization, which is marked by the domination of technology, demand a proportional development of morals and ethics" (*Redemptor hominis*, III, 15).

John Paul II warns us that, to the degree that man endangers the natural environment, he loses his own dignity and undergoes a process of profound dehumanization (*Redemptor hominis*, III.15). The main reason for this process of dehumanization of contemporary man "lies in an inadequate view of man,"<sup>11</sup> and in treating the *humanum* without relating him to the

*divinum*. In a paper delivered at the Catholic University of Milan on March 18, 1977, Cardinal Wojtyla stated:

In the Church or in Christianity, or even within the orbit of non-Christian religions, this is, above all, a controversy with atheism which more often denies the *divinum* in the name of *humanum*. Atheism in the form of Marxism denies referring to God-Creator as a way of constituting the human person, it means, the image of God, and establishes with the *humanum* the collective form of existence as the foundation and final existence at the same time. In this historical context, the category of ‘*persona*,’ which must be a fundamental idea in the controversy about the *humanum*, is essentially a Christian one.<sup>12</sup>

Human dignity must base itself on self-respect of one’s own self and the respect for other fellow men. The reason for such a respect consists, according to John Paul II, in “a feeling of deep esteem for ‘what is in man’, for what man himself worked out in the depths of his spirit concerning that most profound and important problem of respecting everything that has been brought about in him by the Spirit which ‘blows where he wills’” (*Redemptor hominis*, II, 12). Cultivating this “feeling of deep esteem” for each and every human person is the cornerstone of building the communal life of all men, which Cardinal Wojtyla described as participation in terms of a relation of man to man.<sup>13</sup>

In view of the mutual relation between man and man, participation in humanity is based on mutual primacy of ‘I’ in regard to each other, as being regarded as person, thus constituting communal ties that are always secondary to the personal one. In other words, the mutual participation of ‘I’ in the other person is by the same token indicative of the primacy of personal subjects over the community.

The principle of participation so conceived is not always a reality, and as such it is endangered by a real process of alienating humans from one another. Referring to the existing socio-economic situation of the contemporary world John Paul II writes:

The man of today seems ever to be under threat from what he produces, that is to say from the result of the work of his hands and, even more so, of the work of his intellect and the tendencies of his will. All too soon, and often in an unforeseeable way, what this manifold activity of man yields is not only subjected to ‘alienation’, in the sense that it is simply taken away from the person who produces it, but rather it turns against man himself, at least in part, through the indirect consequences of its effects returning on himself. It is or can be directed against him. This seems to make up the main chapter of the drama of present-day human existence in its broadest and universal dimension. (*Redemptor hominis*, III, 15)

The result of alienation is an existential fear of losing human dignity:

“He is afraid that what he produces — not all of it, of course, or even most of it, but part of it and precisely that part that contains a special share of his genius and initiative can radically turn against himself; the ‘he’ is afraid that it can become the means and instrument for an unimaginable self-destruction, compared with which all the cataclysms and catastrophes of history known to us seem to fade away” (*Redemptor hominis*, III, 15).

Now, the process of alienation of man can be overcome by developing among people the spirit of solidarity (*Redemptor hominis*, III, 16). This spirit of solidarity will lead, according to our Pope, not only to “a true conversion of mind, will and heart”, but also to building “a road of the necessary transformation of the structures of economic life” and social justice (*Redemptor hominis*, III, 16). The principle of solidarity is not, however, a fact but a task which “requires resolute involvement by individuals and peoples that are free and united” (*Redemptor hominis*, III, 16). Appealing to “the deepest powers in man, which decide the true culture of peoples,” John Paul II believes that “such involvement of people will express man’s true freedom” (*Redemptor hominis*, III, 16).

#### 4

The habitual/virtual power of man’s self-cognition can be described as bi-stable oscillation of potentiality and actuality, both in the order of being and becoming, and according to the individual theanthropic selfhood, his/her mode of *in*-existence, namely, the personal conscience. In the order of being, the theanthropic self-hood and one’s own *in*-existence and conscience, is the principle of unity of the habitual/virtual power in/of self-cognition of human beings, and it is its ontic foundation of experiencing God by/in man. However, the same unifying habitual/virtual power of self-cognition in man is, in the order of becoming invariably diversifying the religious experiences of God by/in man, either in a creative or a destructive manner.

The active/passive and habitual/virtual disposition as capacity of/for God in man, involves three main areas of questioning: (1) the *who* of the divine, (2) the *how* of the theanthropic manifestation of the divine in man, and (3) the *why* of the divinity in man. The answers given to these questions have led to the establishment of a variety of religious theanthropic traditions, and following our paradigm they can be classified to one or more form(s) of the theanthropic manifestations of the relation of human and divine religious traditions – shamanistic, prophetic and kerygmatic.<sup>14</sup>

In the theanthropic self-consciousness of the “I-You” immanent/transcendent relationship of man and God, the active/passive virtual faculty for/of the divinity is grounded in human *in*-existence as a

unifying/diversifying entity through which each person constitutes his/her selfhood as a “self-constituting-and-self-sustaining-inner-and-outer-entity.” By way of illustration, one can offer the following phenomenological description of the awareness of one-self as described by Samuel Beckett: “Where would I go, if I could go, who would I be, if I could be, what would I say, if I had a voice, who says this, saying it’s me? Answer simply, someone answers simply. It’s the same old stranger as ever, for whom alone accusative I exist, in the pit of my in-existence, of his, of ours, there’s a simple answer.”<sup>15</sup>

The ability of humans to experience God by means of both habitual and virtual powers of self-understanding by way of each person’s *in*-existence of his/her conscience consists in the unfolding of both actual and potential inner/outer powers that belong to each and every human and which have their beingness *per participationem*, namely, according to their active disposition in the order of being and passive disposition in the order of becoming. According to Karol Wojtyła, these active/passive dispositions are the sources for the pluripotency of human and divine operations.

## 5

An individual human being analyzed in his human dignity constitutes a specific process of ‘self-determination’ through which man becomes a person by his actions.<sup>16</sup> ‘Self-determination’, however, reveals two aspects of a person:

- 1) ‘self-possession’ (*persona est sui iuris*), and
- 2) ‘self-domination’ (*persona est dominus sui*).

‘Self-determination’ reveals in a person ‘self-possession’: “‘I want’ as an actual self-determination establishes structural self-possession. One can only decide about that which one possesses in reality. Man himself decides about himself through his own will, since he possesses himself.”<sup>17</sup> ‘Self-possession’, however, points only to the passive character of ‘self-determination’ of that which ‘I want’, and it is only a condition for actual realization of my ‘wants’ by my will, namely, ‘self-domination’: “here is someone who dominates and controls himself, and he is someone over whom he himself has domination.” This twofold aspect of ‘self-determination’ of man reveals a person not only for what he is, but also for who he is: “Making his own ‘I’ as somebody, man at the same time becomes some-one.” In this way the twofold aspect of ‘self-determination’ of ‘man-person’ points to human freedom. Analyzing human freedom in terms of ‘self-determination’, Wojtyła concludes that these characteristics of man, who through his actions can give himself a direction, indicate on the one hand the Marxian concept of man as a species-being (*Gattungswesen*) and properly estimate, on the other hand, the priority of man in his human praxis.

In this respect, John Paul II warns: “Nowadays it is sometimes held, though wrongfully, that freedom is an end in itself, that each human being is free when he makes use of freedom as he wishes, and that this must be our aim in the lives of individuals and societies. In reality, freedom is a great gift only when we know to use it consciously for everything that is our true good.” (*Redemptor hominis*, IV, 21)

The question arises: what is the criterion of an authentic use of our freedom? In what way can man determine himself as such? How can a person reveal his own true self through his actions? In other words, where is the ultimate source of the human transcendent freedom?

As an ethicist, Cardinal Wojtyla searched for the criteria of human freedom in the moral behavior of man, as the most sensitive and “visible” test of man’s dignity which consists in searching for his own goodness, and which *Redemptor hominis* grounds on conscience (II, 12).

Individual human conscience is the final and deepest root of morality in/through which man determines himself through actions and reveals his own dignity in the most profound way: “Conscience as a key-point of that personal ‘self-completion’ of the subject points, in a significant manner, to transcendence, remaining, so to speak, in its very subjective core.”<sup>18</sup> Without going into details, I shall simply summarize the role of conscience in man’s ‘self-completion’ in the words of Wojtyla:

There exists a correlation between conscience as the interpersonal source of duty and the objective order of moral norms. The basic value of the norms lies in the truth of good, which is objectified in them, and not in duty itself, although the normative words used in the given cases accentuate duty, having recourse to such phrases as ‘one should’, ‘one ought to’, ‘the obligation exists’ and the like. The essence of normative opinions of morality or right is inherent all the more considerably in the truth of good, which is objectivized in them. Through this truth they obtain contact with the conscience, which to some extent transforms this truth into concrete and real obligation.<sup>19</sup>

This view of man as a self-identified existing “I” who can be conscious of his unique and unrepeatable act of existing as the subject of all his actions is the point of departure of the Lublin Thomists from that of the Catholic French existentialists. In co-operation with the metaphysical speculation of Mieczyslaw A. Krapiec and the historical investigations of Stefan Swiezawski (both from the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland), Wojtyla sought the existential identity of man not in the natural, but rather in the personal subjectivity of the human self. Viewing man as an agent who experiences his own existence in both the immanent and the transcendent order of his human nature, Wojtyla lays the foundation for a new version of St. Thomas’ doctrine on man; Wojtyla’s synthesis has been described as “existential personalism.”<sup>20</sup>

At the base of Wojtyła's existential personalism lies the fact that man finds himself in a permanent state of experiencing his own existence. As a matter of fact, although I do not know what I am in my inner contentless structure, I am always conscious of my existence, which is for me a constant source of all my actions. But, experiencing my "I" as existing in all my actions, I experience my being from within, and in this way I attest to the primacy of my existence of my being through actions. Wojtyła notes that "Actions are particular moments in my self-inspection (oglad) — that is an experiential cognition of a person. Actions, therefore, constitute the most proper starting point for understanding man in his dynamic nature."<sup>21</sup>

## 6

Wojtyła, in the evaluation of man's existence, uses experience as his starting point. He sees experience as a basic characteristic of man as a being who constitutes himself as a person through his actions. Wojtyła goes on to accept consciousness as residuum of self-cognition through which each individual man constitutes himself as a human being. For Wojtyła, however, human consciousness in its very core is devoid of pure intentionality. Rather, it is endowed with a twofold foundation: "reflectiveness and reflexiveness;" in the former consciousness plays the role of human objective cognition (and this "cognitive" consciousness consists of intentionality but is understood as in classical philosophy), and in the latter it consists of a process of self-determination of his subjectivity through which I can say that I am a personal being.

Keeping in mind the usefulness of the phenomenological method in the description of human experience, especially in the realm of ethical values, Wojtyła turns to metaphysics in order to find "the objective principle" and foundation of human nature. In conclusion, Wojtyła writes:

The last step which we can take in by the phenomenological method in the area of ethical investigations, immersing ourselves, so to speak, in ethical experience as in the specific ethical value which is unveiled in it, is this ethical correctness. Through this method we uncover good and evil; we see how it fashions the experience of a person. We cannot, however, delineate the objective principle through which we would be able to establish that one act of a person is ethically good, and another ethically evil. In order to formulate this principle we have to discard the phenomenological method. This particular moment of the problematic, which forces us to pass over in ethical inquiries from the phenomenological method to the metaphysical one, remains still in the realm of phenomenological experience, since we are phenomenologically asserting the normative character of ethical values in the analysis of the act of conscience; which by itself, as an experience, remains still in the field of phenomenological

experience. The normative activity of conscience forces us to search for the objective reasons, that is, the measures of moral good and evil of our act. We have to avail ourselves here of the metaphysical method which will enable us to define the Christian, revealed order of moral good and evil in the light of an objective principle; it will enable us to define and justify it in a philosophical and theological manner.<sup>22</sup>

Wojtyla, then, evaluates man from both the metaphysical point of view as a personal subject and from the phenomenological perspective of human experience. Agreeing that “phenomenological experience captures the experience of the human person in all his contents,” Wojtyla accepts the phenomenological method insofar as it “enables us to uncover this specific correctness of the experience which stems from it, exactly because it is directed toward moral values.”<sup>23</sup>

*University of San Francisco*  
*San Francisco, USA*

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cf., Antoni Podsiad, Zbigniew Wieckowski, *Maly slownik terminow i pojec filozoficznych* [A Short Dictionary of Philosophical Terms and Concepts] (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1983), p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> June 2, 1980, Paris.

<sup>3</sup> Jan Pawel II, *Pamiec i tozsamosc* [Memory and Identity] (Krakow: Znak, 2005), p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> “Chrzescijanin a kultura” [The Christian and Culture], *Znak*, No. 10, 1964, p. 1155.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* See also Andrew Woznicki, *Dignity of Man as a Person* (San Francisco: Society of Christ, 1987), pp. 69–88.

<sup>6</sup> *Opus Oxon.*, I.iii.3

<sup>7</sup> “Il problema del costituirsi della cultura attraverso la ‘praxis’ umana,” *Rivista di filosofia neo-scholastica* 49 (1977), fasc. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 518. Cf., “Teoria e prassi nella filosofia della persona umana”, *Sapienza* 4 (1976), pp. 377–384.

<sup>10</sup> Quotations from *Redemptor Hominis* will be followed in this text by numbers referring to divisions in the published text.

<sup>11</sup> Address of John Paul II to the Third Assembly of Latin American Bishops at Puebla, Mexico, on January 28, 1978, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 71 (1971), 1.1. cf., “Humanizm a cel czlowieka” [Humanism and the Purpose of Man], *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 31 (1957).

<sup>12</sup> “Il problema del costituirsi della cultura attraverso la ‘praxis’ umana,” *Rivista di filosofia neo-scholastica* 49 (1977), fasc. 3, p. 515.

<sup>13</sup> Cf., “Osoba: podmiot i wspolnota” [Person: Subject and

Community], *Roczniki Filozoficzne*, 2 (1976), pp. 5–39.

<sup>14</sup> Cf., Andrew N. Woznicki, *Transcendent Mystery in Man: A Global Approach to Ecumenism*, (Bethesda, Academia Press 2007).

<sup>15</sup> *Stories & Texts for Nothing* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 91.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Karol Wojtyła, *The Structure of Self-Determination at the Core of the Theory of the Person*, in: Congresso Internazionale Tommaso D'Aquino nel suo Settimo Centenario (Rome/Naples, 1974), pp. 37–44

<sup>17</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn* [Person and Action] (Krakow: Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne, 1985), p. 132.

<sup>18</sup> “Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota”, *Roczniki Filozoficzne*, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> *Osoba i czyn*, p. 199.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., Andrew N. Woznicki, *A Christian Humanism: Karol Wojtyła's Existential Personalism* (New Britain: Mariel Publications, 1983).

<sup>21</sup> *Osoba i czyn*, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ocena mozliwosci zbudowania etyki chrzescijanskiej w oparciu o system Maksa Schelera* [Evaluation of a Possibility of Building Christian Ethics] (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1959), p. 123.



## CHAPTER V

# AL-FĀRĀBĪ'S APPROACH TO ARISTOTLE'S *EUDAIMONIA*

MOSTAFA YOUNESIE

In this paper, I want to examine the views of Al-Fārābī (who is the “Second Master,” after Aristotle who is the “First Master”) who – in his treatise, “The Attainment of Happiness” – writes about *eudaimonia*.<sup>1</sup> When we read this Arabic treatise, at first sight there are few, if any, explicit references to Aristotle’s philosophy of *eudaimonia*, but when we look at Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, and compare passages with Al-Fārābī’s treatise, another interpretation takes shape that seems more appropriate. We have to justify this different interpretation, and it is with regard to this issue that I want to discuss Al-Fārābī’s method.

It can be said that Al-Fārābī’s approach is an intersection of hermeneutics, rhetoric, and interpretation, with the centrality of the *hermeneutics of mediation*; in the Middle Ages – and also for Al-Fārābī – hermeneutics is the master discourse. Whenever there is a translation, it must define its character on this model.<sup>2</sup> Al-Fārābī has a *telos* in mind and, for the exposition and description of this end, it seems that as an axiom he wants to employ the ideas of Aristotle about happiness. Therefore, this kind of hermeneutics manifests itself as textual appropriation. Al-Fārābī seeks to create a coherent philosophy about happiness, though it is a kind of reconstruction that is different from the Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. This gives a rhetorical aspect to his hermeneutic of mediation, for it invents and reinvents the original text through similarity and difference with it and, consequently, his treatise about happiness assumes the status of an independent productive work.

Al-Fārābī uses explicit and implicit rhetoric. Thus, he has a positive view of Aristotle’s rhetoric, and this kind of affirmation or positivity leads him to engage Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. He is not merely a bystander or outsider towards the mentioned text. But, as we can see in his treatise “The Attainment of Happiness,” synchronically he is engaged with different and diverse texts, and Aristotle’s text is just one of them. Therefore, Al-Fārābī is a mediator who has to mediate among texts. Accordingly, his method is a *hermeneutics of mediation*. For there are many heterogeneous texts that deal with *eudaimonia* as *telos* in Al-Fārābī’s treatise and, for a thinker who wants to reach this end through a positive reception and engagement with them, it is necessary to be a good mediator. This mediator has the double function of discovering the original meaning of happiness and the rhetorical interpretation of it. Based on this approach, I will find and

compare the related parts in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Al-Fārābī's "The Attainment of Happiness."<sup>3</sup>

Al-Fārābī begins his treatise "The Attainment of Happiness" with these words:

The human things, through which nations and citizens of cities attain earthly happiness in this life, and supreme happiness in the life beyond, are of four kinds: theoretical virtues, deliberative virtues (rational, thinking, calculative, reflective), moral virtues and practical arts (ed. Mahdi, p. 13).

Al-Fārābī defines virtue as that by which we deliberate on the thing which we wish to do, when we wish to know whether to do it is possible or not, and if it is possible, how we must do the action.

In comparison with this notion, Aristotle writes:

Now virtue also is differentiated in correspondence with this division of the soul. Some forms of virtue are called intellectual virtues, others moral virtues: Wisdom or intelligence and Prudence are intellectual, Liberality and Temperance are moral virtues." (Bk. I, Ch. 13, 1102b 20).

Then, to explain and define this division, he concentrates in Book VI on the moral virtues but also, at the same time, intellectual virtue.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, at the end of this Book, Aristotle writes about or relates moral virtues to prudence. True virtue cannot exist without prudence (*phronesis*). Therefore, virtues have to co-operate with right principle, and prudence is the right principle in the matters of conduct.<sup>5</sup> But he points out that we have varieties of prudence such as deliberation; understanding and Judgment.

As the respective texts and aims of Aristotle and Al-Fārābī show, each wants to define happiness in the spheres of ethics and politics – but in different ways. Accordingly, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, through its different books and chapters, Aristotle gradually introduces aspects of happiness and its definition. But Al-Fārābī introduces and defines happiness only near the end of his treatise, "The Attainment of Happiness," in a short paragraph of about twelve typed lines, and in the context of another discussion. These are his words:

For every being is made to achieve the ultimate perfection. It is susceptible of achieving according to its specific place in the order of being. Man's specific perfection is called supreme happiness; and to each man according to his rank in the order of humanity, belongs the specific supreme happiness pertaining to his kind of man. (p. 37)

Aristotle in contrast says: “it remains for us to treat in outline happiness, inasmuch as we count this to be the end of human life” (Bk. X, Ch. 6, 1176a 32). And also:

It is a certain kind of activity of the soul, .... the active exercise of our faculties in conformity with virtue that causes happiness, ... . [T]hat man is happy, who realizes complete goodness in action, and is adequately furnished with external goods? Or we should add, that he must also be destined to go on living not for any casual period but throughout a complete lifetime in the same manner, and to die accordingly (Bk. I, Ch, 9, 1099b 27; Bk. I, Ch. 10, 1100a.10 and 1100a.15-20).

After this overall outline, Al-Fārābī writes that the supreme felicity or eudaimonia or happiness must be realized by or is equal to the supreme science called philosophy, theory, or contemplation, and it has the most authority and rule over the other sciences – although Al-Fārābī is very brief about the qualities of this contemplation and the reasons of its superiority. Al-Fārābī writes:

This is the superior science and the one with the most perfect [claim to rule or to authority]. The rest of the authoritative sciences are subordinate to this science. ... [The other three sciences] merely follow the example of that science and are employed to accomplish the purpose of that science, which is supreme happiness and the final perfection to be achieved by man (pp. 42-43).

In regard to Aristotle's text, it can be said that in two parts he mentions the characteristics and also the reasons of the superiority of contemplation – points that Al-Fārābī is silent about. As an important and pivotal theme he says:

But if happiness consists in activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be activity in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be the virtue of the best part of us. ... this activity is the activity of contemplation. (Bk. X, Ch. 7, 1177a. 12, 18).

After this thematic point he mentions or describes eight qualities of contemplation for legitimizing its acceptance. It is:

The highest part,  
The most continuous,  
The pleasantest  
The most self-sufficient,  
The most leisured,

An end in itself,  
The activity of the divine in man, and  
The true self.<sup>6</sup>

After describing this idea, Aristotle mentions the reasons of its superiority over other things, and among them is moral virtue. He says the life of moral virtue, on the other hand, is happy only to a secondary degree for these four reasons:

1. Moral activities are purely human,
2. Contemplation needs but little external happiness or less than the happiness based on moral virtue (secondary happiness). Contemplation distinguishes man from animals.
3. Contemplation is the sole activity conceivable in God, and therefore contemplation in man is the source of happiness, and
4. Contemplation distinguishes man from animals.<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly, after introducing the supreme science or wisdom, and through a multicultural and intercultural developmental gradual genealogy (that is, the transmission of wisdom from the Chaldeans to the people of Egypt, and from there to the Greeks and then by the Syrians to the Arabs), Al-Fārābī writes about contemplation and its sub-divisions:

The Greeks who possessed this science used to call it true wisdom and the highest wisdom. They called the acquisition of it science, and the scientific state of mind philosophy (by which they meant the quest and the love for the highest wisdom)....  
Now wisdom may be used for consummate and extreme competence in any art whatsoever when it leads to performing feats of which most practitioners of that art are incapable. Here wisdom is used in a qualified [e.g., human or practical or artistic] sense. ....  
However, unqualified wisdom is this science and state of mind (n. 53, p. 43).

Unlike Al-Fārābī's intercultural argument, in the broad context of the related topic Aristotle writes:

Hence it is clear that wisdom must be the most perfect of the modes of knowledge. Hence wisdom must be a combination of intelligence and scientific knowledge: it must be a consummated knowledge of the most exalted objects (Bk. VI, Ch. 7, 1141a 16 – 20).

Thereby he introduces the general meaning of wisdom. But this is not the whole story, and he mentions: "The term wisdom is employed in the arts to denote those men who are the most perfect masters of their art ... In

this use then wisdom merely signifies artistic excellence,” (Bk. VI, Ch. 7, 1141a 12-15.).

Up to now, Aristotle has introduced general and particular wisdom, but it seems that they are insufficient for us as human beings, for we need another kind of wisdom in the sphere of the social and communal life: “For it is absurd to think that political science or prudence is the loftiest kind of knowledge, inasmuch as man is not the highest thing in the world” (Bk. VI, Ch. 7, 1141a 22 - 25). Thereby it is natural that the discussion turns toward prudence as practical wisdom – that is concerned with the affairs of men and with things – that can be object of deliberation.

According to this process, it is natural and appropriate that both Al-Fārābī and Aristotle pay more attention to subjects such as praxis. For the attaining of the supreme happiness, theoretical science is not enough and we need something more that can reflect human or practical wisdom. In this connection Al-Fārābī writes:

When the theoretical sciences are isolated and their possessor does not have the faculty for exploiting them for the benefit of others, they are defective philosophy. To be a truly perfect philosopher, one has to possess both the theoretical sciences and the faculty for exploiting them for the benefit of all others according to their capacity. ... Therefore he who is truly perfect, possesses with sure insight, first, the theoretical virtues, and subsequently the practical [that is deliberative and moral virtues]. Moreover, he possesses the capacity for bringing them about in nations and cities in the manner and the measure possible with reference to each. (n. 54, pp. 43, 44)

According to this quotation there is no difference between the true philosopher and the supreme ruler, for both of them need a combination of theoretical and practical virtues.

With regard to Al-Fārābī's quotation, when we attend to Aristotle's text, it seems that there is both similarity and dissimilarity. As we have quoted from Aristotle before, based on his mentioned eight reasons or justifications, wisdom must be the most perfect of the modes of knowledge, and it is different from prudence and political science. But then he continues that some people say wisdom or the possessor of wisdom has a kind of defect:

These considerations therefore show that wisdom is both scientific knowledge and intuitive intelligence as regards the things of the most exalted nature. This is why people say that men like an Anaxagoras and Thales may be wise but are not prudent, when they see them display ignorance of their own interests,...(Bk. VI, Ch.7.1141b1-4).

By comparing this quotation with the preceding quotation from Al-Fārābī, there appears to be a hard and fast contrast. But this is not all. For, by going little by little into the next chapter of the same book, more multidimensional similarities appear and present themselves:

a) Perhaps, however, as we maintain, in practical sciences the end is not to attain a theoretical knowledge of the various subjects, but rather to carry out our theories in action. If so, to know what virtue is is not enough, we must endeavor to possess and to practice it, or in some other manner actually ourselves to become good (Bk. X, Ch 9, 1979b 2-4).

b) In order to be good, a man must have been properly educated and trained, and must subsequently continue to follow virtuous habits of life, and to do nothing base ..., then this will be secured if men's lives are regulated by a certain intelligence, and by a right system, invested with adequate sanctions (Bk. X, Ch 9, 1180a 16-19).

Here we can see an interconnection between theoretical, moral, and practical or political virtues. And lastly,

c) But a physician or trainer or any other director can best treat a particular person if he has a general knowledge of what is good for every body, or for other people of the same kind: ... Not but what it is possible no doubt for a particular individual to be successfully treated by someone who is not a scientific expert, but has an empirical knowledge based on careful observation of the effects of various forms of treatment upon the person in question ... (Bk. X, Ch. 9 1180b 13-19).

In other words, in the broad context of the relation of the theoretical and practical sciences, or the relation between the philosopher and the ruler, Al-Fārābī writes about the philosopher and the legislator or the relation between philosophy and legislation. Here, legislation is a branch of politics or, at least, we have to understand the latter in the context of the former. This is the definition of the science of legislation or the legislative craft:

... It is evident that when one seeks to bring into actual existence the intelligibles of the things depending on the will supplied by practical philosophy he ought to prescribe the conditions that renders possible their actual existence. Once the conditions that render their actual existence possible are prescribed, the voluntary intelligibles are embodied in laws. (n. 56, p. 45)

Here, Al-Fārābī's thinking contrasts with Aristotle's and, accordingly, in his description of law he defines the legislator in a conditional fashion:

Therefore the legislator is he who, by the excellence of his deliberation has the capacity to find the conditions required for the actual existence of voluntary intelligibles in such a way as to lead to the achievement of supreme happiness. (n. 56, p. 45)

With regard to this account, then he mentions these necessary conditions for being a legislator: Perception of voluntary intelligibles by the intellect; perception of supreme happiness by the intellect, and the acquisition of philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

But philosophy and the philosopher, too, should have some qualities for being true philosophy and true philosophers. In Al-Fārābī, "the philosopher is a person who has acquired theoretical virtues and has the capacity for bringing them about in all others according to their capacities". Furthermore, the philosopher can carry out the above mentioned task and responsibility if he possesses the deliberative virtue; he possesses the practical / moral virtue; and he possesses the faculty that enables him to "excel in persuasion and in representing things through images" (ed. Mahdi, n. 56, p. 46).

After mentioning the supreme state and grade of intellect and the wise man, Aristotle says that our discussion is incomplete, for we are in the sphere of practical science and we do not want merely different theoretical knowledge and virtues. Therefore we need and have to refer to practical / moral sciences, and this is possible only through laws that can be supplied by public or state authority, not individual, paternal, authority. In other words, the legislator has to realize and actualize intelligibles; theory and teaching are not sufficient. Thus law by the legislator is a necessary and sufficient factor in the practical / moral sphere – it seems that here there is a resonance with Plato's "Laws." Aristotle writes:

... Then this will be secured, if men's lives are regulated by a certain intelligence, and by a right system invested with adequate sanctions. ... But law on the other hand is a rule, emanating from a certain wisdom and intelligence, that has compulsory force. ... The best thing is then that there should be a proper system of public regulation [not individual, paternal...]. ... he will be more likely to be successful in this if he has acquired the science of legislation. Public regulations in any case must clearly be established by law, and only good laws will produce good regulations... (Bk. X, Ch.9, 1180a 11-12, 34-35; 1180b 1-3).

And finally, he writes:

So presumably a man who wishes to make other people be there (whether few or many) by discipline, must endeavor to acquire the science of legislation – assuming that it is possible to make us good by laws. For to mould aright the character of any and every person that presents himself, is not a task that can be done by anybody, but only (if at all) by the man with scientific knowledge...(Bk. X, Ch. 9, 1180b 22-28).

In the next step, Al-Fārābī equates the philosopher, legislator, prince, and Imam (an Arabic word with special religious connotations) with each other, and says that these four ideas or personalities are a single idea or person. In this regard, there are three important notions that show some similarity and dissimilarity with Aristotle's text, and I will focus on them. Al-Fārābī defines one by one and separately these four terms:

It follows then, that the idea of Imam, philosopher and legislator is a single idea. However, the name philosopher signifies primarily theoretical virtue. But if it be determined that the theoretical virtue reaches its ultimate perfection in every respect, it follows necessarily that he must possess all the other faculties as well.

Legislator signifies excellence of knowledge concerning the conditions of practical intelligibles, the faculty for finding them, and the faculty for bringing them about in nations and cities.

The name prince signifies sovereignty and ability, this ability is not merely from external but also comes from knowledge, deliberation, moral virtue and art.

As to the idea of Imam in the Arabic language, it merely signifies the one whose example is followed and who is well received: that is, either his perfection is well received or his purpose is well received. Only when all other arts ... seek to realize his purpose and no other, will his art be the most powerful art... For with all of these powers he will be exploiting the powers of others so as to accomplish his own purpose (n. 57, pp. 46, 47).

It is possible to find and mention similar terms in Aristotle. Firstly, Aristotle undermines and weakens this notion that that theoretical and prudence or political science must be one idea; they are different ideas: "Hence it is clear that wisdom must be the most perfect of modes of knowledge. ... it must be a consummated knowledge of the most exalted objects" (Bk. 6, Ch.7, 1141a 20). According to this theme, Aristotle differentiates between Sophia or wisdom or philosophy, and prudence / practical wisdom or political science. Therefore they are different ideas and not one idea. Secondly, Aristotle mentions the virtue or excellence of contemplation, and calls it self-sufficiency: "... The wise man on the contrary can also contemplate by himself, and the more so, the wiser he is; no doubt he will study better with the aid of fellow-workers but still he is



the most self-sufficient of men" (Bk. X, Ch. 7, 1177a 33-35). And lastly, Aristotle talks about the good:

... And likewise with the Idea of Good; for even if the goodness predicated of various things in common really is a unity or some thing existing separately and absolute, it clearly:

1 – Will not be practicable or attainable by man; but the good which we are now seeking is a good within human reach." Therefore the idea of good or transcendent good is not attainable and practicable.

2 – Ideal good as a pattern is not the actual procedure of the sciences. "For these all aim at some good, and seek to make up their deficiencies, but they do not trouble about knowledge of the Ideal Good".

3 – "Yet if it were so potent an aid, it is improbable that all the professors of arts and sciences should not know it nor even seek to discover it".

4 – Moreover, it is not easy to see how knowing that same Ideal Good will help a weaver or carpenter in the practice of his own craft, or how anybody will be a better physician or general for having contemplated the absolute Idea. ... (Bk. I, Ch. 6, 1096a 11-1097a).

Therefore, in the human sphere, we cannot have or have access to the transcendent Good. Moreover, discussion about transcendent good pertains to the sphere of first philosophy or metaphysics and not to human sciences such as ethics and politics.

It is clear here that here we have the encounter and engagement of Aristotle with Plato's philosophy about the idea of the Good. And it is an important and basic matter that Al-Fārābī does not ignore and indeed pays rather lengthy attention to it – and also proposes a kind of solution or standard for evaluating it.

With regard to the Aristotle's criticism of Plato's idea of the universal Good, Al-Fārābī looks at the difficulties and the solutions discussed by Aristotle in the "Nicomachean Ethics," principally in Book I, chapter 6. Al-Fārābī weighs Aristotle's criticisms and, at the same time, seeks to defend Plato against Aristotle. It is interesting that his thinking has both similarities and dissimilarities with Aristotle's way of thinking. There are three aspects of Al-Fārābī's reading of Aristotle's discussion that are worth noting.

1 – According to Al-Fārābī's reading of Aristotle, the doctrine of the categories necessitates a kind of plurality and multitude in notions, sciences, and ideas. In regard to this, we quote Al-Fārābī's reading of Plato:

.... Now if it were the case that to give an account of these things as they are perceived by the intellect is to give an account of their actual existence, it would follow that theoretical sciences have given an account of them as actually existent. But if it is not the case that the intellection of a thing implies its existence outside the intellect and that to give an intelligible account of it is to give an account of its actual existence, then ... he necessarily requires something else beside theoretical science. That is because things perceived by the intellect are as such from the states and accidents that they have when they exist outside the thinking soul. In what remains numerically one, these accidents do not vary or change at all; they do vary however, in what remains one, not numerically, but in the species. ... This applies to the *natural* intelligibles, which are and remain one in their species as well as to *voluntary* intelligibles (nn. 22, 23, pp. 25, 26).

2 – Aristotle argues that the Idea of the Good is superfluous, being the same in essence as the concept ‘good.’ Here is Al-Fārābī’s contribution to this critique:

... For when it [that is, the intelligible idea of Man] assumes actual existence outside the soul, the states and accidents in it at one time are different from those it has at another time after or before. The same is the case with respect to different places. The accidents and states it has when existing in one country are different from that it has in another. Yet, throughout, the intellect perceives Man as a single intelligible idea. This holds for voluntary things as well. Hence the distinction between man himself and a particular man himself is meaningful (n. 24, pp. 26, 27).

3 – Aristotle argues that the Idea of the Good is irrelevant to ethics, since a transcendent good is unattainable and useless even as a guide to the attainment of practicable goods. Al-Fārābī’s contribution:

... the theoretical sciences ... cover only the intelligibles that do not vary at all. [What about those things that vary over place and time...?] Therefore another faculty and another skill is required with which to discern the voluntary intelligibles, [not as such, but] insofar as they possess these variable accidents: that is, the modes according to which they can be brought into actual existence by the will at a determined time, in a determined place and when a determined event occurs. That is the *deliberative* faculty (n. 25, 26, p. 27).

According to this reading of Plato’s idea of the Good and Aristotle’s discussion of it, it seems that we have to return to a more

important matter that is knowledge and its kinds. About this matter Al-Fārābī mentions two kinds of knowledge and begins with these words:

Theoretical virtues consist in the sciences (episteme) whose ultimate purpose is to make the beings and what they contain intelligible with certainty. This knowledge is in part possessed by man from the outset without his being aware of it and without perceiving how he acquired it or where it comes from. This is primary knowledge. The rest is acquired by mediation, investigation and inference, instruction and study. The first premises are known by primary knowledge; on their basis one proceeds to the subsequent knowledge gained from investigation, inference, instruction and study (n.2, p. 13).

Aristotle presents his discussion of the same issue in this way: “demonstrated truths and all scientific knowledge (since this involves reasoning) are derived from first principles. Consequently the first principles from which scientific truths are derived cannot themselves be reached by Science; nor yet are they apprehended by Art, nor by Prudence” (Bk. VI, Ch. 6, 1140 31b 31-35).

With regard to the importance of this division, it seems necessary that our two philosophers pay detailed attention to this subject. It is not so with Al-Fārābī, for he returns to these two kinds of knowledge under the title of the relation between the deliberative and theoretical virtue and writes:

It is evident that the deliberate virtue with the highest authority can only be subordinated to the theoretical virtue, for it merely discerns the accidents of the intelligibles that ... are acquired by the theoretical virtue. (n. 34, p. 32).

In comparison with Al-Fārābī's view, Aristotle writes that wisdom is at the top or head of theory:

Hence wisdom must be a combination of intelligence and scientific knowledge: it must be a consummated knowledge of the most exalted objects. ... For it is absurd to think that political science or prudence is the loftiest kind of knowledge, in as much as man is not the highest thing in the world. (Bk. VI, Ch. 6, 1141a 22-24).

Then he mentions its contradistinction from deliberation or phronesis.

Of the two parts of the soul possessed of reason, prudence (deliberation) must be virtue of one, namely, the part that forms

opinions (or calculative faculty); for opinion deals with that which can vary, and so does prudence. But yet prudence is not a rational faculty merely, as is shown by the fact that a purely rational faculty can be forgotten, whereas a failure in prudence is not a mere lapse of memory. (Bk. VI, Ch. 5, 1140b 25-30).

Therefore it is not a purely intellectual activity, and theoretical virtue and deliberative virtue are distinct from each other. The former is supreme, but at the same time the latter cannot be subordinated to it, for they belong to different spheres.

The discussions of Aristotle and Al-Fārābī lead to a deeper and more fundamental matter, that is, “being” and “knowledge.” Al-Fārābī discerns a distinction between the principle of instruction and the principle of being; between what is better known to us, and what is better known by nature; or between “*causa cognoscenti*” and the “*causa essendi*”. Quoting him:

The primary cognitions relative to every genus of beings are the principles of instruction in that genus.... If all or most of the species comprised by the genus should possess cases by which, from which, or for which these species exist, then these are principles of being of the species comprised by the genus, that these two kinds of principles can be identical or different” (n. 5, p. 15).

About the same topic in Aristotle, we read:

...But “the known” has two meanings – what is known to us, which is one thing, and what is knowable in itself which is another. Perhaps then for us at all events it is proper to start from what is known to us ... For the starting point or first principle is the fact that a thing is so; if this be satisfactorily ascertained, there will be no need also to know the reason why it is so” (Bk. I, Ch 4, 1095 3-8).

But these presentations should not make us forget that here the basic fact and purpose are the true qualities through which the mind achieves truth and also the contrast that is mainly between theoretical and practical wisdom.

In Bk. I, Ch. 5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1095b-1096a 5), we have three kinds of life, especially and mainly the life of action / politics; the life of enjoyment / pleasure; and the life of contemplation / theory. But further on we see a five-fold partition – and that life related to theory and practice are only two of the five kinds. Quoting Aristotle:

Let it be assumed that there are five qualities through which the mind achieves truth in affirmation or denial, namely Art or

technical skill, Scientific Knowledge, Prudence, Wisdom, and Intelligence. (Bk. VI, Ch. 3, 1139b 1-6).

But this is not all, for then, in a concentrated way, in the last book and chapter of Aristotle's treatise, we see again the two partitions: knowledge that is practical and that is theoretical. According to Aristotle:

For to mould or right the character of every person that presents himself is not a task that can be done by anybody, but only (if at all) by the man with scientific knowledge, just as is the case in medicine and the other professions involving a system of treatment and the exercise of prudence. (Bk. X, Ch. 9, 1180b 25-28).

So it would appear that those who aspire to a scientific knowledge of politics require practical experience as well as study.

But it seems that Al-Fārābī has a different reading:

This then is theoretical perfection. As you see, it comprises knowledge of the four kinds of things by which the citizens of cities and nations attain supreme happiness. What still remains is that these four be realized and have actual existence in nations and cities while conforming to them given by the theoretical sciences" (n. 21, p. 25).

According to Al-Fārābī's account, the theoretical sciences include a theoretical human or political science whose objects are the intelligibles or ideas of voluntary things, as distinct from their actual existence at particular times and places. But this does not mean that Al-Fārābī forgets to discuss the practical knowledge for becoming a virtuous person in the community. Accordingly, Al-Fārābī describes and explains the quality of the deliberative faculty and presents a definition of it and its different subdivisions. Therefore, his discussion is arranged in two parts. In part one: "Things are discovered by the deliberative faculty only insofar as they are found to be useful for the attainment of an end and purpose. .... The ends may be truly good, may be evil, or may be only believed to be good" (n. 27, p. 28). According to these grades the deliberative faculty can be classified as deliberative virtue; deliberative evil; and deliberative doxa. In part two, with regard to the supreme value of deliberative virtue, Al-Fārābī gradually concentrates on this virtue and mentions its five main and general subdivisions or titles, although each one of these can be divided. Paraphrasing Al-Fārābī:

– ... Political deliberative virtue. It is the deliberative virtue that discovers the most useful and most noble that is common to many nations, to a whole nation, or to a whole city,

irrespective of whether what is discovered persists there for a long period or varies over a short period.

- The deliberative virtue that manages the different classes of particular, temporary tasks in conjunction with, and at the occurrence of, the events that affect all nations, a certain nation, or a certain city.

- The deliberative faculty by which one discovers what is most useful and noble, or what is most useful for a virtuous end, relative to one group among the citizens of a city or to the member of a household.

- The deliberative virtue by which one discovers what is most useful and noble with respect to the purpose of particular arts or with respect to particular purposes that happen to be pursued at particular times.

- The deliberative virtue that enables man to excel in the discovery of what is most useful and noble with respect to his own end when an event occurs that concerns him specifically or with respect to a virtuous end to be attained by somebody else (n. 28, pp. 28, 29).

Now consider Aristotle, and his notions about these two general topics in two parts. In part one, in defining the deliberative faculty, he says: “Deliberations ... are for ends. But while some hold that what is deliberated for is the good, others think it is what appears to be good. ... Whereas in the case assumed it may so happen that the man wishes for something bad” (Bk. III, Ch. 4, 1131a 15-17). In this passage, Aristotle shows that deliberation has a relation to the end or *telos*. But more importantly, this *telos* can be good; or bad; or appear good and bad. Here we see a kind of relation between the *telos* and goodness or badness. It is with regard to this relation between deliberation and *telos* that he differentiates among different kinds of deliberation and that he speaks of deliberation as a virtue (or deliberative virtue) and its subdivisions.

Again, a man can be said to have deliberated well either generally, or in reference to a particular end. Deliberative Excellence in general is therefore that which leads to correct results with reference to the end in general, while correctness of deliberation with a view to some particular end is Deliberative Excellence of some special kind (Bk. VI, Ch. 9, 1142a 28-30).

Thereby deliberation becomes an excellence or virtue in-itself, different from art, opinion, knowledge and conjecture. It is not these categories but it is an intellectual quality that displays itself in the process of correctly investigating a problem or conduct. Also, man should excel in it, for it is not a neutral faculty in which one may excel or not excel. Therefore we may say that prudence is a truth-attaining rational faculty that is

concerned with action in relation to the things that are good for human beings.

After this passage about the definition and account of deliberative virtue, in the second part Aristotle mentions its subdivisions. Although it is long, it is worth mentioning:

Prudence is indeed the same quality of mind as *politike* [political science], though their essence is different. Of prudence as regards the state, one kind as supreme and directive, is called legislative science, and the other as dealing with particular occurrences, has the name, *politike* [political science] that really belongs to both kinds. [Thus *politike* belongs to the legislative and *phronesis*]. ...The latter is concerned with action and deliberation. Prudence also is commonly understood to mean especially that kind of wisdom which is concerned with oneself, the individual; ...while the others are distinguished as Domestic economy, legislature, and political science, the latter being subdivided into deliberative science and Judicial science...(Bk. VI, Ch. 8, 1141b 23-35).

There are two important points in this passage. On the one hand, political wisdom is not a special sort of prudence but a special application of it, for prudence is not limited or confined to a specific sphere. But, on the other hand, political wisdom is a special sort of wisdom. Al-Fārābī mentions both points. He points to a subtle and important point about the architectonic and directive role of *politike* that places *politike* at the head, and we have the other subdivision of deliberative virtues after it. But this is not all. For it seems that Al-Fārābī speaks of *politike* as the first and universal category, but at same time, he mentions *politike* as the particular that has the third ranking after political as a universal category and legislation (see n. 28, p. 29).

After all these detailed discussions about the deliberative faculty, it seems that it needs a moral virtue or a kind of goodness and rightness. Therefore the deliberative faculty in itself is incomplete and defective. Al-Fārābī writes:

It is obvious that the one who possess a virtue by which he discovers what is most useful and noble, and this for the sake of a virtuous end that is good, ... cannot possess this faculty without possessing a moral virtue. ... Accordingly, the more perfect the authority and the greater the power of these deliberative virtues, the stronger the authority and the greater the power of moral virtues that accompany them (n. 29, pp. 29, 30).

Aristotle demonstrates the aforesaid point in different words. First, by introducing prudence as an excellence or virtue, and not an art: "But yet prudence is not a rational quality merely, as is shown by the fact that a

purely rational faculty can be forgotten, whereas a failure in prudence is not a mere lapse of memory” (Bk. VI, Ch. 5, 1140b 25-30). Therefore a loss of prudence is felt to involve a moral lapse, which shows that it is not a purely intellectual quality. Second, by introducing deliberative excellence as a kind of correctness, Aristotle emphasizes the ethical character of the deliberative faculty.

But Deliberative Excellence is a form of correctness in deliberation. However, correctness in this connection is ambiguous, and plainly it is not every kind of correctness in deliberation that constitutes Deliberative Excellence. ... Therefore it is this kind of correctness in deliberation that is Deliberative Excellence, namely being correct in the sense of arriving at something good (Bk. VI, Ch. 9, 1142b 16-23).

And lastly, Aristotle mentions that:

... Virtue ensures the rightness of the end we aim at, prudence ensures the rightness of the means we adopt to gain that end. Now rightness in our choice of an end is secured by virtue [moral virtue]; but to do the actions that must in the nature of things be done in order to attain the end we have chosen is not a matter for virtue but for a different faculty. ... Hence it is clear that we cannot be prudent without being good (Bk. VI, Ch. 12, 114a 6-23).

Thereby *arête* [virtue] becomes the subject of discussion and it is natural that it be the focus of writing and investigation. Accordingly, Al-Fārābī writes:

Therefore one ought to investigate which virtue is the perfect and most powerful virtue? Is it the combination of all the virtues? Or, if one virtue (or a number of virtues) turns out to be have a power equal to that of all the virtues together, what ought to be the distinctive mark of the virtue that has this power and is hence the most powerful virtue?” (n. 31, p. 31).

This virtue for Aristotle is justice, that is the perfect, chief and sublime virtue. Therefore, justice is the universal virtue that contains all the other virtues. Aristotle writes:

Justice in this sense [meaning that which is lawful and that which is equal or fair] is perfect virtue... This is why Justice is often thought to be the chief of virtues, and more sublime “or than the evening or the morning star”.... And Justice is perfect virtue because it is the practice of perfect virtue; and perfect in a special degree... Justice in this sense then is not a part of virtue, but the whole of virtue; and



its opposite injustice is not a part of vice but the whole of vice (Bk. V, Ch. 1, 1129b 26-35; 1130a 9-11).

With regard to the above discussion about the necessary and complementary place of *arête* / virtue for the deliberative faculty or knowledge, it is good to examine the relation between moral and deliberative excellences. In other words, here we have to see an important and rather detailed discussion about the relation of the deliberative and moral virtues. In Al-Fārābī we can propose different relations between these two kinds of virtues, such as independence; identity; or coexistence. But more important than this we have to solve the specific problems and difficulties that each can produce.

Al-Fārābī introduces three possibilities under the topic, such as independence, identity, or coexistence about the relation of moral and deliberate virtues and specifies their specific difficulties. But prior to or intermingled with these possibilities we have to bear in mind the hierarchy or inferiority and superiority of the deliberative and moral virtues. In this regard Al-Fārābī writes:

But if, after the theoretical virtue has caused the intellect to perceive the moral virtues, the latter can only be made to exist if the deliberative virtue discerns them and discovers the accidents that must accompany their intelligibles so that they can be brought into existence, then the deliberative virtue is anterior to the moral virtue. (n. 35, pp. 32, 33).

With this notion in mind, we can now proceed to the three kinds of possible or alternative relationships between the deliberative and the moral virtues. In the continuation of the preceding paragraph Al-Fārābī explains that if it is anterior to them, he who possesses the deliberative virtue discovers by it only such moral virtues as exist independently of the deliberative virtues, and for this alternative he mentions two difficulties. But then he mentions another alternative, that is their coexistence, and here also it seems that there are two problems. And lastly, the third one is the identity of deliberative and moral virtue (n. 35, p. 33). According to this text, it can be suggested that Al-Fārābī's choice is for the fourth alternative, that is, deliberative virtue is accompanied by some other virtue different from the moral virtue that is discovered by the deliberative faculty.

Aristotle, too, searches for the relation of and the hierarchy between deliberative and moral virtue. To paraphrase him: Moreover it would seem strange if prudence, which is inferior to wisdom, nevertheless has greater authority than wisdom: yet the faculty that creates a thing governs and gives orders to it (see Bk. VI, Ch. 12, 1143b 33-37). Prudence stands in the same relation to wisdom as medicine to health: it provides the conditions for its development. And some paragraphs later Aristotle says: "But nevertheless it is not really the case that prudence is in authority over wisdom, or over the

higher part of the intellect, any more than medical science is in authority over health..." (Bk. VI, Ch. 13, 1145a 8-12).

After introducing his proposed hierarchy, Aristotle introduces his own account of the kinds of possible relationships that can exist between the deliberative and the moral virtues, and it seems that he concludes and has sympathy with the cooperate alternative, and not identity, isolation, or complete independence. Quoting Aristotle:

We have now discussed the nature and respective spheres of prudence and wisdom, and shown that each is a virtue of a different part of the soul. Virtue is not merely a disposition conforming to right principle; but one cooperating with right principles; and prudence is right principle in matters of conduct. Socrates then thought that the virtues are principles, for he said that they are all of them forms of knowledge. We on the other hand say that the virtues cooperate with principle. ... Moreover, this might supply an answer to the dialectical argument that might be put forward to prove that virtues can exist in isolation from each other... (Bk. VI, Ch. 11, 1143b 18-20; Bk. VI, Ch. 13, 1144b 26-36).

After examining the relation and hierarchy of the deliberative and moral virtues, the next matter can or should be the realization and actualization of them in the context of nations and cities. Al-Fārābī says that there are two primary methods:

Instruction and the formation of character. To instruct is to introduce the theoretical virtues in nations and cities. The formation of character is the method of introducing the moral virtues and practical arts in nations. Instruction proceeds by speech alone. The formation of character proceeds through habituating nations and citizens in doing the acts that issue from the practical states of character ..." (n. 39, p. 35).

And similarly Aristotle writes:

Therefore, virtue being, as we have seen, of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue is for the most part both produced and increased by instruction, ... whereas moral or ethical virtue is the product of habits (ethos), ... In a word, our moral dispositions are formed as a result of corresponding activities (Bk. II, Ch. 1, 1103a 14-20).

Thereby Al-Fārābī and Aristotle agree that people should be instructed and habituated with regard to the theoretical and ethical virtues respectively – although the more important of these two is the actualization or how-ness of the moral virtues. In Al-Fārābī's words:

They [perhaps all the people, or the princes and imams] should be habituated in the acts of the practical virtues and the practical arts by either of two methods. First, by means of persuasive arguments .... This method is made possible by the practice of the rational arts.... The other method is compulsion. It is used with the recalcitrant and the obstinate among those citizens of cities and nations who do not rise in favor of what is right willingly... (n. 41, p. 36)

Therefore there are two methods for realization of the different kinds of virtues in the cities and nations. In referring to Aristotle we read:

Accordingly we shall need laws to regulate the discipline of adults as well, and in fact the whole lives of the people generally; for the many are more amenable to compulsion and punishment than to reason and to moral ideals. Hence some people hold, that while it is proper for the lawgiver to encourage and exhort men to virtue on moral grounds ... yet he is bound to impose chastisement and penalties on the disobedient and ill-conditioned, and to banish the incorrigible out of the state altogether (Bk. X, Ch. 9, 1180a 3-12).

Therefore, for both Aristotle and Al-Fārābī actualization of virtues has two consensual and compulsory aspects, and skill in law (as a part of politics) uses both of these for two broad classes of people, those who consent willingly, and those who are recalcitrant and do not accept voluntarily and willingly . For Al-Fārābī, the latter skill can take the form of the craft of war that is the faculty that enables him (i.e., the statesman) to excel in organizing and leading armies and utilizing war implements and warlike people to conquer the nations and cities that do not submit to what will procure for them the happiness for whose acquisition man is made.

*Political Sciences Department,  
Tarbiat Modares University,  
Tehran, Iran*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* (Attainment of Happiness, the Philosophy of Plato, and the Philosophy of Aristotle), trans. with an introduction by Muhsin Mahdi (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962). All future references to this work will be to this edition and included in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> See *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975). All future references to this work will be to this edition and included in the text.

<sup>4</sup> See Aristotle, Bk. VI, Ch. 1, 1138b 1.

<sup>5</sup> See Aristotle, Bk. VI, Ch. 13, 1144b 5.

<sup>6</sup> See Aristotle, Bk. X, Ch.7, 1177a, 1177b, 1178a 1-8.

<sup>7</sup> See Aristotle, Bk. X, Ch. 13, 1178a9 - 1178b 27.

<sup>8</sup> See Al-Fārābī, n. 56, pp. 45, 46.

## **PART II**

### **THE NATURE OF CULTURE AND ITS POTENTIAL AS A PHILOSOPHICAL SOURCE**



## CHAPTER VI

# A REALISTIC INTERPRETATION OF CULTURE

*JEU-JENQ YUANN*

### INTRODUCTION

This paper intends to argue that culture can be interpreted realistically so that it stands for the reality it entails. This argument would not be sound unless a philosophical demonstration is given in the first place. This demonstration is indispensable, as culture is generally considered an idea properly situated in anthropology or history. However, the core argument of this study differs from the traditional consideration by analyzing the idea of culture from epistemological or theoretical contexts. What we mean by 'epistemology' or 'theory' has a great deal to do with the ideas of knowledge developed in the philosophy of science in general and in so-called 'post-positivistic philosophy of science' in particular.<sup>1</sup> We intend to make use of these ideas, and then transform them to fit the inquiry of culture. By so doing, we propose an image of culture which maintains its characteristics as a form of close intelligibility, on the one hand and, on the other hand, as a formation of dynamic change. What we have in mind concerning 'close intelligibility' is the idea that culture is considered as a totality of principles from which different modes of manifestations occur. With regard to 'dynamic change', it refers to the fact that all cultural manifestations are exposed to outsiders who can either confirm or disconfirm them on the basis of their own principles, with the possibilities of exchanging ideas through communication.

The paper is divided into five parts: 1. An exposition of post-positivistic philosophy of science represented mainly by Paul Feyerabend. 2. An exploration of theoretical realism arising as a consequence of the previous section. 3. An analogical explication of the relation between theory and culture. 4. An analysis of the idea of incommensurability among cultures. 5. An empirical demonstration of the realistic effect of culture (by taking the Confucian culture as an example). In conclusion, this paper will stress that the epistemic effort of humankind fully manifests its longing for expanding the extent of knowledge by the application of all means in which remote ideas, such as imagination, myths, divinities, and super-natural phenomena can be included. What is important is the suggestion that all sorts of cultures, either 'advanced' or 'underdeveloped', are valuable, not for reasons of comparison, but for the very fact that they are, to a tremendous extent, 'realities'.

**AN EXPOSITION OF POST-POSITIVISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE**

Debates about the nature of observation sentences are found from the very beginning of the development of the philosophy of science.<sup>2</sup> With regard to this development, we stress only the distinction between positivism and post-positivism. When the term 'positivism' is used, its central themes are mainly characterized as essential parts of 'traditional philosophy of science.' According to P. William Bechtel and Eric Stiffler, the central themes of positivism in this context are: 1) observation sentences serving the dual functions of providing the evidence for and the semantic foundation to our cognitive scheme; and, 2) observation sentences employing only observational terms which are both meaningfully made and necessary for explaining scientific theories. Roughly speaking, both themes can be reformulated as the so-called 'stability thesis of the meanings of observation terms' (the stability thesis).<sup>3</sup> As a matter of historical fact, many ideas derived from this thesis converge in an idea of verificationism. On this view, observation terms and sentences are considered something hardly different from criteria of truth which are used to verify theoretical terms and sentences.<sup>4</sup>

On the basis of holding tight the import of theories, some find verificationism mistaken. Among them we find the so-called post-positivistic philosophers of science such as W. V. Quine, N. R. Hanson, T. Kuhn, and P. Feyerabend – all of whom denied the distinction between observation sentences and theoretical sentences (*viz.* Quine), and some of whom further maintained the idea of theory-ladenness (*viz.* Hanson, Kuhn, Feyerabend). These two ideas (*i.e.*, 'the no-distinction between observation and theoretical sentences' and 'the theory-ladenness') are not the same, but insofar as their criticism of positivism is concerned, they both contribute essentially to the collapse of traditional philosophy of science.<sup>5</sup> Generally speaking, we can say that the whole argument of post-positivistic philosophy of science has a great deal to do with the deflation of the semantic claims of observations which is taken by the positivists as something foundational.

As part of the deflationary trend of mocking the meaning-invariant nature of observation sentences, Feyerabend undoubtedly occupies a position of special importance. His importance can be explained by two reasons: one historical, the other methodological. Historically, Feyerabend was the 'direct descendant' of the Vienna Circle, being a member of the 'Kraft Circle' (which was the later version of the 'Vienna Circle,' concentrated around V. Kraft after the Second World War<sup>6</sup>). And methodologically, Feyerabend was privileged by an intellectual upbringing that brought together the ideas of O. Neurath, V. Kraft, K. Popper and L. Wittgenstein in order to forge a position of 'pluralistic methodology'.<sup>7</sup> Despite the controversies caused by this methodology – referred to mainly as an idea of 'epistemological anarchism'<sup>8</sup> – Feyerabend's attacks on the



stability thesis of observation sentences have been proven to be a direct descendent of this combination of historical and methodological efforts.

Feyerabend's attacks on stability are succinctly reformulated by Elie Zahar in terms of three conceptions: logical, linguistic and conjectural.<sup>9</sup>

The logical attack refers to the fact that the stability of the meaning of an observation sentence, such as "I see a yellow dog," is well-established if there is a 'pre-establishment' set before the linkage between the phenomenon and the phenomenological conditions urging me to utter the sentence. If there is a possibility of making this 'pre-establishment' explicit in expressive form and hence equally 'observational', then there is necessarily another 'phenomenological requirement' asking for the link between this 'observation of pre-establishment' and the phenomenon from which it is derived. This procedure of linkage can go on and on, and so there is the logical problem of proceeding *ad infinitum*. The logical problem proves directly that there is no invariable link between 'our feeling' and 'our expression of it.' Thus, whenever we sense something, 'the meaning of this thing' (in a sentential form) is by no means equivalent to 'the feeling of it'. There is simply no *a priori* proof to say that they are the same. In other words, 'I am feeling pain now' is not psychologically incorrigible, and hence is not stable. Experiences fail to have fixed meaning, not because they do not exist, but because their expression can be fallible. The fact that we can meaningfully communicate with each other on a daily basis is mainly due to the fact that the meaning of words is acquired through repeated use. Because of repeated use, we become familiar with words and their meaning, rather than knowing the meaning before how to use them. The linguistic practice turns out to be the essential part of meaning, rather than a faithful description of what we sense. Hence, the possibility of meaning variance goes together with the possibility of reaching different linguistic practices. This is the second critique, and it is crucial to the third attack of Feyerabend on the stability thesis, i.e., the conjectural critique.

Feyerabend thinks that stability is established on the presumption that the incorrigibility of an observation statement is uttered at a specific instance by a particular observation reporter. Other occasions of accepting the same statement (such as one verified by other people, or other statements verified by oneself previously on another occasion) are hardly different from endorsing it on a tacit presumption of meaning invariance. However, there is no warrant to guarantee that such a meaning can be conveyed on occasions different from its original one. Hence, it is merely conjectural, as it is practically made on the basis of an apparently tacit but actually false presumption. Though there is no proof to sustain this presumption, its application is widespread and overwhelming. By insisting on the implausibility of this presumption, Feyerabend fully manifests the heritage of the Vienna Circle dating back to the days of the 'protocol sentence debates.' Though there is no space for us to fully elaborate this historical part, an exposition of the methodological part will help us capture

a more comprehensive view on which the contributions of Feyerabend's critique of positivism can be established.

With regard to methodology, Feyerabend's intention is to offer a critique of traditional ideas. Among the traditional ideas of methodology, Feyerabend opts to make a choice between normativity (in his sense) and soundness (in the traditional sense). He considers them mutually exclusive in the sense that, if you want to keep methodology to be normative (i.e., safeguarding the progress of empirical knowledge), then you have to give up all versions of traditional methodology which are generally deemed sound. According to Feyerabend, this is so because none of the methods endure the tests of historical facts. However, Feyerabend's idea of 'mutual exclusiveness' is opposed to a pervasive idea. The idea holds that a sound methodology must be normative in order to uncover certainty.<sup>10</sup> To Feyerabend, uncovering certainty through instructions of normative methods would not be very different from sticking to a pious faith, and the cost is the stagnation of knowledge. Feyerabend says: "Altogether the adherents of certainty are in the habit of believing that certainty is difficult to attain and that it needs long and patient research to uncover principles, or even single statements, that are not endangered by the fallibility of human discourse."<sup>11</sup> Feyerabend thinks that all methodologies, as long as they stress the doctrine of searching for certainty by following vested principles, are conservative in the sense that they do not match the basic requirement of being a methodology. Methodological rules are set up, not to keep a theory from being challenged, but quite the contrary to expose the current theory in front of all alternative theories. Maintaining the empirical realm within the extent of one well-established theory is no different from inductively accumulating facts, without noticing nonetheless that the very facts concerned here might be portrayed from the theory in function. This amounts to Feyerabend's idea of theory-ladenness which is characterized in the following paragraph:

The remark that some connection of meaning must be established at least with the *observational* terms of previous theories (or of ordinary language, in case we *start* theorizing) assumes that *terms are observational by virtue of their meanings*... This theory, which we might call the semantic theory of observation, introduces a *priori* elements of a very undesirable kind into our knowledge. We shall therefore adopt a different account of observation and assume observability to be a pragmatic concept: a statement will be regarded as observational because of the *causal context* in which it is being uttered, and not because of what it means... All we need in order to provide a theory with an observational basis are statements satisfying this pragmatic property. We do not need to connect these statements with the observational statements of a different theory in order to give them meaning. They obtain their meaning from the theory to which they belong.<sup>12</sup>

There are at least two crucial points here: theory and context. Theory forms its own meaning because of its context. While submitting theoretical hypotheses to the justification of observations was traditionally assumed as a matter of course in positivism, the position now is entirely reversed under the idea of theory-ladenness. The position of theory supersedes that of observation because it is as a matter of fact a 'shaper' of observations.<sup>13</sup> There is no 'neutral' observation, because there is no observation which is not presumed by a theory. The presumption is stronger than merely forming a part; it is a presumption of reality. Whatever is portrayed in a theory, is a deep concern about what consists in reality, and the manifestation of reality is characterized to be the aim of knowledge and science. Feyerabend's idea of theory-ladenness intends to offer an insight into theoretical realism.

### **AN EXPLORATION OF THEORETICAL REALISM**

Realism as an idea plays a role of crucial importance in Feyerabend's philosophy from the beginning to the end of his career.<sup>14</sup> However, what is realism for Feyerabend? Other than the complicated nature that this term apparently implies,<sup>15</sup> to Feyerabend 'realism' refers to something rather 'idiosyncratic.' He says: "...we must distinguish between appearances (i.e., phenomena) and the things appearing (the things referred to by the observational sentences in a certain interpretation [offered exclusively by a theory]). This distinction is characteristic of realism."<sup>16</sup> In opposition to positivism, which holds the invariable nature of the meaning of observational statements, Feyerabend admits that his 'realism' presents itself as 'an ideal of knowledge' which reiterates that "what is determined by the 'fact' is the acceptance (or rejection) of sentences *which are already interpreted* and which have been interpreted independently of the phenomenological character of what is observed."<sup>17</sup> In brief, what Feyerabend means by 'realism' refers actually to a 'reality' portrayed by interpretations derived from a theory underneath them. This is the reason why we call it 'theoretical realism.' From this term, the aura of relativism obviously spreads.

Tsou echoes our view about Feyerabend's realism by considering it as "rather minimal and quite unorthodox."<sup>18</sup> Tsou signals two points of the minimal and unorthodox nature of Feyerabend's 'realism': "First, Feyerabend endorses the realist thesis that scientific theories describe an independent existing world. Second, Feyerabend endorses the realist belief that scientific theories are not "mere instruments" but that the (non-observational) terms in scientific theories (in some case) actually *refer* to real properties and process in the world."<sup>19</sup> In fact, Feyerabend is even more positive than this in setting up the two guidelines for his 'realism'; he proposes a full program of methodology. He claims:

The attempt will also be made to formulate a methodology that can still claim to be *empirical* but that is no longer beset by the problems of a *radical* empiricism. Put in a nutshell, the methodology requires a theoretical pluralism instead of theoretical monism... This plurality of theories must not be regarded as a preliminary stage of knowledge that will at some time in the future be replaced by the "one true theory." *Theoretical pluralism is assumed to be an essential feature of all knowledge that claims to be objective.*<sup>20</sup>

This certainly has a great deal to do with Feyerabend's promotion of the 'proliferation of theories.'<sup>21</sup> However, rather than shocking people in its anarchistic form of 'anything goes,' the idea designates a normative standpoint of methodology, i.e., the pursuit of objective knowledge. The pursuit is regarded as a far-reaching aim, and there will be no chance to accomplish it quickly. It is also due to this aim that we are engaged with the task of philosophy. According to Feyerabend, with this aim, we understand why scientific theories play such an important role in his philosophy. He says:

The fact that I have frequently discussed scientific theories must not be misunderstood. I have discussed them not because I want to restrict myself to the philosophy of science, but because I regard scientific theories as excellent examples of actual knowledge... Philosophy has always had the tendency to proceed from a stable system and to judge thought by the criteria implicit in such a system. It is clear that such criteria will fail when applied in the attempt to improve matters in a fundamental way. This is why a consideration of science is important, for ... we have here criticism and progress through revolutions that leave no stone unturned and no principle unchanged.<sup>22</sup>

From this, we see clearly that the 'utility' of Feyerabend's theoretical realism is not limited to the realm of philosophy of science. It contains a much wider objective by taking into account not just scientific knowledge, but all sorts of knowledge. Indeed, Feyerabend later expands his realistic interpretation of theories to the realm of culture.

### **AN ANALOGICAL EXPLICATION OF THEORY AND CULTURE**

An analogy between scientific theories and historical cultures may appear to be quite unusual at first. This is understandable, as we all have known for quite some time that science, being a universal form of knowledge, is fundamentally different from culture which is more a matter of peoples scattered around all the corners of the earth. This reason also alludes to the idea that while science arises from a specific corner of the world, culture

exists everywhere. Culture belongs to everyone who has lived throughout the centuries, whereas science appears to originate from only a very limited number of regions and peoples in the world. The permeation of this idea is generally considered a matter of course.

However, this idea is sound only if it is supported by an argument sustaining that science is essentially different from other forms of knowledge, be they cultural, historical, anthropological, or even mythological. Despite the fact that this idea seems to be quite widespread, there is, alas, no proof for it. Quite the contrary, post-positivistic approaches in the philosophy of science say precisely the opposite, and their reasons are equally convincing. Feyerabend claims that before a proper definition of science is achieved, either logically or methodologically, any presupposition concerning the superiority of science to other forms of knowledge is futile because it lacks the needed evidence. Instead, once the presupposition of scientific superiority is destroyed, the demarcation between science and non-science turns out to be negated. In fact, insofar as an individual's life is concerned, there is only an 'abundance' of various sorts of things, equally important and crucial to his or her life. Feyerabend describes this 'abundance' by saying:

The world we live in contains an abundance of things, events, processes. There are trees, dogs, sunrises; there are clouds, thunderstorms, divorces; there is justice, beauty, love; there are the lives of the people, gods, cities, of the entire universe. It is impossible to enumerate and to describe in detail all the incidents that happen to an individual in the course of a single boring day.<sup>23</sup>

This is the factual part of every individual, regardless of where he or she might live. However, there is another part, which concerns the epistemic. Feyerabend says:

Living in a particular world, an individual needs knowledge. An enormous amount of knowledge resides in the ability to notice and to interpret phenomena such as clouds, the appearance of the horizon on an ocean voyage, the sound patterns in a wood, the behaviors of a person believed to be sick, and so on. The survival of individuals, tribes, of entire civilizations depends on this kind of knowledge.<sup>24</sup>

With the combination of the two preceding paragraphs, we can see that Feyerabend not only abolishes all understanding of science and non-science as two distinct realms of disciplines, but also extends his usage of 'theory' much broader than whatever the term might commonly imply. He says:

When speaking of theories I shall include myths, political ideas, religious systems, and I shall demand that a point of view so named be applicable to at least some aspects of everything there is. The general theory of relativity is a theory in this sense; “all ravens are black” is not. There are certain similarities between my use of ‘theory’ and Quine’s ‘ontology’, Carnap’s ‘linguistic framework’, Wittgenstein’s ‘language games’... Kuhn’s ‘paradigm.’<sup>25</sup>

With the ideas of ‘ontology,’ ‘linguistic frameworks,’ ‘language games,’ and ‘paradigms,’ we see that, first of all, Feyerabend would consider all so-called post-positivistic philosophers to agree on a basic point, i.e., the ontological claims of a theory which includes everything as real within its extent of explanation.<sup>26</sup> Second, an aura of ‘the relativized stand’ automatically arises here, as there is practically no possibility to limit one ‘ontology’ on the basis of another. The two points form a structure wherein the first part manifests a claim about reality, and the second hints at the idea of incommensurability. Science is by no means an exception, as its theories contain the contexts through which things are identified as real. However, this identification has hardly anything to do with ‘absolute truth’ as truth is in the state of constant modification through history. Feyerabend says:

... the ‘reality’ science allegedly defines and uses to ‘annihilate’ the more disorderly ingredients of our world is constantly being redefined to make it fit the fashion of the day”... The attempt to make the success of science a measure of the reality of its ingredients fails also for other reasons. Success and failure are culture-dependent... It is true that the validity of Maxwell’s equations is independent of what people think about electricity. But it is not independent of the culture that contains them. It needed a very special mental attitude inserted into a very special social structure combined with sometimes quite idiosyncratic historical sequences to divine, formulate, check and establish the laws scientists are using today.<sup>27</sup>

In this paragraph, ideas such as ‘mental attitude,’ ‘social structure,’ and ‘historical sequences’ have cultural significance. These ideas plus the material perceived in the outside world form a framework from which observational knowledge is derived. In this perspective, we might be able to say that the idea of culture can also be considered a conceptual framework which makes things ‘real’ in terms of its ontological appeal. This is hardly different from saying that culture is a ‘shaper,’ in the sense of C. R. Hanson, who says:

Observation of x is shaped by prior knowledge. Another influence on observations rests in the language or notation used to express

what we know, and without which there would be little we could recognize as knowledge.<sup>28</sup>

If culture is considered here as the framework of 'prior knowledge,' then it is not hard to say that culture is the 'shaper' of the 'facts' which are its consequences. Whatever is perceived in the outside world becomes 'explicit' as soon as it is considered 'real' in a cultural framework. For this reason, we are going to interpret the idea of culture as a 'metaphysical order,' that formulates whatever is perceived in the world in accordance with its 'order of phenomena,' and then expresses these formulations in terms of its specific language. The language of a culture, taking into account its 'objective reality,' is the medium through which meaning is phenomenalized. The problem of the nature of meaning is inseparable from the problem of its phenomenalization, which consists in understanding how a system of conventional signs can be the carrier of meaning. This may sound fictional, but it happens in all kinds of languages. However, the point is that language takes particular specifications according to the kind of reality to which the culture refers. In fact, all cultures speak of their own reality which is not directly accessible to perception and would not become comprehensible unless the cultural framework is taken into account in the first place.

The framework functions here like theory functions in science. In science, reality is presumed to be the ultimate objective to portray, and in culture, the framework of thinking (from which customs, conducts, behaviors, etc., are derived) plays a similar role in setting out all reasonable activities. The framework exerts its realistic influence on us in ways beyond our imagination, through mythical, religious, customary, social, theological, or even educational means. Here, the analogy of science to culture is put forward as a part of our intention, because they are generally considered entirely distinct. We intend, on the contrary, to show that the difference between science and culture makes little sense; all human constructs are to some extent 'culture-dependent.' "Cultural factors, not empirical adequacy, determined the survival of the one and the disappearance of the other", says Feyerabend.<sup>29</sup> There is no doubt that, if cultural factors determine the very survival of human constructs and if all things considered real are outcomes of human phenomenalization, then the question concerning the difference in cultural contexts becomes extremely crucial in the sense of not merely understanding the nature of human constructs, but also knowing the possibility of their mutual enrichment. The answer to this question has a great deal to do with the issue of incommensurability among cultures.

### **AN ANALYSIS OF THE IDEA OF INCOMMENSURABILITY AMONG CULTURES**

In order to see the function of culture and its influence on constructing human activities, we need to examine first of all the relationship between

culture and science. The analysis of this relationship has to begin with the success of modern science, which is nowadays already a criterion of truth. It is said as a matter of course that whatever is vindicated in the realm of science has the status of being true, whereas other forms of knowledge have to be limited on the basis of this criterion. This approach reiterates its position by holding tight the idea of ontological claims. The reality it contains has the anticipated possibility of being verified as objective and rational; others do not. This approach also admits the involvement of cultural factors in forming what later on may be proved to be 'scientific entities,' but the involvement ends itself as soon as those proposed entities are vindicated on an objective and rational basis. In other words, as all scientific activities have to be proposed initially by humans in specific circumstances, science did have its origin based on cultural factors; this is undeniable. However, though undeniable, scientific entities at later stages detach from their cultural link, not merely because they are vindicated as 'true', but also because they, for some reason that we might not be able to identify in the beginning, are related to 'the material world'. Feyerabend calls this approach 'the separability assumption,' which appears to be something like a principle of realism. Feyerabend says,

A realism that separates being and history and yet assumes that being can be grasped by history is forced to populate being with all the creatures that have been considered and are still being considered by scientists, prophets, and others. To avoid this abundance, some philosophers and scientists made the following move: Scientific entities (and, for that matter, all entities), they said, are projections and thus tied to the theory, the ideology, and the culture that postulates and projects them. The assertion that some things are independent of research, or history, belongs to special projecting mechanisms that "objectivize" their ontology; it makes no sense outside the historical stage that contains the mechanisms. Abundance occurs in history, it does not occur in the world.<sup>30</sup>

This is typically a paragraph of so-called 'scientific objectivity.' According to the view expressed here, science is objective because it eliminates all historical factors and their related ideas on the basis of facts about the material world. Taking an experimental method, it approaches reality, not by imaginative means, but by discovering facts. It is also because of this that many among us today claim that science is superior to all other collections of ideas. Feyerabend finds this claim to be absurd, as there is absolutely no such result that can be attributed to science. Science succeeds not because it unveils the truth of reality, but because it follows 'a path of least resistance.'<sup>31</sup> Science refers to matters which can be examined by experiments – and gods cannot be. Nevertheless, such a reference in no way establishes a superiority of science, simply because nothing is



definitely eliminated by science. Feyerabend proposes four reasons to explain this. First, most of the alternative ideas remain in their debates with science.<sup>32</sup> Second, science can never force people to abandon the view that some natural events such as thunderstorms or earthquakes are divinely explained. Thirdly, science pretends to have excluded subjective elements by its objective claims, without ever creating any effective result. Finally, the prevalence of all scientific theories, even the most confirmed ones, depends on historically determined circumstances. With these four reasons, Feyerabend then concludes his remarks regarding the nature of scientific entities.

Scientists, according to this account, are sculptors of reality... They not merely *act causally* upon the world; they also *create semantic conditions* engendering strong inferences from known effects to novel projections and, conversely, from the projections to testable effects... Every individual, group, and culture tries to arrive at an equilibrium between the entities it posits and leading beliefs, needs, expectations, and ways of arguing. The separability assumption arises in special cases (traditions, cultures); it is not a condition (to be) satisfied by all, and it certainly is not a sound basis for epistemology. Altogether, the dichotomy subjective/objective and the corresponding dichotomy between descriptions and constructions are much too naïve to guide our ideas about the nature and the implications of knowledge claims.<sup>33</sup>

There are several things in this paragraph that need to be analyzed. First of all, scientists are 'sculptors.' Why? It is because they create 'semantic conditions' which are simultaneously also the 'conditions of existence.'<sup>34</sup> These conditions are not merely set for projecting entities to cope with the effects exerted by the world upon us; they are empirical in the sense that they can transform themselves into conditions of testability. This means that whatever is projected forms a unity whose ideas are tested within a close framework. This is precisely what we have seen previously – that science as well as culture exhibit a close intelligibility which characterizes all sorts of conceptual schemes. In brief, there is no easy way to split this close intelligibility of the subjective side and its objective counterpart. There is an inextricably intertwined being which functions like a reality of its own. This reality is qualified to be so because it contains its conditions of existence, which correspond to its 'world' and a life that is adapted to this world. This idea of reality does not limit itself within the realm of science; it applies to all historically developed human groups in which culture should be considered a rather popular case. Now, if culture indeed is something like a 'shaper' which 'shapes' the reality in which we trust, why does it matter?

It matters because it concerns the recognition of rationality. Obviously, extending the realm of knowledge beyond that of science

implies the possibility of employing culture against science. This is precisely the case when R.T. Ames writes that “This critique, meant as it is to free us from “the myth of given,” enables us to consider the possibility of a tradition in which rationality emerges largely as the product of a historical and cultural process.”<sup>35</sup> This point has been clearly addressed by J. Gernet, regarding the difference between Western culture and that of China. Gernet says the Chinese culture is

a global universe where all things – dominant ideas, morality, religion, politics – were mutually related and echoed one another”... [This correlative world of the Chinese contrasts so starkly with our own that we find ourselves] in the presence of a different kind of humanity... The lack of those mental categories which we take to be constitutive of all rational thought does not imply an essential inferiority, but rather different modalities of thought, the strength and flexibility of which may, on further consideration, be seen as advantages.<sup>36</sup>

The possible advantages inferred from distinct modes of cultures are obviously mutual in the sense that each might have advantages over the other. However, the substantial point here has less to do with advantages than with differences. According to Ames, the differences between the Chinese and the Western cultures are essential, fundamental and comprehensive.

In classical Western epistemology, a distinction between object and an idea is assumed. Idea is a representation of the essential structure of the object in the subject. Essentialistic “things” can be explained by causal chains, and allow for the isolation of reasons or causes. Language mediates this distinction between object and subject, and derives its meaning and its clarity as the articulation of what is essential in the world for the mind. Language is not reality, but is an instrument for capturing and explaining what is univocal and essential about it... In the Confucian world, there is not the familiar disjunction between reality and the concrete world of phenomena. There is an unbroken line between image as what is real, and image as the presentation (not re-presentation) of what is real, and image as the meaning of what is real. Image is *reality*.<sup>37</sup>

The main point is revealed at the end of this paragraph: *reality*. It is *real* in the sense of employing language as an instrument to *represent* reality, and it is also *real* in the sense of employing image to *present* reality. Their difference is our concern here, and all claims made on the basis of this *realistic interpretation* are fundamentally ontological; they are true in the sense of refusing to be overthrown by other claims made on the basis of another point of view (be it an alien language or another ‘reality’). This is

also pointed out by Alasdair MacIntyre who says: “it becomes clear that each has its own internal structure in terms of which these are understood.”<sup>38</sup> About the discrepancy between the Confucian and Aristotelian moral systems as being an example of incommensurability, he writes:

Each system has its own standard and measures of interpretation, explanation, and justification internal to itself... There are indeed no shared standards and measures external to both systems and neutral between them, to which appeal might be made to adjudicate between their rival claims. The two systems of thought and practice are incommensurable in the sense made familiar to us by Thomas Kuhn – the concept, if not the word, was anticipated both by Bachelard and by Polanyi, and has in the last thirty years in various conceptual guises played a key part in the writings not only of Kuhn and Feyerabend, but also of Foucault and Deleuze.<sup>39</sup>

This paragraph is a natural consequence of the fact that, if no shared standards exist between two distinct systems, then the idea of incommensurability immediately applies. Despite the idea that culture sets up a realistic scheme from which human constructs are derived as ‘real entities,’ the communication between the two languages concerned, even with the same reference like an expression of morality, does not refer to the same ‘thing.’ In this regard, we think that MacIntyre makes a good comparison between the Confucian and the Aristotelian moralist. He writes:

While both the Confucian and the Aristotelian moralist will see and report one and the same person giving freely and liberally to someone else in need, the Confucian may observe an absence of *li*, of that ritual formality which is an essential characteristic of *jen*, a type of absence necessarily invisible to the Aristotelian, who has no words in either Aristotle’s Greek or William of Moerbeke’s Latin to translate *li*, an expression captured neither by such Greek words as *hosia*, *orgia*, or *teletai* used of religious rituals, nor by such words as *ethos*, signifying the customary and habitual, nor by their medieval Latin equivalents. By contrast, the Aristotelian will observe an example of a disposition evidencing a particular ordering or disorder of the *psyche*, a conformity or lack of it to what is required of a citizen of a *polis*, both understood in terms of an ultimate *telos* conceived in a highly specific way, all of which must be invisible to the Confucian who has no words for *psyche* or *polis* either in the ancient Chinese of Confucius or in the later Chinese of Sung Neo-Confucianism.<sup>40</sup>

The example of morality is optimal in providing an instance that characterizes the most pervasive phenomena a culture can offer. This

instance is particularly significant to us because moral judgments are simultaneously both 'culture-dependent' and 'absolutely valid' in the society concerned. The paradox exerted by the two contradictory ideas of cultural dependence and absolute validity is obvious, yet the fact is equally evident whenever a moral judgment is considered. We might be able to say that, in all cultures, there is no single moral judgment made in a cultural context that can be amended without running through a kind of revolution similar to that of superseding an incommensurable system. In other words, no moral judgment would invalidate itself by taking the ideas of someone belonging to a rival system. This paradox manifests fully that culture could play a role of 'phenomenalization,' which turns parts of the material world into 'reality'. The paragraph by MacIntyre cited above clearly demonstrates this thesis, by unveiling the following three points which depict practically the incommensurable status between Confucian and Aristotelian morality.

The first point refers to a person whose actions and their ethical significance can be interpreted in terms of both systems with entirely different meanings. We might be able to identify this person as a part of 'the material world' which exists before any linguistic formulation, yet the moral judgments added to his or her actions depend mostly on the culture to which he or she belongs. The second point is that the language designates what is to be determined as morally correct and actually sets the limit for the application of the rules in terms of the 'reality' portrayed in the culture. The third point is the reference of the ideas of 'visibility' and 'invisibility'; something would not be visible unless it is real. The same idea applies to the validity of moral judgments. They would not be able to have a normative function unless they really oblige people to carry out the actions which they are required to do according to the judgments. These three points demonstrate altogether that a person's actions can be morally interpreted by two modes of thinking which do not overlap or share meanings. This vindicates strongly the claim that the tenacity of culture and its influential factors are so concrete that, once they appear in linguistic form referring to someone's actions, their effectiveness is as real as physical force. With this vindication, we see that this effectiveness is 'real' in the sense that it can cause physical damage to whoever contravenes the rules.

#### **AN EMPIRICAL DEMONSTRATION OF THE REALISTIC EFFECT OF CULTURE**

A realistic interpretation of culture would not make much sense unless it were empirically testable. The test is certainly not carried out by examining cultures of all kinds, but by offering examples within one's own cultural context. After all, if theoretical analysis conveys the image that culture functions like a 'shaper,' then we should be able to show empirically the extent to which our ideas are 'shaped' as parts of reality. In view of this objective, the Chinese culture to which I belong has a particular familiarity. And as a matter of fact, Chinese culture does demonstrate a very different

picture of ideas in contrast to that of the West. The difference itself is decisive, because it shows the ‘shaped influence’ of the concerned cultures. This is made rather explicit by MacIntyre referring to Confucian (viz. the “backbone” of Chinese culture) and Aristotelian thinking about virtues.

For that harmony of vision into which, on the Confucian view, each individual has to integrate his own insights as constitutive parts of a harmony underlying the practice of the virtues, a practice whose claims are universal, even if the universal envisaged is very different from, for example, an Aristotelian conception of rational universality, is quite alien to this modern individualism of aestheticized personal choice, in which each person constructs his or her own *collage*.<sup>41</sup>

Here our concern is not whether we too can extract the Confucian idea of harmony from Aristotelian ethics, but the fact that the two moral systems are very different. Moreover, they are distinct fundamentally in the sense that, while Western culture from its early stages holds firm the idea of individualism, Chinese culture pursued the idea of collective harmony. Though this difference is made rather popular by the commonsensical image concerning the distinct behaviours of the Chinese and people of the West, it may still sound too theoretical to give us a practical picture. In order to fully demonstrate the difference shaped by two underlying cultures, we need a conflict which demonstrates the difference on empirical, practical and even daily levels. Such a conflict is available by looking at the example of the disagreement over ‘Asian values,’ first proposed by Lee Kuan Yew, the former Prime Minister of Singapore, and then criticized by Chris Patten, the last British viceroy of Hong Kong, which was a British colony until 1997.

In order to see their disagreement more clearly, it is important to digress a bit, by looking back over what we have argued so far. We have basically argued for two points, undermining the generally-held superiority of science in contrast to other forms of knowledge. First, science is not superior to other cultures because it also contains theories which function like any form of a ‘close intelligibility.’ Second, science itself can in no way claim its validity by it ‘corresponding with the world,’ for there is no way to establish such a correspondence. So, we concluded that the truth of science is founded on the basis of a mode of reasoning like that of other disciplines: they all manifest their own ‘reality’ in which the presumed entities are portrayed as true because of their coherence. There can be as many realities as there are forms of close intelligibility. It is in this regard that the long-held superiority of science – and its universalism – have been undermined in this paper.

The disagreement between Lee and Patten is relevant to the undermining of universalism in general and the challenge of the universal validity of democracy in particular.<sup>42</sup> This is mainly due to the non-Western

style of development, particularly social and economic, taking place in East Asian countries or regions like Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. With the exception of Japan, these places have been labeled 'newly industrialized regions' since 1980s (the so-called "Four Dragons").<sup>43</sup> Moreover, they are all mainly influenced by Confucian culture. The juxtaposition of these two facts (i.e., the socio-economic success and the Confucian influences) in these regions does not necessarily establish a causal link, yet it conveys a message that there is a new mode of development on the rise. What is crucial is the fact that this is a non-Western sort of development. Despite the fact that there is no way to give an simple explanation – that they all come from the same model of development – the attribution of the Confucian influence on the peoples living in these regions is evident; so are their cultural characteristics.

On the basis of these phenomena of social development and economic success and on these personal characteristics, Lee draws an important conclusion. He adopts a stance which he called "Asian Values."<sup>44</sup> With this stance, Lee intended to confirm, justify, and even legitimize his ruling in Singapore, which is featured by social cohesion, economic success, and alas, political elitism. In brief, Lee attempted to confirm his achievements in Singapore by offering a new model of development and modernization, distinguished from the (then) only other model available: the Western model. His disagreement with the last viceroy of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, begins here too. Though the British did not implement democracy in Hong Kong during a hundred-year long colonization, Patten held firm his belief that social development and economic success go hand in hand with political democracy. While Patten did what he believed was right by insisting on democratic reform in Hong Kong, criticisms spread accusing the British of the intention to undercut the Chinese insistence on economic development at the cost of human rights and democratic values. Though it might appear hypocritical, the whole project of Patten was defended on a strong basis, i.e., the universal validity of democracy. Obviously, Lee opposed this.

The disagreement would not have become a serious one if it was simply an issue between the 'universal' model of development, and the Asian exceptions. The issue became a point of pivotal attention because both Lee and Patten argued based on the cultural differences between the Western and Confucian traditions. Their arguments boiled down to the following: how should we interpret the exception of development in Asia on the world stage? Patten would insist that, without political and economic freedom, a high level of development and success is merely a matter of contingency, whereas Lee would hold that, with the Confucian characteristics of political obedience, social relations and hard-work, development and success are matter of natural consequence. Obviously, with regard to the conditions of political and economic freedom, whether socio-economic development turns out to be a consequence of contingency or necessity is clearly beyond what we can deal with here in this short

paper. However, the very existence of the disagreement fully manifests what we intend to prove concerning a realistic interpretation of culture.

The realistic interpretation of culture has apparently contradictory implications. It implies on the one hand that all ideas as well as entities are 'phenomenalized' by being portrayed in accordance with a close and coherent intelligibility. On the other hand, the same ideas and entities are presented as being physical forces, as they are matters of truth for being 'absolutely real' to the advancement of life. If we may put this contradiction in a simpler way, we should say that 'cultural dependence' and 'absolute reality' are actually not in conflict, as they are included in a general framework which is characterized by being coherent and close. This does not mean that whatever comes out of this apparent contradiction is blind to the other modes of thinking; it says only that whatever is held to be real needs to be intelligible within a certain context. This context refers to a long tradition shaping its people to forge a distinct culture. It does not need to be theoretical or academic, but only to be accepted among its people. This fact explains why the sociologist Peter Berger would call Lee's program in Singapore 'vulgar Confucianism' referring to "a set of beliefs and values motivating the man-in-the-street."<sup>45</sup>

'Vulgar Confucianism' – though the term probably sounds inappropriate from an academic and theoretical point of view (MacIntyre's comparison between the Confucian and Aristotelian ideas of virtues being a perfect example, corresponding presumably with the taste of intellectuals and academics) – completely fits the realistic interpretation we intend to stress in this paper. The reason is rather obvious for, when we talk about something realistically, it would not be true unless its effectiveness is pervasive and widespread. For this particular concern, the academic interpretation would be much less effective than the popular version of the culture concerned. So, what is the cultural effectiveness taking place that K.Y. Lee has in mind?

First of all, it manifests itself in the comparison with an alternative – American values, in this case. When talking about the role played by a successful government in the West, Lee compares its function of taking care of its people to the role played by the family in Chinese culture. Take the example of single mothers. Lee thinks that a capable government of this kind encourages families of single mothers to believe the government will replace the vacuum left by an absent father. "This is a bold, Huxleyan view of life", says Lee, "but one from which I as an East Asian shy away."<sup>46</sup> Moreover, "You will find this view widely shared in East Asia," adds Lee. In fact, his view has passed through generations, on the basis of cultural inheritance. He says,

There is a little Chinese aphorism which encapsulates this idea: *Xiushen qijia zhiguo pingtianxia* means look after yourself, cultivate yourself, do everything to make yourself useful. *Qijia*, look after the family; *Zhiguo*, look after your country; *Pingtianxia*,

all is peaceful under heaven. We have a whole people immersed in these beliefs. My grand-daughter has the name *Xiu-qi*. My son picked out the first two words, instructing his daughter to cultivate herself and look after her family. It is the basic concept of our civilization.<sup>47</sup>

So, this view has passed through generations in Lee's own family, and popular culture demonstrates this in general in the following characters: it is a culture that does place much value in learning and scholarship, hard work and thrift, and deferment of present enjoyment for future gain. Singapore shows an example of outstanding success achieved by the majority of its people belonging to a culture characterized by these values. The case of Taiwan to which I belong also demonstrates similarities with this to a great extent. All the above-mentioned values are familiar in Taiwan and are present among the people I encounter on a daily basis. They all come from the same cultural system, which is very different from that of the West. What is most important of all is the fact that Chinese people adhere to these beliefs and values and give them with high praise. Unless we recognise this as a realistic interpretation of culture, this adherence of such a strong degree would not be possible. This is also clearly seen by F. Zakaria:

The dominant theme throughout our conversation was culture. Lee returned again and again to his views on the importance of culture and the difference between Confucianism and Western values. Culture is in. In this respect, Lee is very much part of a trend. From business consultants to military strategists, people talk about culture as the deepest and most determinative aspect of human life.<sup>48</sup>

We would say from this paragraph that Lee is not merely a part of a trend, but is one who sees the world as it is projected or shaped by his embedded culture. Confucian culture does stress the possibility of combining both, going beyond and remaining within the socio-historical context in its practical concerns for daily life – and so do other cultures.

## CONCLUSION

If culture by its very nature sets up a reality in which all human-constructed entities are perceived to be real, then why should we bother to offer a realistic argument here? Isn't it trivially true that whatever exists must be portrayed by an underlying culture which not only determines its form but also its physical nature? The answers to these questions are rather complicated in the sense that, if we live in a primitive and underdeveloped world, then a deterministic interpretation does make sense. It would hard for the ancient Chinese to think or even to imagine that there might be an alternative way of life which is equally fruitful and even superior. However,



in the globalized world, such a ‘determinism’ is by all means misleading. The realistic interpretation of culture situated in the globalized world is not meant to obstruct communication. Instead, it is meant to fortify the confidence of the so-called non-scientific cultures whose creative ideas have been limited violently on the basis of scientific standards. We have argued in this paper that there is no such set of standards that can be employed to arbitrate other forms of knowledge. At the same time, we are also certain that each culture contains its unique creativity within a close intelligibility. If these theses are well established, then further communication is not only a matter of course, but of necessity. A culture would certainly stagnate if its people did not attempt to advance and progress. No one wishes to remain stagnant in the new era of globalization, yet a realistic interpretation can raise the attention of other peoples and remind them of the relevance of the culture concerned. Rather than have one culture be replaced with a new, indifferent and remote culture, the significance of the realistic interpretation of culture lies not in maintaining a distinct culture, but in winning confidence in confronting other cultures. This is likely to be the case as K.Y. Lee writes: “The West is uncertain whether this huge nation (China) will be good or bad for the world. The tension will only be solved when both sides approximate each other’s worldviews and accept that *they will never have identical cultural values*” (italics mine).<sup>49</sup>

*Department of Philosophy  
National Taiwan University  
Taipei, Taiwan*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, in the absence of a short and succinct definition, reference to ‘philosophy of science’ and ‘the post-positivistic philosophy of science’ does not intend to include everything there is within these two fields. The two fields referred to here have a close relevance with the tradition of logical positivism on the one hand, and its critics on the other. Among the critics, philosophers such as Quine, Kuhn, Hanson and Feyerabend play roles of crucial importance. For a compact yet concise introduction regarding these critiques, see P. William Bechtel and Eric Stiffler, “Observationality: Quine and the Epistemological Nihilists,” *PSA: Proceedings of the Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association*, Volume One: Contributed Papers (1978), pp. 93-108,

<sup>2</sup> This has its origin in the Vienna Circle, as the “protocol sentences debates” concerning the nature of observation sentences within the context of the theory of meaning. For more detail, see H. Lauener, “Neurath’s Protocol Sentences and Schlick’s “*Konstatierungen*” versus Quine’s Observation Sentences,” in *Perspectives on Quine*, ed. R. Barrett and R. Gibson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 131-150.

<sup>3</sup> The idea of “Stability Thesis” is borrowed from P. Feyerabend,

*Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method. Philosophical Papers, Vol. I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Verificationism’ has for long been considered a ‘hallmark’ of logical positivism. However, its meaning and reference were never clear enough to represent a uniform view. The main supporter of verificationism in logical positivism is A.J. Ayer, who introduced logical positivism to the English-speaking world in 1936. However, the controversies he raised by the application of the idea of verificationism have not decreased since then. For more detail, see I. Lakatos, “Lectures on Scientific Method” in *For and Against Method*, ed. M. Motterlini (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 19-109, and I. Hacking, *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Quine does not endorse the position of Hanson and Kuhn. He even called them ‘cultural relativists’ and ‘epistemological nihilists’ (not including Feyerabend, whose philosophy occupies an essential part of this paper). Quine’s criticism is based on his insistence on the scientific nature, in which the assent or dissent to an empirical stimulus necessarily forms an essential part of sensory prediction among theoretical hypotheses. See W. V. O. Quine, “Epistemology Naturalized,” in *Ontological Relativity & Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 69-90.

<sup>6</sup> The details of these historical and methodological concerns of Feyerabend are well recorded in his autobiography. See P. Feyerabend, *Killing Time* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> The development of Feyerabend’s ‘pluralistic methodology’ is rather complicated in the sense that it combines many of the ideas he developed throughout the decades in his lifelong career. Details can be found in J. J. Yuann, “A Naturalistic Approach to Scientific Methodology: A Comparative Study of O. Neurath and P. Feyerabend” in *Naturalized Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (Rodopi Philosophical Studies Volume 7)*, ed. Chienkuo Mi and Ruey-lin Chen (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 171-196. See also P. Feyerabend, *Killing Time*, *op. cit.* That Feyerabend’s works reveal an aura of Popper’s philosophy is commonly accepted, and with regard to his analysis of Kraft’s philosophy, see Feyerabend, “Review of *Erkenntnislehre* by V. Kraft,” *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 13 (1963), pp. 319-323.

<sup>8</sup> P. Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: Verso, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> E. Zahar, “Feyerabend on Observation and Empirical Content,” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 33 (1982), pp. 397-401.

<sup>10</sup> There is no better philosophy than K. Popper’s to represent this pervasive idea. Popper says: “I do not regard methodology as an empirical discipline, to be tested perhaps, by the facts of the history of science. It is, rather, a philosophical – a metaphysical – discipline, perhaps partly even a normative proposal.” See K. Popper, *Realism and the Aim of Science* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. xxv. Popper also says: “I assert that *we know* what a good scientific theory should be like... provided it passes certain

crucial tests. And it is this (meta-scientific) knowledge which makes it possible to speak of progress in science and of a rational choice between theories". I draw the reader's attention to the idea of "meta-scientific knowledge" in contrast to Feyerabend's emphasis on "historical practices." Equally important concerning this contrast is the opposition between Popper and Feyerabend as, while the former stresses the "prescriptive" nature of science, the latter would hold science by its very nature "descriptive". K. Popper, "Truth, Rationality, and the Growth of Knowledge," in *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge, 1963), p. 217.

<sup>11</sup> P. Feyerabend, "Problems of Empiricism," in R. G. Colodny ed., *Beyond the Edge of Certainty: Essays in Contemporary Science and Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 145-260, at p. 194.

<sup>12</sup> Feyerabend, "Problems of Empiricism," pp. 198-9.

<sup>13</sup> N. R. Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Feyerabend's publishing career begins with an abbreviated version of his Ph. D. thesis, "An Attempt at a Realistic Interpretation of Experience" (reprinted in *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method*, pp. 17-36) and ends with "Realism," in *Artifacts, Representations, and Social Practice* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), pp. 205-22.

<sup>15</sup> Undoubtedly, there are many sorts of realism in divergent contexts. Yet, the apparent implication of the term is used to designate what Popper would call "metaphysical realism". According to Popper, it refers to the following: "The idea of approximation to the truth presupposes a *realistic view of the world*. It does *not* presuppose that reality is as our scientific theories describe it; but it does presuppose that there is a reality and that we and our theories can draw closer and closer to an adequate description of reality, if we employ [the method of trial and error]". See K. Popper, *All Life is Problem Solving* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Feyerabend, *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method*, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> Feyerabend, *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method*, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> J. Tsou, "Reconsidering Feyerabend's Anarchism," in *Perspective on Science*, Vol. 11 (2003), pp. 208-235, at p. 218.

<sup>19</sup> Tsou, "Reconsidering Feyerabend's Anarchism," p. 219.

<sup>20</sup> Feyerabend, "Problems of Empiricism," p. 149 (my italics).

<sup>21</sup> Feyerabend's 'principle of proliferation' is: "Invent and elaborate theories which are inconsistent with the accepted point of view, even if the latter should happen to be highly confirmed and generally accepted". See P. Feyerabend, "Reply to Criticism: Comments on Smart, Sellars and Putnam," in his *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 105.

<sup>22</sup> Feyerabend, "Problems of Empiricism," p. 217.

<sup>23</sup> P. Feyerabend, "Knowledge and the Role of Theories," in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 18 (1988), p. 157-178, at p. 157.

<sup>24</sup> Feyerabend, "Knowledge and the Role of Theories," p. 158.

<sup>25</sup> Feyerabend, *Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method*, p. 105.

<sup>26</sup> Though we did not include R. Carnap, the pivotal figure of logical positivism, in the camp of post-positivistic philosophers of science – doing so would be literally contradictory – the affinities between Carnap's philosophy of linguistic frameworks (see his "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology" in *Meaning and Necessity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 205-221) and Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions are well-documented. This fact alleviates the misleading opposition between Kuhn's theory and that of logical positivism, represented by Carnap. See M. Friedman, "Kuhn and Logical Empiricism," in T. Nickles (ed.), *Thomas Kuhn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 19-44.

<sup>27</sup> P. Feyerabend, "Knowledge and the Role of Theories", *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>28</sup> Norwood Russell Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> P. Feyerabend, *The Conquest of Abundance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 132.

<sup>30</sup> Feyerabend, *The Conquest of Abundance*, p. 139.

<sup>31</sup> Feyerabend, *The Conquest of Abundance*, p. 142.

<sup>32</sup> The example offered by Feyerabend in this regard should be read in view of the fact that the import of the so-called body-mind problem has never been reduced by the rapid advancement of neurophysiology. Another example that comes to mind is the widespread interest in the dialogue between science and religion, notably between the top-ranking representatives of both fields.

<sup>33</sup> Feyerabend, *The Conquest of Abundance*, p. 144.

<sup>34</sup> Feyerabend, *The Conquest of Abundance*, p. 146.

<sup>35</sup> R. Ames, "Meaning as Imaging", in *Culture and Modernity*, ed. E. Deutsch (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), p. 234.

<sup>36</sup> The quotation is actually cited from R. Ames, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-3 and the details of J. Gernet's words are from Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 242 and 247.

<sup>37</sup> Ames, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>38</sup> A. MacIntyre, "Incommensurability, Truth, and the Conversation between Confucians and Aristotelians about the Virtues", in *Culture and Modernity*, ed. E. Deutsch (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), p. 108.

<sup>39</sup> MacIntyre, "Incommensurability, Truth, and the Conversation between Confucians and Aristotelians about the Virtues," p. 109. There is no need here to explain all the names mentioned in this paragraph. The only thing we might note in mentioning all these names is that they all share similar ideas of Feyerabend (with regard to the systematic difference in

thinking), whose thought constitutes an essential part of this work. However, another interesting point might be the fact that some of the names (such as G. Bachelard, M. Foucault, and G. Deleuze) belong to French 'post-modernism,' which is literally meant to go against its modernistic predecessor. M. Polanyi's exposition in *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958) has for long been considered a classic. The reason why it is mentioned here is due to the stress in this book that, in all knowledge conceived on the basis of personal experience, there is always a 'tacit part' escaping from total encapsulation. Obviously, this 'escape' reminds us of the similar idea of incommensurability.

<sup>40</sup> MacIntyre, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>41</sup> MacIntyre, p. 115.

<sup>42</sup> This depiction of the disagreement concentrates on C. Patten, *East and West: China, Power, and the Future of Asia* (New York: Times Books, 1998) and F. Zakaria, "Culture Is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, no. 2 (March/April, 1994), pp. 109-126. Those interested in a more detailed exposition of this disagreement can refer to Ming-Huei Lee, "The Confucian Tradition and Modernization of East Asia", in *The Political Thought within the Confucian Vision* (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2005), pp. 181-222. Also because our objective of demonstrating this 'disagreement' is to show an example of culturally- determined reality, we do not delve deeply into the counterarguments made by Patten who takes clearly a stance of universalism in confronting Lee's particularistic view made on the basis of the Confucian culture.

<sup>43</sup> Rajeshwari Ghose, "Design, Development, Culture, and Cultural Legacies in Asia," *Design Issues*, Vol. 6 (1989), pp. 31-48, at p. 33.

<sup>44</sup> Although Lee called the stance 'Asian Values', he focused on East Asia in order to make a distinction among various regions existing in Asia as a whole. According to MH Lee, when K.Y. Lee mentioned East Asia, the region he had in mind was 'the cultural circle of Confucianism', referring to regions have long been under Confucian influence. Ming-Huei Lee, "The Confucian Tradition and Modernization of East Asia", p. 184.

<sup>45</sup> 'Vulgar Confucianism' is a term proposed by P. Berger in his conference paper "Secularity: West and East" published in *Cultural Identity and Modernization in Asia Countries: the Centenary Conference of Kokugakuin University* (Japan). A copy of this conference paper is available on the internet: <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/berger.html> The beliefs and values Berger mentions here are: "... a deep sense of hierarchy, a quasi-total commitment to one's family, and overall norms of discipline, frugality and benevolence of one's own. These beliefs and values form a common heritage of East-asian culture."

<sup>46</sup> See K.Y. Lee's interview with F. Zakaria, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>47</sup> F. Zakaria, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-4.

<sup>48</sup> F. Zakaria, *op. cit.*, p. 125. We have to be fair to Zakaria as he does

not agree with Lee concerning the ‘determinative’ role played by the idea of culture. However, as the purpose of citing them is to manifest an effective example of the realistic interpretation of culture, we can leave their disagreement behind, by demonstrating simply that it is plausible to implement the ideas of this paper at the level of daily life.

<sup>49</sup> K Y. Lee, “Two Images of China,” in *Forbes Asia Magazine*, 06.16, 2008.

## CHAPTER VII

# REHABILITATING VALUE: QUESTIONS OF MEANING AND ADEQUACY

KARIM CROW

It is indispensable that man's attention move from the meaning (*al-ma'na*) to the wording (*al-lafz*) more than it move from the term to the meaning, for in reality the wording does not evince the meaning save by the mediation of the 'form' of that meaning in the 'heart' (*illa bi-wasit jati sju rati dha lika l-ma'na fi l-qalb*); when the form of the meaning is not ascertained in the heart, the meaning can never be grasped through the wording [al-Ra'ghib al-Isfahani (11<sup>th</sup> cent.), *al-Dhari'ah*, ed. Abu Zayd al-'Ajami, p. 124]

Spirit in the body is like Meaning in the word  
(*al-ru'uh fi l-jasad ka-l-ma'na fi l-lafz*.)  
– 'Ali (7<sup>th</sup> cent.)  
[Sala al-Din al-Safadi, *Sharh Lamiyah al-'Ajam*  
(Cairo: 1290 H) II p. 133]

## INTRODUCTION

How the language of Scripture and Tradition embedded in revealed texts or sacred writings, and in the foundational narratives supporting pre-modern world-views, may be understood and applied today remains a major issue for the world religions. Traditional articulations of religious conceptions and past modes of discourse now appear inadequate for meeting sweeping global challenges facing most human societies. Increasingly, thinking people of faith seek to re-awaken and re-appropriate essential religious teachings through creatively transformative understandings yielding more *meaningful* ways of addressing problems raised by our global reality — in relation to pervasive material and cultural conditions. The axis around which these attempts revolve is twofold: First: recovering primary values of universal true validity, and recognizing which disciplines and individuals really possess the authority to enunciate application of such values in the context of specific conditions prevailing within our societies. Secondly: recovering the deep essential intelligibility of Knowledge and Virtue at the heart of the endeavour to more fully realize our humanity. These two efforts are intertwined and should not be pursued separately.

Such awakened awareness involves a creative adjustment and appreciation of new modes and applications of knowledge in our age — without doing violence to the genuine modes of knowing and being that provided strength and versatility in the past and which potentially offer resources that may aid us now. This mode of self-awareness involves training the imagination to *live* the creative process received from within our own traditions of learning, practice, and organization so as to see and to grasp what is most adequate to our task, discriminating what remains ‘moist’ and viable from what has dried out becoming ‘brittle’ and no longer adequate or needing to be discarded or archived.

Approaches embedded in past models may be contrasted with those arising from specific cultural and political realities of our modern age — an era posing unprecedented changes signalling a rupture from the past. We shall take as our model of pre-modern (traditional) experience the Islamic intellectual and spiritual teaching-discipline,<sup>1</sup> and seek to draw out its relevance for peoples and cultures when searching for more *adequate* ways of invoking religious teachings in response to contemporary needs. Ideally we would pursue a double path by first invoking instructive models from the past, and then demonstrating in what manner such previous efforts achieved more adequate modes of conceptualization and application during their particular eras, thereby pointing to modes of activity required for us to accomplish a parallel task. An example of such a model might be the work of Abu H{a}mid al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE). Here we only have space to briefly suggest these tasks, and our remarks resemble more of a partial skeleton than a full bodied entity.

The promise inherent in comprehending past modes of conceptualization and application may assist efforts by individuals and leading circles for awakening a fuller adequacy of traditional ideas and values. Such awakening has the potential to facilitate wise solutions to personal, societal, regional and international problems, and to meet the challenge of inhabiting our individual and communal humanity more fully. However, this potential is conditioned by the manner with which permanent values are grasped and brought to life within individuals and by extension throughout their societies and polities.

## VALUE

Values are essential for revitalizing the universal rather than the national or particular (exclusivist) side of religious identity. Values are critical for nurturing a faith-commitment that affirms the unity and dignity of the fullness of human life. The primary values upheld, for example, by leading Muslim exponents in their experiential teachings embrace: Oneness of The Real */tawhidi*; Security and Peace, Justice, Knowledge (with its hierarchy of knowers and their authority), and Integrity and Purity of Soul [‘virtue’] through cultivating and practicing praiseworthy character traits — with these values embodied in the psychic and intellective substance of



individuals [Soul], radiating through their community and beyond into the world.

By ‘values’ we mean those ethical attitudes and immaterial ideals that sincere conviction implants into humans through their family upbringing, training, education, and life experiences – attitudes and ideals which may grow into interior motivating impulses expressed through actions. Values possess a practical force operating deep within the human at the level of conscience and will. Values operate first and foremost by the inner willing of conscience, and are manifested outwardly in praiseworthy character traits and admirable models for behavior. This practical dimension of ethical endeavor and moral-volition is termed the faculty of *conation* (that is to say, volition and will-power). Ethics (in Arabic: the *Akhlaq* or *Mahjasin* /‘virtuous character-traits’) is the domain of Practical Reason or ‘prudential mind’ (*‘aql ‘amali* in Islamic terminology) involving the faculty or power of conation. Conative power denotes the impulse or striving to change one’s behavior and act in accordance with both the *directives of inner conscience* arising from within the innate constitution of the created person, as well as of *outer guidance* or revealed imperatives received from without.

Furthermore, the human attitudes and ideals prompting actions, and which are mediated by values, possess an intellectual or *cognitive* power shaping the worldview and discourse of humans collectively forming a cultural community functioning for a definite purpose within the created order. For Islam, these two related aspects of values are bound together through *Knowledge*: the *conative* faith-induced dimension of knowledge yielding conviction and moral-volition through the operation of human intelligence embedded in conscience, being intimately joined with the *cognitive* or perceiving or knowing dimension operated by our intelligence. A closely related pair of Islamic notions expressing these two dimensions is the joining of *Righteous Action* (*al-‘amal al-salih*) with *Beneficial Knowledge* (*al-‘ilm al-na‘ifi*): knowledge and practice must go hand in hand for values to become truly operative and effective in human experience. Here is an example of what we have just stated concerning the conative and cognitive dimensions of value. In an utterance by the Shi‘ite imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq (d. 765), the term ‘understanding or cognition’ /*ma‘rifah* is employed in conjunction with ‘activity or practice’ /*amal*:

God accepts (a person’s) practice only (if performed) with ‘cognizance’/illa> *bi-ma‘rifatin*, and (God accepts a person’s) cognition only (if accompanied) by practice. Whomever knows/*arafa*, the cognition directs them to the practice; and whomever does not practice, that person has no *ma‘rifah* /cognition...<sup>2</sup>

Islam teaches that the true origin of universal human values mirrors or reflects the transcendent source of all that is ‘valuable’, that the

permanent enduring values safeguarding our true humanity are sourced in the divine. The highest human values possess true value only because they spring from a transcendent source and help to draw us closer to the ultimate source of Being, Existence, and Value. A well-known tradition of the Prophet Muh}ammad (Sf) counsels us to “*Adorn yourself with the virtuous character traits of God /takhalluq bi-akhla>qi lla>hi*” as the chief path to authentic service and inner realization. This fundamental insight insists that the transcendent source of values is the true reason why they are deemed universal and permanent, and objectively to be sought and practiced by all humans. Another way of stating this is to affirm the complementarity of right thought and right activity, or intellectual perfection and moral perfection, or awakened intelligence and ethical action. But here we simply say that cognition and conation are integral to actualising the fullness of human nature, and that realization of value requires their conjoined functioning.

The universal values upheld and taught should be clearly evident and displayed in the lived practice of their practitioners, their exemplars or living examples. Otherwise, one is dealing with hypocrisy, with hollow words lacking any conative force failing to touch and move us from within, thereby failing to manifest outwardly in any substantive change of behavior. Contemporary Scientism [physicalism] universalized by Euro-American inspired modernity is deficient in both the quantity and quality of the bond that arranges universal values into an authoritative hierarchy.

### **ANTHROPOCOSMIC AND ANTHROPOSOPHIC**

In general, the traditional (pre-modern) worldviews embedded in religious cultures with elaborated intellectual and spiritual disciplines were concerned with realizing knowledge in four domains: metaphysics – or apprehension of The One Real [Being, First Principle, Absolute, God]; cosmology; spiritual psychology; and ethics.<sup>3</sup> These are four complementary domains: investigation of the cosmos yields insight into the interior world of spiritual psychology, while apprehension of metaphysics and cosmology leads to grasping the true nature of the human ‘soul’, and proper prehension of ‘soul science’ returns the Self to the ground of Being.

We may also invoke the venerable conviction of the uterine inter-relatedness of the celestial, cosmic, and human orders. And as most of us know, the modern heedlessness or ignorance over understanding the Self as a ‘unified field’ for energy-activity-awareness conjoining cosmos and soul as both object and subject at once, has led humans to falsify the relations between self, people, and nature.

In order to avoid the traps of exclusivist parochial dogmatism and of the ideology<sup>4</sup> characteristic of our modernities, we must each individually recover for ourselves a proper understanding of our own nature. William Chittick states:

...in order to know the proper way of acting in the world and living out our human embodiment, we must know what the world signifies to us. In order to know the significance of things, we must know our own nature and our own proper destiny. In order to know our own nature, we must know the self that knows.<sup>5</sup>

What is knowledge for? What is the proper role and qualitative context of human thought? There is a very real discrimination between two fundamental modes of knowing involving distinct faculties or energies:

First, we can speak of transmitted knowledge employing instrumental rationality [viz., the 'brain'], viewing the world as a collection of objects, which understands knowledge as the means to control nature, society, and the body; thus, humans seek control and power over creation by means of the technological application of knowledge and exclusive reliance on instrumental reason.

Second, there is direct unmediated knowledge which transpires by awakening and actualizing human innate intelligence ['heart' and 'spirit'... light: Arabic *'aql, qalb & ru>h*} ... *nu>r*] forming the peculiarly special perceptive-understanding power of our interior self [soul or mind]. Such prehension is termed 'realization' */tah}qi>q* in Islamic teaching – in contrast to the 'imitative' mode of transmitted knowledge termed *taqli>d*. Philosophy with its metaphysic of 'soul-science' was particularly interested in ways of activating the human potential for realized intelligence or 'heart'; contemporary Euro-American 'philosophy' does not know of, or admit, this reality anymore, but speaks of neurophysiological cognition in terms of measurable physical events. To say more about this might mislead and confuse meaning, so I let another speak for me: "Only what is known in the depths of the soul without intermediary is intellectual in the proper sense of the word ... the only locus of intellectual knowledge is the knowing self."<sup>6</sup> Nor should we forget that transmitted knowledge, since it exists embedded in a specific cultural matrix conditioned by habits of mind solidified within its own 'priesthoods' molded by socio-political factors and self-interested needs, frequently becomes a veil preventing attempts to actualize true realized intelligence. A fine example of this is the description provided by the 11<sup>th</sup> century authority al-Ghaza>li> (d. 1111), in his analysis of the famous tradition that seventy thousand veils of light and darkness separate God from His creatures.<sup>7</sup>

'Realized Intelligence' exploits both the critical powers of reason and employs the imagination through envisioning 'things' as signs and symbols of The One Real (seeing the 'Face of God' everywhere and in everything, as the Qur'a>n states). Intelligence may be rationalist and symbolist together, and it may resuscitate the mythic imagination by restoring the creative power of symbolic and mythic discourse which lies at the heart of traditional religious language (profoundly imbued with anthropomorphic imagery). This mode of trans-rational apprehension vehiculed by the human soul when actualized as 'realized intelligence'

enables one to erase the boundary between the literal and figurative meanings of sacred texts, and go beyond this by affirming a reality for the imaginal realm as an intermediate domain partaking of the qualities of the corporeal as well as the purely immaterial. In Islamic experience, this affirmation of an imaginal reality has a long history until our own time, and is particularly associated with the Andalusian saint buried in Damascus, the *Greatest Shaykh* Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240), whose understanding of the 'World of Imagination' /'A<lam al-Khaya>l combining qualities of spirit and body was so influential.<sup>8</sup> Ibn 'Arabi integrated the achievements of the philosopher Avicenna (d. 1037) as well as of al-Ghaza>li> in his own grand synthesis; and centuries later the Iranian sages including S{adr al-Di>n Shira>zi> (d. 1640) elaborated upon this in a profound manner which invites serious attention today.<sup>9</sup>

Do not misunderstand my meaning: there is no going back, no return to the dogmatic literalism of traditionalist anthropomorphism when apprehending sacred texts. Yet there remains the possibility for us to expand our horizons, to embrace the truths affirmed by intelligence informed through faith-cognition and thereby to awaken the dormant potential of our humanity. Teachings of the order just mentioned offer us a model of a mode of experience and activity to accomplish a parallel task and thus rehabilitate a living intellectual tradition. But it will be ours, not that of the past. Furthermore, we must be especially wary of ill-conceived exploitations of powerful ideas that might yield great harm and generate much falsehood. Is not the energy contained in the human imaginal faculty increasingly being abused in our era by all manner of delectations and temptations facilitated by technological advances (television, electronic media, computers)? Are we even aware of its possible deleterious effects? Here is an area of psycho-somatic research that will have to start from the data already amassed by advertising organizations for decades in their dedicated efforts to persuade consumers and amass wealth.

Every knowledge makes ethical demands upon the knower. Realized Intelligence becomes actualized within oneself through a lengthy process of cognitive training and inner purification, of disciplining the mind and the soul. Achieving correct understanding of the Absolute, cosmos, and soul by grasping an authentic vision of reality demands the actualization of the pristine human character and cultivation of virtue – the corresponding activity of self-understanding and self-realization in conformity with such direct knowledge. The cognition calls out for its complementary conative practice; knowledge necessitates virtue. Chittick observes: "...correct activity – ethical, moral, and virtuous action – depends upon correct knowledge of the world, and correct knowledge of the world depends upon knowing the contingent and convergent reality of soul and cosmos."<sup>10</sup> This entails healing the split between subject and object upon which the prevailing modern scientific worldview is grounded.

There is another issue related to the illumination that awakened intelligence and direct experiencing may shed today on re-thinking values

and virtues on the path to becoming more fully human. This involves language, with its organic aptitude for sharing and communicating experiences and ideas within one linguistic family. Language may also bridge across different linguistic groups through fostering unitive disclosures of meaning, allowing over-arching understanding of more universalizing values dressed in various conceptual and linguistic guises specific to different cultural matrices. In conjunction with this, the barriers between social groups and cultural blocks fostered by linguistic differentiation may under the right conditions operate as filters selectively admitting congenial elements while blocking others.<sup>11</sup> We may observe this operating within the two most significant translation movements in human history: the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century movement of Hellenic sciences and philosophy from Greek into Arabic, and the 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century transposition of sciences, philosophy, and spirituality from Arabic into Hebrew and Latin in Europe.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the most instructive example of the operation of language as a congruent unitary force is the ‘lingua franca’ phenomenon whereby one tongue serves as a ‘vehicular language’ for communication and exchange between many other local vernaculars, reflecting the military, mercantile or cultural dominance of the vehicular language group. Currently the recognized dominance of spoken English with its Latin script [341 million] is rivaled by written standard Chinese and standard spoken Mandarin in East Asia [ca. 1.2 billion persons], spoken Arabic vernaculars [ca. 422 million], Hindi in S. Asia [366 million] and spoken Spanish in the Americas [322 million].<sup>13</sup> Today Arabic vernaculars form the second largest spoken language after standard Chinese, while the Arabic script – the language of the Qur’a>n – remains after Latin the second most widely used alphabetic system in the world.<sup>14</sup>

It is well known that few cultures placed more emphasis on their language as a unifying factor than have the Arabs; yet the unprecedented diffusion of Arabic linguistic and conceptual presence from sub-Saharan and East Africa, the Iberian peninsula, through to Central and South Asia, China and to South East Asia was due as much to religious and cultural grounds than to commerce or politics. Within various Muslim cultural regions historically, a number of other languages adopting Arabic script also served vehicular functions such as Persian (lingua franca of India, before the British conquest), Turkish, Azeri, Urdu, Swahili, and Jawi [Melayu]. This displays the integrating unitive effect of Islam over far flung territories, previously separated by geographical barriers and racial-cultural divides. Subjectivities tend to exclusion and conflict, disclosure of meaning tends to inclusion and harmonious awareness.

## LANGUAGE AND MEANING

Language, comprising speech and narrative (e.g. text) and poetry, is rightly taken as a key index of the human faculty for grasping and communicating meaning, and is intimately involved in rationality and critical apprehension.

A significant aspect of speech and its accompanying seizure of meaning is the conjunction of symbol and the reality it points to, namely the meaning disclosed through its apprehension; or, to express this relationship another way: the Word and the Meaning which it discloses. Restoration of the imaginal power of symbolic and mythic discourse at the basis of religious language centers on apprehending the ‘efficacy’ of Names in their qualitative depth, not merely their quantitative flatness.<sup>15</sup>

We can only refer briefly to one aspect of the relation between word and meaning. The word is a tangible sensory form conveying meaning; language points to meaning and discloses significance – thus, Arabic calligraphy became Islam’s pre-eminent art form and mode of symbolic representation. But such disclosure requires the minds and hearts of humans to be prepared and capable to conceive and grasp meaning, to heed the indications or pointers words provide and thereby penetrate to their intended significances. The identity or non-identity of name and thing-named was intensively discussed among Muslim speculative theologians, while the legalist-oriented traditionalists avoided the topic as a reprehensible innovation. This issue was often cast in the polarity of ‘*ism* and *ma’na*’ / ‘name’ and ‘concept’, where proper comprehension elevates the ‘concept-meaning’ above its ‘name’. The gist is captured in an utterance by the reputable early thinker Ja’far al-Sadiq (d. 765):

...the name is other than what-is-named, so whomever worships the name disregarding the concept/*ma’na* commits unfaith (*kufra*) and he worships nothing, and whomever worships the name and the concept commits unfaith by worshipping Two, and whomever worships the concept disregarding the name – now that is true ‘oneness’/*tawhidi*.<sup>16</sup>

Two things must be borne in mind: a) the same meaning may be pointed to by more than one term or phrase within the same language, as well as by several words across several languages; and b) without the meaning already being present, or sufficiently evoked and indicated, within our understanding intellectual faculty, the proper apprehension of the Word is difficult or the Word itself fails to convey the intended Meaning and may even be taken in a ‘wrong’ meaning (e.g., confining the term to merely one restricted surface sense while ignoring its deeper symbolic or mythic significance).

Confirmation of this would be our common experience of first having apprehended the meaning of a term in an ‘ordinary’ sense as a young person, then later, with increased knowledge and insight, achieving a deeper more significant sense. Furthermore, significances may be ‘flat’ (figurative or rhetorical), or may possess ‘depth,’ opening out onto a hierarchy of related meanings and apprehensions. Poetry, as well as prophecy, frequently operates in this latter mode of symbolic significance. Incorporation of fresh meanings through borrowing or influence from

another language or culture represents a particular case of expansion of meaning, and frequently induces new values or new ways of looking within the worldview of the host culture. The phenomenon of bilingualism (whose many dimensions we leave untouched here<sup>17</sup>) underlines the importance of cross-cultural penetration, and demonstrates that successful bilingualism and becoming bi-cultural require intelligence as well as proper attitudes toward the other group(s) and motivation. Similarly with translation between languages, where the competence of the translator in rendering the meaning requires more than linguistic expertise, but also conceptual and cognitive insight into other cultural patterns of thought and experience and the critical intelligence informing particular disciplines. This reminds us of: the complementary operation of a barrier acting simultaneously and selectively as a filter; as well as: the requirement that meaning already be present in the mind or heart in order that Word may function as disclosing symbol. (The notion of 'disclosure' is useful here.)

Meaning – the ability or facility to elicit or to evoke over-arching correspondences and confluences, or contrasting points of complementarity, bridging separately expressed meaning [discourse, imagery] embedded within distinct cultural matrices – is capable of prompting a *unitary sense of value* or significance wherein each specific culture with its unique manner of discourse and symbol may come to be seen in some degree as simultaneously both a light and a veil. This is not a matter of doctrines or of dogma, for the Christian Trinity remains a stumbling block for Muslims and Jews, while the personal Creator of prophetic monotheism may appear alien to the Ineffable Principle of Buddhism. And even within one religious culture there are varying conceptions of origination: thus Islamic thinkers spoke variously of temporal creation */khalq & h}judu>th*, or of divine fiat (creative imperative: *kalimah & amr*), or of timeless existentionation */ibda>* ' , or the continual emanation */fayd}* of the Peripatetics (all but the last of these terms are drawn from the Qur'an).

Rather, tapping the unitary sense is a matter of essence and the congruence flowing from it, grounded above all on the reality that the human species is not only biologically but ontologically one and the same. This reality facilitates the openness of religious texts, imagery and symbols to a *hierarchy of readings* and *seizures of meaning* – in accordance with the *hierarchy of knowers* who plumb their depths and hold them up as lenses through which to apprehend metaphysics, the cosmos, and the horizons within the human soul. *Knowledge is hierarchical along with gradations of the knowers who seize meanings.*

## FINAL REMARKS

Restoration of the imaginal noetic power of symbolic and mythic discourse at the ground of religious language must be guided by the recognition that the qualitative power of words [*Names*] affords a more real and effective mode of insight and meaning for bridging across cultures. What is truly

being asked of us is to *learn new languages of the spirit and heart*, to experience fresh thoughts and grasp the knowledge joining our inmost self to the whole and the source. Therefore, cultural *multi-lingualism* should be one of our means for soliciting the desired *unitary sense of value*. We all must work as *translators* from the limiting cultural constraints given us at birth, into the unutterable fullness of being which is our veritable human birthright. This might be the best work of translation – to render the Self back into its essential meaning. It is certainly a more adequate response to the global conflicts and cognitive chaos that threaten conscious life on earth.

Name is a veil over Essence  
– Muh}ammad al-Niffari> (10<sup>th</sup> cent.)

*International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS),  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The purpose of language is to convey meaning, so we shall use Arabic–Islamic terms sparingly in order to spare those unfamiliar with this tradition from confusion. Nevertheless, in terms of transforming inter-cultural misunderstanding, there is a great benefit to be derived from clarifying the key terms and notions of specific cultures, so as to foster apprehending shared meanings. (See our remarks on the utility of *cultural bi-lingualism* below.) However, this clarification has to begin with an *intra-cultural* effort, given that most ‘moderns’ are now estranged from the deep roots of their own particular intellectual–cultural heritage. Actually, the most pressing concern today may be the dialogue within one culture between its traditional components and its own mode of modernity – this is certainly true of Islam. Remember: *there is more than one way to be modern*.

<sup>2</sup> al-Kulayni>, *Us}u>l al-Ka>fi>*, ed. al-Ghaffa>ri> (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Tehran: 1388) *I kita>b fad}l al-’ilm, ba>b isti’ma>l al-’ilm* p. 44 §2.

<sup>3</sup> Consult e.g., Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Boulder: Shambala, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> We intend by *ideology* the secularist socio-political programs deemed rational and scientific, including the varieties of politicized religious-ethno nationalism termed ‘fundamentalism’.

<sup>5</sup> Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), p. 73. He also asserts: “Cosmos and soul are not two separate realities, but two sides of the same coin...” (p. 132).

<sup>6</sup> Chittick, *Cosmos*, pp. 136, 138.

<sup>7</sup> Abu> H{a>mid al-Ghaza>li>, *The Niche of Lights*, tr. D. Buchman (Provo, UT: 1998); and see Hermann Landolt, “Ghaza>li> and ‘Religionswissenschaft’: some notes on the *Mishka>t al-Anwa>r...*”



*Asiatische Studien* 45 (1991).

<sup>8</sup> See in particular: Ibn al-'Arabi>, *The Meccan Revelations* vol. I, ed. M. Chodkiewicz, trans. W. C. Chittick & J. W. Morris (New York: Pir Press, 2002) index s.v. *khaya>l* ; W. C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi>'s Cosmology* (Albany: SUNY, 1998) –The Imaginal *Barzakh* p. 331–370; W. C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-'Arabi> and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany: SUNY, 1994) p. 67–119; and Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi>* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

<sup>9</sup> See preceding note; and our contribution to the international symposium *Ibn 'Arabi and Modern Era* (Istanbul & Damascus, May 23–28, 2008), “Ibn 'Arabi and Imagination: The Background.”

<sup>10</sup> Chittick, *Cosmos*, p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> See especially Norman Daniel, *The Cultural Barrier* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975) for an extended meditation on obstacles to knowing other cultures by a long time observer of Islam. I take this notion of ‘filter’ from Daniel.

<sup>12</sup> Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture. The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Society (2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries)* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998). For a survey of the translations, scholars and institutions involved, see Gerhard Endress, “Die wissenschaftliche Literatur” [‘Scientific Literature’], in *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie*, vol. II: *Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. H. Gätje (Wiesbaden: 1987) §8.1–8.5, pp. 400–506 (esp. pp. 416–31), and *Supplementband* (1992) pp. 3–152; and the ongoing compilation edited by G. Endress & D. Gutas, *A Greek and Arabic Lexicon: material for a dictionary of the mediaeval translations from Greek into Arabic* (Leiden: Brill, 1992-).

<sup>13</sup> “Languages Spoken by More Than 10 Million People”, *Microsoft Encarta* 2008. Retrieved June 21, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Even after Turkish, Azeri, Swahili, Malay /Brunei /Indonesian, and Uyghur switched to Latin script.

<sup>15</sup> Chittick, *Cosmos*, pp. 96–101 for the notion of qualitative *efficacy* of Names; also Paul-A. Hardy, “Epistemology and Divine Discourse,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp. 288–307, treating al-Ghazali>’s important contribution to this theme.

<sup>16</sup> al-Kulayni>, *Usju>l al-Ka>fi>*, I k. *al-Tawh} >d, ba>b al-ma'bu>d* p. 87 §2. This utterance is also assigned to ‘Ali> in other sources.

<sup>17</sup> For an approach between psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, see W. E. Lambert (in collaboration with Elizabeth Peal), “The Relation of Bilingualism to Intelligence,” in *Language, Psychology and Culture. Essays by Wallace E. Lambert* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 111–159. Lambert’s work shows “that a person can comfortably become bilingual and bi-cultural, that one’s attitudes toward the other group whose

language is being learnt play an important role in language acquisition and that such attitudes both affect and are affected by one's motivation to learn the other language... ." (p. xiii).

## CHAPTER VIII

# GLOBALIZATION AND THE EMERGENCE OF PHILOSOPHY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

*TRAN VAN DOAN*

### INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asian philosophy has never been, and is not yet, taken into account by most Western philosophers. More curiously, it is still not even recognized by many Asians and Southeast Asians themselves.<sup>1</sup> In their eyes, such a philosophy does not exist. As a consequence, the recent effort of Southeast Asian philosophers to build their own philosophy is often brushed aside, considered as so much nonsense, and/or simply ignored.<sup>2</sup> At the threshold of a new era, wherein globalization has become the law of survival, the hope for a Southeast Asian philosophy seems to be as good as dead. How could the tiny, divided and even confused local philosophy compete with the giant system of philosophy backed by the same (Western) world which dictates the law of globalization, prescribes its language and commands its future?

I stand in direct opposition to such pessimism and want to argue, rather, that Southeast Asian philosophers can use globalization to defend their own valuable heritages and to reconstruct their own unique philosophical traditions. It is true to some extent that, globalization could be misused to support the claim of neo-imperialism. And there is certainly more than one case of this in human history. One knows well that the Enlightenment has been abused by the West to justify their insatiable lust for power and wealth. However, it is precisely thanks to the Enlightenment that the East can be emancipated from a “self-inflicted” inferiority complex.<sup>3</sup> The revival of Chinese and Indian philosophy and the rise of Japanese philosophy testify that the Enlightenment, like the sciences, is not a Western product but a universal instrument. So, the real question is rather that of self-awareness and wise application. Only those who well know and wisely realize its spirit can derive benefit from it. This means that, just like the Enlightenment, globalization could become a very effective instrument liberating Southeast Asian philosophers from the iron cage of Western ideology and, consequently, inspiring them to work out their own philosophy.

### THE DILEMMA OF GLOBALIZATION

The unbelievable success of the computing sciences and the irresistible expansion of the power of informatics have given birth to the “peculiar”

idea of globalization.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, under the flag of “press freedom,” the mass media, particularly cable news networks, have forcefully (and sometimes violently) demonstrated globalization’s absolute necessity. Globalization is taken, naively, as a kind of “natural” law, carrying the same weight of Newton’s law of gravity. Of course, such belief remains a belief so far, surely, not because of its not yet entirely verified status but, rather, because of its artificiality. Globalization is a human product to satisfy human needs (and greed).<sup>5</sup> It is not something *a priori*, like space or time. So, any equation of globalization with natural law is erroneous and ungrounded.

As a human artefact, globalization has been greeted with rather mixed reactions. Optimists would glorify it as the new panacea to social, economic, political and even scientific problems. To them, globalization will bring equality, democracy, progress and prosperity. Against such a view, pessimists find in it, rather, a neo-imperialism in an attractive form. To them, the iron-cage prophesized by Max Weber is finally coming.<sup>6</sup> Globalization would bring disaster, far more than that caused by Hurricane Katrina and the Indonesian tsunami of 2004: not only the loss of autonomy, but even the collapse of any resistance.

Both camps have scored some points. However, there is little doubt that they have intentionally simplified its complexity by reducing either its risks or its benefits, in order to convince the ignorant. By employing the straw-man fallacy, they brought a premature conclusion to the process. No doubt, there is *some truth* in each’s view. However, that is not the *whole truth*. How can one grasp the whole if globalization is an ongoing process, still not yet final, and perhaps never ending? The firm belief in one’s own capacity of possessing the whole truth, in fact, displays either a naive ignorance or a blind belief in one’s own absolute knowledge. The “logic” of reducing the whole process to a single static point is intended to back such a claim. Since globalization comes into being, not by accident, but rather as a continuity of the infinite process of the human quest for the better, it can be understood only partly, and namely in the context of a certain life-world and its relation to other worlds.<sup>7</sup> Thus, one can say, globalization has not been, and is not yet, completely understood if it is treated as a simple instrument, or if it is mistaken to be a simply human end.

Aware of the complexity of globalization, this paper argues for a different approach. It contends that globalization is neither the aim of human activity nor a scientific method. Globalization is rather an instrument and, at the same time, a medium for a certain purpose, or many purposes. It claims to widening our knowledge, deepening our understanding and bringing us to a close encounter. It could force us to accept a certain form of life, incompatible with our nature. And, in the final analysis, it could pretend to be an effective medium through which human beings may be able to express themselves freely, to overcome their own boundaries and to enjoy life. However, globalization could betray its own claim by reducing the human power of autonomy, or worse, by destroying human resistance

against the inhuman invasion of technology. Globalization could be misused – and this is the most fearful and real prospect – by unscrupulous merchants and ambitious politicians. To them, the most “scientific” way (hence, the most effective means) to enslave human fellows and to rob their neighbours is globalization. So, the basic question is not globalization, but human wisdom. Like any instrument, globalization would bring benefits only when one wisely uses it.

Hence, the question here is that of a wise application. This question requires further investigation into human awareness of the aim and the reason of our choice of globalization. Wrong aim leads to wrong choice, and any wrong choice would be never vindicated by any “scientific” method. So, a wise application requires a full awareness of the aim, an adequate knowledge of the method used, and deliberation in choosing the means. In a certain sense, globalization reminds us of the Enlightenment and its dilemma in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Enlightenment has been the force behind human progress. It has catapulted sciences to absolute power. It has been the main spirit behind the quest for freedom and democracy. However, it was also the main factor behind neo-barbarism and a renewed serfdom. In the name of reason and science, one mercilessly destroyed innumerable cultures. In the name of reason, one arrogantly dehumanized weak races and violently subdued less developed countries. Capitalism, colonialism, imperialism and racism are the illegitimate children born out of the wedlock of absolute reason and the insatiable lust for power.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, reason is *in se* not responsible for all these atrocities. In contrast, it has been and still is the main force behind human progress and the warrant for lasting peace. One can hardly deny that the Enlightenment has had great effects in philosophy. Thanks to it, modern philosophy and a pluralism of philosophies flourished. For the first time, German philosophy could claim its own status, and catapulted itself into the height of philosophical world with great figures like Kant, Hegel, and others. Cartesianism, the proclaimed model of modern rationalism, once dismissed or brushed aside as a non-academic subject, became dominant and enjoyed an unexpectedly royal reception in the academic syllabus. Thanks to it, Italian philosophy, Spanish philosophy and even Danish, Dutch, and Belgian philosophy caught the attention of the academic world. Spinoza, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche (the outsiders of academia) would be dismissed as “dead dogs” if the idea of pluralism had not been on the lips of high-class society.

### **SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

We begin with the fact that the above-mentioned dilemma of globalization is no longer a fiction but a reality. However, one has to acknowledge that such a dilemma is not the essence of globalization. It displays rather a part of the nature of any instrument. The same instrument could either bring great benefit or cause grave damage, depending on its users and on their

aims. So, harm and benefit come not from globalization. They are not its direct consequence. Harm and benefit can be understood only in a web of relations: globalization could be good for some but dangerous for others. As such, the real problem comes from us, the users of globalization and not from globalization itself.

To accept the essence of globalization as instrumentality means to acknowledge the role of human. Thus, it is the question of practical wisdom (of how and why and for what globalization is employed) that emerges and catches our attention. Practical wisdom is known first with a full consciousness of the subject, a full awareness of the conditions (both material and social) and the consequences, as well as deliberation. That means that the prerequisite conditions for any decision for globalization are self-consciousness and full awareness, which consist of a thorough knowledge of the nature of globalization, a deep understanding of our purpose, as well as a full comprehension of the conditions of our life-world. In other words, full awareness and self-consciousness are the pre-conditions determining what Aristotle once called *phronesis*, i.e., practical knowledge. This kind of knowledge combines different know-how, know-what, know-why and the knowledge of the world in which we live. Accordingly, globalization can fulfill its positive role only when one knows its nature thoroughly, when one is certain of the purpose of its application, and when one can firmly grasp the conditions of the world one wishes to change. In a word, the dilemma of globalization can be overcome only with a full awareness of its nature, of our purpose and our life-world.

### **GLOBALIZATION AS INSTRUMENTAL REASON**

Enlightenment, rationalism, globalization and the like are actually only instruments for certain purposes. Their values are restricted in its instrumentality, or in Max Weber's own jargon, instrumental reason.<sup>9</sup> Our unawareness of a clear distinction, or to put it better, our laziness in searching for the differences among different types of reason, pushes us towards an easy and uncritical belief in the uniqueness and the omnipotence of reason. It is this dogmatic *credo* that catapults simple instrumental reason into the orbit of the ultimate ends of knowledge and consequently, of human life. Analogously, like the Enlightenment, globalization has been one-sidedly understood. It is wrongly believed to be omnipotent. As a consequence, its claim of absolute power is uncontested, its replacement of dethroned myth is ignored, and its fictitious exaggeration becomes the new ideology of our age.<sup>10</sup> In short, globalization is, at the same time, the reality of an instrument to deal with modern problems, and the fictitious claim of being the ultimate *telos* and the most effective means of human life.

If globalization is, contradictorily, a reality and a fiction, a rational way of living and a myth, then *phronesis* requires an urgent need for a clear distinction between reality and fiction, between a rational way of living and mythical thinking. Such a distinction cannot be done by a pure description

or analysis, but rather by a deep awareness of the relation between the means (globalization) and the end (better life), and between the end and our life-worlds. Furthermore, if globalization is not yet, or perhaps will never be, completely understood, then the important issue for us may be neither the theoretical question of its foundation nor the practical question of its application (how can we practice it without an adequate understanding?), but its impetus for self-awareness. In any case, self-awareness is the first prerequisite for the birth of philosophy in general. The rise of modern philosophy has been in a certain way possible thanks to the self-awareness of thinkers like Descartes, Bacon and Locke; and its height has been achieved precisely by philosophers like Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. In a word, self-awareness has been the *conditio sine qua non* for the rise of philosophy in general. Southeast Asian philosophy is, doubtless, not an exception.

Self-awareness begins first with our reflection on the relation between the subject and its world, with the calculation of the effectiveness of the means one takes to acquire (satisfy) interests, and, then, with our recognition of the actual and ideal conditions that the subject has to confront.

### **GLOBALIZATION OR MONDIALIZATION<sup>11</sup> (THE SUBJECT AND ITS WORLD)**

The ideas of independence and democracy, just like the idea of equality, freedom and fraternity, are the fruit of a long reflection on the relation between the subject and its world, between human existence and human existential conditions, between the actual and the ideal. In other words, human dignity would never come to our mind if there were no self-reflection, i.e., self-awareness of human life. The world (in which human beings live) would be still non-human, if the ideas of transcendence and the ideal were still strange. The human world is human so far it transcends the animal world. That means, so long man is still enslaved, mistreated, and robbed of his own means and conditions of living, and so long as mankind is still living in fear and despair, then such a world is inhuman. Marx is right here when he reiterated Hegel's idea of needs and desires as basic human nature. The human is human as long as human needs are satisfied in a just manner.<sup>12</sup>

There was a time when the subject was understood as the Western world, and the life-world was identified with the Christian life-world. As we know, the world, *mundus* first and later *le monde*, was restrictedly (and falsely) given to Europe. Of course, Asia (notably *le monde chinois* and *le monde indien*) was discovered by European merchants.<sup>13</sup> However, they were regarded as *other* worlds, fully detached and incompatible with Europe. Columbus' discovery of the new world might have given to the West a new, more complete picture of the whole world. However, it did not change the ideology of Europe as the centre of the world. Thus, non-

European worlds cannot and are not allowed to enjoy equal status. They are rather the objects of exploitation. In other words, the non-European worlds are not treated as subjects, equal to Europe. Asia, just as Africa and South America, were the objects, first of exchange, then of exploitation, and finally, of free slavery. In this context, the term mondialization is used. It means not the sacred mission of “Westernization,” i.e., bringing civilization to the still “primitive,” “barbarous” and “pagan” worlds, but rather a subjugation of the rest of the world to the West.<sup>14</sup> Mondialization is indoctrinated as the “sacred” duty of imposing Western values (religions, politics, civilization, etc.) on other non-Western worlds.

After the triumph of the Enlightenment, the West switched to secular values, as seen in the proclamation of the French Revolution. Sciences and technology, along with democracy, became their most predominant ideologies. Of course, the switch to “new” values did not, however, include a switch to a new world. The tragedy comes precisely from human inability of “differancing” (to use Derrida’s language) the values and the worlds (where these values are *regarded* as prevalent). As the consequence of the “unclear” and “confused” identification of values and the world, Asians have opted for an easy (or lazy) and uncritical path: they choose to be Western.<sup>15</sup> Such total surrender entails a complete abandonment of one’s own values and philosophies. For what use are our philosophies now, when our world is no longer our world? As the consequence of our embracing of the Western world, we have no other choice than to adopt its philosophy and to dismiss our own. In the case of the Southeast Asia, the need for philosophy, if there is any, becomes a fiction.

The intimate relation between the life-world and our thinking unmistakably explains the existence, logic and form of philosophy. A particular philosophy would rarely pop up in our mind if we had no idea of our own life-world, our particularity and our needs. That means the idea of a particular philosophy would never appear if we found in it no value (use, interest) for us. This is the case of Southeast Asian philosophy. How can we convince our people of our own values if we uncritically embrace the Western world and its values? How could Southeast Asian philosophy come into existence if Asians absent themselves from their own world? How could a philosophy be authentic if it is not emancipated from the invisible yoke of Western ideology (or Islamic ideology as in the case of Indonesia and Malaysia), and especially from the illusion of being Western?<sup>16</sup>

So, one can say with some confidence that, long before globalization, Asians had already almost lost their identity due to mondialization. Thus, the “real” questions for us may be neither the danger nor the opportunity of globalization, but whether we have the capacity to avoid the mistakes of the past (our uncritical adoption of mondialization). The naive embracing of mondialization has not only destroyed our own philosophies, but has even prevented the birth (or the renaissance) of any philosophy in the future.



### GLOBALIZATION AS THE MEANS AND NOT THE END

My reflection on the nature and function of reason<sup>17</sup> sheds some light on the instrumentality of globalization. Globalization *in se* is not the end, or at least, not the final end, of the human world. Only through its function and its effectiveness is globalization defined, recognized and redefined. What if globalization brings more harm than benefits, more sadness than joy? This question seems to fall on deaf ears. However, if one poses a different question, about its utility: What if globalization can no longer satisfy the new “über-needs” (in the same sense of *über-man*) then, I am sure, we should have second thoughts. Globalization would run “out of gas” and become obsolete if it can no longer render good service. It would be thrown away, the way old software is disposed of, once it is surpassed or a new release is available. And it would be dammed if more harm were detected.

As a means, the first question will be its effectiveness in dealing with certain problems. Here it is clear that globalization may be good in dealing with certain problems, though not with all problems. The next question would be: Which problems can globalization effectively deal with, and which problems not? The third question would be about its life span. Since globalization is born out of human needs, and since human problems are growing at a never ending rate, no single means could claim to be lastingly effective. The fourth question would be, can it be implemented, or adjusted, or changed in order to be more effective? Due to the limits of our discussion, I would not venture to go into the detail of each question, and attempt to find out satisfactory answers. I would rather be content with a general inquiry into a more fundamental question on the relation between human needs (desires) and human problems. My arguments run as follows:

1. In a global world, human needs, and, hence, human desires are increasing at an incredibly rapid rate. These needs (desires) are no longer limited to the so-called basic needs (desires) – the ones pinpointed by Giambattista Vico as birth, death and religion – but extended to unimaginable, not yet born, desires and, consequently, needs. So, human needs are no longer purely “human,” but far above human. To say after Friedrich Nietzsche, human needs are now bearing a rather divine character: the need to become *Übermensch*, the need of realizing the impossible (the ones we were content with in our dream), and the need for being creative.<sup>18</sup>

2. “Über-desires”<sup>19</sup> would stimulate our new needs, or “über-needs,” i.e. the ones we did not have in the past, and they are in some degree not part of the basic nature of human beings (as defined by philosophers from Aristotle to Kant).

3. Our problems, hence, consist of (1) whether these needs constitute our human essence, (2) whether we are able to realize them, and (3) whether they could satisfy our quest for happiness.

4. By reflecting on the urgency and primacy of human needs, one may find that most of human “über-needs” and “über-desires” in the global

age are, in fact, not real but fabricated. This means that such needs would never emerge outside the context of globalization. The point is, globalization is the unavoidably actual fact, and our present life-world cannot be ‘not global’ even if we desperately object to it. As such, one encounters a paradoxical dilemma: one would hardly survive in the global age without satisfying the “über-needs” which are rather artificial, and even incompatible with human nature.

### CONDITIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

In *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean-François Lyotard refers to our present world as the post-modern world in the sense of post-industrial and the post-rational.<sup>20</sup> Such a description is “true” to some extent. But its “truth” is, paradoxically, vague and imprecise. “Post-industrial” is perhaps a mode of production (that is much different from Western mass-production and the mechanistic reaction), while post-rational refers to an attitude, a way of living (that is no longer dictated by reason). The point we are inquiring about is “What are the conditions of so-called postmodern society?” Lyotard did not (and could not) give a clear-cut answer. He nonetheless has pointed out one condition, at least: it is “informatics” or the science of information.<sup>21</sup> One could hardly survive without information. In a word, if the industrial society could not survive without reason, then postmodern society would not be possible without the science of information. It is the force of informatics that coerces human beings to accept global life; and it is the force of computer sciences that decides the fate of a people, a country or even, thought a little bit exaggerate, of our present world.

If Lyotard’s diagnosis is true, then the spectre of a new domination and new slavery is looming over us. The truth about the new masters, i.e. the power-holders is no longer a suspicion: they are the masters of informatics, the producers of the computer industry, the owners and the super-managers of multi-concerns or large firms which command trade and dictate the world market. They are the masterminds behind an exchange of billions of dollars, electronically, day and night.<sup>22</sup>

If so, then what is left over for the under-developing countries, the “pejoratively degraded” Third World? What about Southeast Asia, where the majority of its people are still suffering from hunger, illness and illiteracy? Informatics, in general, and even the most basic hardware are luxuries, beyond their reach. The hope for an economic miracle remains a dream. Worse, the newly proclaimed economic order turns to be an iron cage manufactured by the rich and the powerful to suppress the less fortunate and less privileged. Evidently, disadvantage prevents the Southeast Asian philosophers from any opportunity to compete with the Western colleagues on a fair ground.

### **PHILOSOPHY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE QUESTION OF LOGIC AND THE WAYS OF THINKING AND LIVING**

If the above logic is strictly observed, then we have reason for pessimism. Hope would vaporize. Fortunately, such logic remains pure theory, because no logic, no rule, no law can claim absolute power. No logic, including the almighty God himself could exercise absolute control over the human. Human beings, due to their essence as freedom (Kant, Heidegger), could change the law, and even the course of the Heaven.<sup>23</sup> (Human) logic may not always follow the same pattern of nature, but may take a quite different path, namely, it would stimulate a kind of revolt among the oppressed and non-privileged, providing that the latter are conscious of their misery and their own force. Marx's logic of revolution could be justified, and headed down the right path if people are fully conscious of their freedom of choice, and if they are conscious of their force and their role in deciding their own fate.

In my opinion, however, Southeast Asian philosophers have no need to follow revolution-logic, even if they may despise the satanic essence of the logic of "who has power, rules." A revolution may help to acquire power, but could not warrant the birth of new ideas. The reverse is true. Without Rousseau's ideas of freedom, equality and fraternity, without Montesquieu's ideas of power-sharing and power-control (the independence of the juridical, legislative and executive sectors), the French Revolution might have been a banal revolt of Parisians, tired of tyrannies. People like Maximilien Robespierre and Jean-Paul Marat (just as Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-Tung)) would have favored a revolution-logic to cement their power indeed. So, one may say with confidence that a revolution-logic would prevent the birth of any possible local philosophy if it is not nurtured by noble ideas. Only noble ideas can contribute to the birth of an original and progressive philosophy.

If the revolution-logic is of little help for philosophy, then Southeast Asian philosophers have to discover their own logic. And that is their first task in the enterprise of building their own philosophy. Their logic should not and will not be identified with that of globalization. Precisely thanks to their full awareness of the conditions as well as the (positive as well as negative) consequences of globalization, and thanks to their rich heritages, they could find a better and more suitable logic for their lives. To be more precise, this kind of logic must be worked out from their own traditions and from their acquired new knowledge (from the West). It must be appropriate for Southeast Asian philosophy.

Now, what is the kind of logic that Southeast Asian philosophers should favor? In my view, it is a kind of evolution-logic. By evolution-logic I understand a step-by-step approach, a kind of "piecemeal engineering."<sup>24</sup> That means philosophy is in a permanent process of formation and transformation by means of rational selection (critique and conjectures) and self-enrichment (*Aufhebung*).<sup>25</sup> Southeast Asian philosophy would comprise

its own traditional (selected and preserved) values and the newly acquired Western values. It would preserve Southeast Asian heritages but also open them for new possibilities. And at the same time, it should know how to combine them, and to produce a worthy synthesis, i.e. a “new” approach that can deal precisely with their life-worlds in the global age. In other words, Southeast Asian philosophy should seek to enrich itself dialectically.

### **SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

As I have dealt with the question of self-awareness in the above section, here I would like to discuss briefly the problem of social consciousness. An awareness of the instrumental role of globalization, and an adequate knowledge of how to maximize its positive role in the build-up of philosophy are, of course, the first conditions for philosophical construction. But it would be insufficient if one stops short here.

The rise of technology has, no doubt, diminished the meaning of the real life-world. But, precisely thanks to modern technology, the desire for autonomy, the desire to be the self is intensified. An awareness of the self has long been on the agenda of Southeast Asian philosophy. However, as I have argued, self-awareness would lead nowhere without any concrete aim, and if our aim is centered on the self. So, what one needs is to go a step further beyond the self. The ideas of prosperity, happiness, and security, just as the ideals we set for our lives, are constituted not by a single individual but by humankind. It is these ideas that motivate and push human beings forward. As such, it is required that any self-consciousness must be at the same time a social consciousness: humanity is conscious of the interconnectedness, intimate relationships, non-separation among all humankind, and between humankind and nature, humankind and its world, humankind and its hopes. This is what I mean by social consciousness.

From this double consciousness, Southeast Asian philosophers have to go deeply into the worlds in which they live and which constitute them. To penetrate deeply into their worlds means a thorough investigation of the psyche of their people, the conditions of their life, the environment where they live, the morals and beliefs on which and according to which their people act and think, as well as their expectation and hope for a better future.

### **SEARCH FOR PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**

A thorough investigation into Southeast Asian worlds consists not only in a historical unearthing of this world, but much more, a constant search for problems and solutions. There are the problems, long existing and hidden in the lives of the people. There are other problems emerging only just recently. There are also problems emerging from human multi-relationships, or from our inability to cope with the coming new worlds. Of course, there are the problems which are not yet existing, but which will surely pop up in

the future. In short, human problems are permanently emerging along with our world, our life and our contact with other worlds. In order to facilitate our discussion, I would like divide human problems into (1) the permanent, (2) the temporal, (3) the spatial (geographical), (4) the basic and (5) the non-essential ones. As a philosopher, one has to discover the permanent, the basic and the most urgent problems.

The search for problems is, however, only the first step. It must be completed by a second, no less important, step. That is the search for solutions. If philosophy is, in its most essential form, a search for wisdom, then it is the solution that represents wisdom best. Thus, the question posed for us here is whether Southeast Asian philosophy could offer certain wisdom to its people, and to humankind. Real philosophy is not a description or an interpretation. Real philosophy must contribute some solutions – theoretical as well practical – to human problems.<sup>26</sup> Only by being so, can it be worthy of being called philosophy. In this sense, Southeast Asian philosophy can be respected as genuine philosophy only if it can offer the best solutions to its people, and furthermore, to humankind. We know that the better solution is often more durable, more effective, longer lasting, and more available to a great number of people.

Of course, Southeast Asian philosophy, like any other philosophy, has to concern itself with an aesthetical dimension, human hope, aspiration, and human ultimate ends. However, due to the limits of our discussion, I would not venture to go into the details, and leave these problems open for further discussions.

## **CONCLUSION**

The question I have attempted to raise in this paper is, perhaps, the main concern of Southeast Asian philosophers. I have no doubt about the possibility of Southeast Asian philosophy, but I have still greater concerns about how to realize it. Globalization may serve here as one of the best instruments for such a purpose, if we are fully conscious of its instrumentality and if we stay firm on our own ground.

I have so far taken the term Southeast Asian philosophy in the singular. Here I wish to clarify the reason of my choice of the singular term, even if I am fully conscious of its manifoldness, its complexity, and even its inner contradiction. Southeast Asian philosophy is not a single philosophy, or a unique system of philosophy. There is no unity of all systems of philosophy in any history. We know that Western philosophy is loosely referred in general in a singular term. But it is by no means a single philosophy or a unique system of philosophy. It encompasses different schools of philosophy, different ways of approaching reality, and diverse methods, in the search for human problems, as well as different kinds of solution to these problems. So, it would be too simple-minded to put all different ways of thinking and living into a single concept. In this context, it is foolish to claim that there is a unique Southeast Asian philosophy, just as

it would be irrational to accept only one kind of wisdom. So, I may say with some confidence that Southeast Asian philosophy may express only a common concern *of being the self* among philosophers in this region. It would by no means reflect a common method, common purpose, common sense, etc. Since our problems consist of the common and the particular, and it is the particular that surpasses the common, I can say that each attempt to approach each kind of problem would point out a peculiar school of philosophy, and each effort in searching for solutions would show the difference and not the commonality. For all these reasons, even when I extensively use the term Southeast Asian philosophy, what I have in mind is a plurality of different systems of philosophy. Globalization forces Southeast Asian philosophers to side with Western colleagues to search for common human problems and solutions, to change the region for the better, and finally, to reflect on their own problems and discover solutions suitable to their own people and countries.

I have no doubt that Southeast Asian philosophy is in the process of emergence, and that it will flourish very quickly thanks to globalization. Its value would be acknowledged once it can offer better solutions to humankind in general, and to the Southeast Asian people in particular.

*National Taiwan University,  
Taipei, Taiwan*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In almost all philosophical dictionaries or encyclopedias edited by Western scholars, and even by Asian philosophers, one can find hardly any entries on Southeast Asian philosophy. Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai, Filipino, Cambodian, and Burmese philosophy are almost completely ignored. The situation is no brighter in Vietnam, the Philippines and Singapore, even though philosophical activities in these countries are sometimes reported; what we find mentioned there is, rather, Chinese (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism) or Indian, or Western philosophy. Only recently has their philosophy captured the attention of their own philosophers. The first essay (Ph.D. dissertation) in Filipino philosophy, *The Filipino Mind*, by the Rev. Leonardo N. Mercado, appeared in the 1990s (thanks to the effort of Prof. George F. McLean), while the works of Professor Kirti Bunchua (Assumption University) on Thai philosophy have become known only in the last ten years (published in *The Proceedings of The Asian Association of Catholic Philosophers*, Tokyo, 2002). Vietnamese philosophy has been discussed as early as the 1970s by Rev. Kim Dinh, but only among a small circle of Vietnamese intellectuals. It is dismissed by Westernized Vietnamese as rubbish, and is completely unknown to the Western world. See my “Kim Dinh’s Search for a Viet-Philosophy” in *Vietnamologica*, No. 5 (Toronto, 2001). Cf. Tran Van Doan “Einige Überlegungen über asiatische Theologie” (Muenster, 1985); Tran Van Doan,

“Konstruktiver Realismus am Beispiel chinesischer und Vietnamesischer Sprache” (Vienna, 1992); Tran Van Doan, “La logique de relation” (Louvain, 1998); Tran Van Doan, “Der Anti-taoist Nietzsche” (Zuerich, 1999). Since 1997, Professor George F. Mclean has encouraged my work and has supported my research projects in Vietnamese philosophy, which has resulted in the following publications: Tran Van Doan, *The Idea of a Viet-Philosophy* – Vol. 1. *The Formation of Vietnamese Confucianism* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005); Vol. 2. *The Spirit and the Form of Viet-Philosophy* (forthcoming). In addition to these publications, a volume in Vietnamese has recently been published: Tran Van Doan, *Collected Essays on Viet-Philosophy* (Los Angeles – Washington DC: Vietnam University Press, 2000). Two other volumes are presently in preparation.

<sup>2</sup> At the XXI World Congress of Philosophy (Istanbul, 2003), there was no session on Southeast Asian philosophy. The papers on Vietnamese philosophy (of Prof. Nguyen Trong Chuan and Prof. Pham Van Duc of The Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences) were arranged, rather, in a session on a completely separate theme on the very last day of the Congress when most of the participants had left. At the World Congress of Philosophy (Boston, 1998), a session for Vietnamese participants was scheduled (Prof. Nguyen Trong Chuan, Prof. Nguyen Duc Huyen, Prof. Vu Kim Chinh and Prof. Phan Dinh Cho, with Prof. G. McLean as moderator). It must be noted here that McLean is unique among Western philosophers in that he is most conscious of this bias and has taken steps to overcome it. On his initiative, many Southeast Asian philosophers have worked extensively at cultivating and presenting their philosophies. Among these are, the Rev. Leonardo Mercado, Prof. Manuel Dy, Prof. Leovino Garcia Ma and the Department of Philosophy of Ateneo de Manila University, along with others in the Philippines; Prof. Kirti Bunchua and his Institute of Philosophy and Religions at Assumption University in Thailand; The Institute of Philosophy in Hanoi with its (former) Director, Prof. Nguyen Trong Chuan; Prof. Chai Heng and his collaborators in Cambodia, as well as some scholars in Malaysia and Indonesia. Also thanks to the assistance of McLean, the *Southeast Asian Philosophical Association* was formed (in Bangkok in 2001) by a group of Southeast Asian philosophers. Its core members: Warayuth Sriwarakuel (Assumption University, Thailand), Nguyen Trong Chuan (Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Vietnam), Chai Heng (Royal Academy of Cambodia), Manuel Dy Jr. (Philippines). Its Board of Advisors: George F. McLean (CRVP), Tran Van Doan (National Taiwan University), Vincent Shen (University of Toronto) and Kirti Bunchua (Royal Academy of Thailand). The first volume, with the collaboration of Southeast Asian philosophers, was published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in 2005 and distributed during the Conference on *Dialogue among Cultures and Religions* at the University of Indonesia (Jakarta, June 2005). See Warayuth Sriwarakuel, Nguyen Trong Chuan,

Manuel Dy, Chhay Yiheang, and J. Haryatmoko, eds., *Cultural Tradition and Contemporary Challenges in Southeast Asia: Hindu and Buddhist* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Chow Tse-tsung, *The May-Fourth Movement: Intellectual revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), and Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 505 ff. See also John Dewey, "New Culture in China," in *Asia*, XXI: 7, pp. 581 (July 1921). Mentioned by Hsu, p. 506.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition – A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, globalization has been primarily understood in terms of economics, or more precisely, of global markets. See Iain Carson, "Survey on Manufacturing," in *The Economist* (January 20, 1988), p. 5. See also Oliva Blanchette, "Globalization or Humanization: A Question of Priorities in Human Development," in O. Blanchette and T. Imamichi, eds., *Philosophical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization* (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> See the very interesting debate on Globalization between Oliva Blanchette ("Globalization or Humanization) and Gary Madison ("Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities") in *Philosophical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization*.

<sup>7</sup> I have dealt with this thesis in another paper: "The Ideals, Traditions and Social Progress" (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, June 2004, and Hua-Dzong University Technology and Sciences, July, 2004). The Chinese version appeared in the *Journal of the Institute of National Spirit*, Hua Dzong University, Wuhan, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno have warned us of the danger of a blind belief in reason. See their work: *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944, New York: Continuum, 1972). In *Eclipse of Reason* (1947, New York: Continuum, 1954), Horkheimer wrote: "If by enlightenment and intellectual progress we mean the freeing of man from superstitious belief in evil forces, in demons and fairies, in blind fate – in short, the emancipation from fear – then denunciation of what is currently called reason is the greatest service we can render."

<sup>9</sup> Max Weber once developed Kant's distinction of pure reason and practical reason into more modern terms of value-reason (Wertrationalität) and purposive reason (Zwecksrationalität). The latter consists of purposive and instrumental nature. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 3 vols., ed. Gunther Roth and Claus Wittich (Bedminster Press, 1968).

<sup>10</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

<sup>11</sup> The term "mondialization" (from *mundus, le monde*) has a double meaning: (1) the process of secularization (after the French revolution), and (2) the process of spreading and imposing the West and its culture on the whole world. In this paper, I prefer the term mondialization (Verweltlichung) over worldlization.



<sup>12</sup> Marx wrote in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848): “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.” (Jeder nach seinen Fähigkeiten, jedem nach seinen Bedürfnissen).

<sup>13</sup> Actually, the first discoverers of the Far East, most probably, were missionaries and not merchants. It was said that St. Thomas the Apostle settled and built the first Christian community in India. Much earlier than Marco Polo came the Nestorians to China, and built the first Christian community there. However, Asia was clearly the target of merchants, and was made known among European intellectuals and aristocrats alike, through exotic products like silk, porcelain, pepper, and the like. Since then, “mysterious” Asia has been considered a ‘support world,’ providing the European nobility and the “nouveaux riches” with luxurious goods (gems, silk, pepper, noodles, etc.).

<sup>14</sup> Note that, as early as the first century, Christians had attempted to bring the ‘good news’ to the whole world. Evangelization was the term describing such a sacred mission. Regretfully, the term “evangelization” was misleadingly changed to mondialization by unscrupulous politicians and heartless merchants to justify their secular ambitions and quest for wealth.

<sup>15</sup> It is not too exaggerated to say that most Asian countries are, at least partly, “mondialized.” Their customs, their ways of living, their organization, their laws, their religions and even their languages are “molded” after the European models. Singapore and the Philippines are not exceptional. Even China and Japan, the two most ‘conservative’ cultures, have imported a number of Western values and integrated them into their own values.

<sup>16</sup> The influx of Southeast Asians to the West is certainly not only caused by economic need, but also by the idea of Western superiority. It is an undeniable but sad fact that a great number of Asians (and Southeast Asians) have alienated themselves from their own roots, even when they know that a full integration into the Western world is almost impossible. The tragedy of “Between” and “Betwixt” of Asian Americans is a case in point that the Vietnamese theologian, Prof. Peter C. Phan of Georgetown University, has depicted in his most recent publications: See Peter Phan, *In Our Own Tongues – Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2003), *Being Religious Interreligiously – Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), *Christianity with An Asian Face – Asian American Theology in the Making* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Tran Van Doan, *Reason, Rationality, Reasonableness* (New York, 1989; republished, Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000). See also Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, pp. 3 ff.

<sup>18</sup> I have explored the need for being creative and for the sublime in other papers: Tran Van Doan, “The Unfinished Project,” *Soochow Philosophical Journal* (1999).

<sup>19</sup> Heavily influenced by Nietzsche, postmodern writers have invented new jargon such as “über-sexual,” “über-effective,” “über-beautiful,” etc. By “über-desires,” I understand as the desires of transcending the actual and real world. So, Nietzsche’s desire to become God, just as the artist’s desire of being a sort of creator, or the desire to attain the sublime, all could be called “über-desires.”

<sup>20</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>21</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Introduction.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *The Commanding Heights: The Battle that is Remaking the Modern World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), p. 371f; cf. Blanchette, p. 13. According to Yergin and Stanislaw, ca. 1.3 trillion dollars is exchanged on the foreign exchange market daily.

<sup>23</sup> The Christian emphasis on the role of the human (i.e., law is for man and not man for law), just as the insistence on the importance of human in Chinese and Vietnamese philosophy – as seen in Mencius, and in the Vietnamese principle of the “Tao of the Heart” (Tam Dao, Xua nay nhan dinh thang Thien cung nhieu) – clearly support the view of human freedom.

<sup>24</sup> Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (New York, 1968), p. 313.

<sup>25</sup> Popper understands (the Hegelian) *Aufhebung* in four consecutive acts: the act of reduction, the act of negation, the act preservation and the act of sublimation (elevation). See Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (New York, 1961), p. 234; *Conjectures and Refutations*, p. 314.

<sup>26</sup> Marx once criticized philosophy, as Feuerbach understood it, as useless. He insisted (in his *Thesen über Feuerbach*, Thesis 11) on the active role of philosophy as the effort of changing the world for the better.

**CHAPTER IX**

**THE NATURAL, MORAL, AND CULTURAL  
ROOTS OF HUMANITY**

VASIL GLUCHMAN

**INTRODUCTION**

A classical formulation of the philosophical or moral-philosophical understanding of the meaning of the concept of humanity was provided by Immanuel Kant, who wrote that

humanity itself is a dignity, for man can be used by no one (neither by others nor even by himself) merely as a means, but must always be used at the same time as an end. And precisely therein consists his dignity (personality), whereby he raises himself above all other beings in the world, which are not men and can, accordingly, be used – consequently, above all things.<sup>1</sup>

In another place, Kant specified the meaning of the concept of dignity or human dignity, and wrote that

Man as a person, i.e., as the subject of morally-practical reason, is exalted above all price. For as such a one (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of other people, or even to his own ends, but is to be prized as an end in himself. This is to say, he possesses a dignity (an absolute inner worth) whereby he exacts the respect of all other rational beings in the world, can measure himself against each member of his species, and can esteem himself on a footing of equality with them.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that Kant's understanding of humanity and man is entirely anti-nature and anti-biological is also evidenced by his statement that "it is one's duty to raise himself out of the crudity of his nature, out of his animality more and more to humanity, by which alone he is capable of setting himself ends."<sup>3</sup> I think that at this stage it is enough to use just Kant's opinions to illustrate how humanity was perceived in the past.

Now I will present some examples of understanding of humanity in contemporary ethics. Christine Korsgaard and Marcia Baron, for instance, present an understanding of humanity according to a Kantian view. Korsgaard states that, according to Kant, to respect the humanity of others means to share their goals. Such a status of humanity is, in her opinion, the source of normative requirements and the source of all value.<sup>4</sup> Baron

believes that, in contemporary Kantian ethics, humanity means above all respect and love for others and oneself as well, while in relation to others it means helping them in the achievement of their permissible goals and respecting others' lives and their characters. In the case of humanity expressed in relation to oneself, it reflects the effort to achieve self-perfection and the development of one's talents.<sup>5</sup> A different understanding of the meaning of humanity is presented by Martin Heidegger, who believes that the humanity of man resides in his essence.<sup>6</sup>

Man is the shepherd of Being. Man loses nothing in the "less"; rather, he gains in that he attains the truth of Being. He gains the essential poverty of the shepherd, whose dignity consists in being called by Being itself into the preservation of Being's truth. It is a humanism that thinks the humanity of man from nearness to Being. But at the same time it is a humanism in which not man but man's historical essence is at stake in its provenance from the truth of Being.<sup>7</sup>

#### **NATURAL SCIENCES AND MORALITY**

Contemporary genetics, neurology, biology, zoology, ethnology, and so on present, however, ever-increasing knowledge of the genetic similarity between humans and the animal realm – for example, the similarity between human brain activity and behaviour or conduct, and the brain activity and behaviour of many representatives of the animal realm, especially primates or mammals, but also some other kinds of animals. Thus, Lee Alan Dugatkin explores proximity, reciprocity, indirect reciprocity and group selection as illustrations of animal cooperation. He points out the ability of animals to punish the violation of existing rules.<sup>8</sup> Another of his studies presents evidence that animals also mimic or imitate, and in Dugatkin's opinion, memes have a very important function in biological evolution, and are much older than Susan Blackmore assumes. According to him, the difference between human and animal memes is more qualitative than quantitative.<sup>9</sup> Bruce N. Waller believes that animals can act and intend to act on the basis of altruistic motives, on the basis of feeling hunger and thirst, as well as on the basis of the motifs of lust, but people can also act in this way.<sup>10</sup> Marian Stamp Dawkins argues that general emotional states of pleasure or suffering enable animals to use a great variety of behaviour strategies, which enables them to increase their health or ability. By monitoring of the consequences of their behaviour, they can build a complex system of responses. Thus emotions create an inevitable condition for the enforcing of animal learning.<sup>11</sup>

## **BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL ROOTS OF MORALITY**

What could be a unique, completely specific feature of behaviour in people as the members of the same species that does not exist in the behaviour of the members of the rest of the animal realm? On what basis could we speak of humanity as a moral value having its origin and source not in the biological or natural, but in cultural evolution? The initial thesis of our thinking about humanity, i.e., humanity as the respect for human life, appears to be more a natural or biological than a solely moral or cultural factor. Undoubtedly, it is true that morality has its biological basis related above all to the value of human life.<sup>12</sup> Bekoff believes that the origin of virtue and morality is older than the human species.<sup>13</sup> However, if we want to emphasize our uniqueness, or difference from the rest of the animal realm, we have to find something typically human in the behaviour of people, something that we could use as the basis for the value of humanity. What could that be?

The criteria of human life can be biological, social and cultural, including the mental qualities or capacities of the human being. The biological qualities especially include the morphological and functional signs. The social and cultural capacities comprise speech and the capacity for communication, as well as the ability to form certain social contacts and interpersonal relationships, to move, to have the ability to take care of oneself, to exercise moral judgement, and the ability to plan the future. The mental qualities and capacities include, in our opinion, the existence of consciousness, self-awareness, abstract thinking, free will and moral thinking. These criteria comprise the objectively existing qualities and capacities of the human being (i.e., their presence or absence, and not their quality or quantity). The minimal criteria for the definition of the real human life, as different from the pure vegetative state of the human organism, have to comprise at least some social, cultural and mental qualities or capacities. If a human life does not comprise any of the social, cultural and mental qualities or capacities, it exists only on the biological level of human organism and it can be treated accordingly in an effort at its maintenance.

So far we have been thinking only about the respect for human life in the case of the newborn or little children. Let us think now about the respect for human life as such. Usually what we mean by this is that to kill other people (with the exception of war or similar cases) is prohibited because it is not right or moral. However, in the animal world, the killing of the members of the same clan of a species is also not common; rather the opposite is true. Of course, there also exist certain exceptions and, just as among people, a certain amount of intraspecies aggression also appears in the animal realm. Just as people destroy or kill the members of other animal species, animals also kill the members of other species, usually the ones existing on lower levels of the evolutionary scale or the weaker ones. From this perspective, it is not possible to perceive the respect for the life of other

members of the same species as a unique form of behaviour that exists only in human beings. The fact that this phenomenon can also be found in the animal realm indicates that this form of behaviour has, both in humans and animals, a biological basis. The fact that our morality is based on our capacity for mutual respect (in the sense that we do not kill each other) does not suffice to prove that we are in some way unique as opposed to the rest of nature – that we have moved a step forward in natural or biological evolution.

Another frequently mentioned aspect of humanity defined as a moral value is that human beings help one another either with the realization of their goals and intentions or in their misery or suffering. Are these uniquely human forms of behaviour or can they also be found in the animal realm? If we think about help with the realization of goals and intentions, we find something similar in the animal realm in the case of the cooperation of various members of the same species in hunting. We could point out that, just as human beings can help one another unselfishly, animals cooperate in hunting to acquire food in an easier way. A sceptic could claim that even the altruistic behaviour of people is not completely unselfish since what these people acquire is at least a good feeling that they helped someone and that that is the sole reason why they do it. According to sceptics, only the conduct based on Kantian pure duty, which excludes any empirical explanation of why we perform a duty, can be accepted as purely unselfish and altruistic. Despite these objections, we maintain that altruistic help with the realization of others' goals and intentions is something that goes beyond the limits of the purely biological or natural dimension of our behaviour and conduct. It is especially true if this altruistic help is given to strangers, since this feature of behaviour does not exist in the animal realm. Humans can offer assistance to the strangers that they meet in the street, if they need it, or to strangers in foreign countries, whom they will never meet (e.g., if they need aid because of wars or natural disasters).<sup>14</sup> In this case, we can state that it is a form of behaviour of person towards another that transcends the natural dimension and is a result of cultural evolution, including moral development. A sceptic can argue that this aid is usually provided on the international level and that it can involve motives that may not be completely unselfish and spontaneous. This may be true, but what I have in mind is the behaviour of individuals who help others independently of state structures and with the simple intention to help the people who need it. An example can be the aid provided for the countries and people suffering the aftermath of earthquakes or floods, but also the aid provided for the children in foster homes. Such behaviour is exclusively human and that is why we can perceive it as a manifestation of humanity, as a moral value that humanity comprises.

So does there exist, besides providing altruistic assistance to others and taking care of developmentally or mentally disadvantaged human beings, other specifically human manifestations that we could perceive as a manifestation of humanity? Certainly a very important attribute that we

usually ascribe to humanity on the intuitive level or on the level of common sense morality is the human capacity to feel compassion with the suffering of others. I do not think now only about the capacity to feel compassion with the suffering of those close to us. Despite the fact that it is common and we perceive it as automatic, it certainly can be found in animals, e.g., dogs. I have in mind, rather, the capacity to feel compassion with strangers, which is something that cannot be found in the animal realm because the animals' capacity to feel compassion is limited to the circle of those closest to their herd, flock or pack; they cannot show compassion with the suffering of other members of their species. This capacity to feel compassion with the suffering of others is probably the impulse that leads to giving assistance to people affected by disaster. The capacity to feel compassion with the suffering of strangers and to provide help to those struck by misfortune or suffering are the uniquely human manifestations, on the basis of which we can speak about humanity as a moral value that is a result of our cultural evolution and our moral development, and not the manifestation of our biological or natural essence that is almost identical with many manifestations in mammals or primates. The capacity to forgive can be put on the same level with the capacity to feel compassion. In the case of close relatives, especially in relation to offspring, we can find this capacity in the animal realm. Evolutionary biologist David Sloan Wilson states that forgiving is a complex biological adaptation that is spread throughout the whole animal realm. Despite the fact that he primarily pays attention to human society, the capacity to forgive can be found also in animals.<sup>15</sup> But the capacity to forgive others, for example, friends and acquaintances, or even passers-by with whom we have a misunderstanding, or in an extreme case to forgive one's enemies, is a uniquely human matter. It certainly can be seen as a manifestation of humanity as a moral value, a result of our moral development.

That is why I suggest that we speak about humanity in all the cases in which human life is protected and maintained, since it brings positive consequences for human life – with the specification that, if it is the protection and maintenance of one's own life, the lives of those close to us, our friends and acquaintances, it is the humanity based on a biological-natural foundation that also has its moral dimension and effect. Still, the manifestations of the protection and maintenance of life in relation to strangers represent the real moral value of humanity, i.e., they are the results of our cultural evolution and our moral development. In this way, we accept all the positive manifestations of our behaviour in relation to other people. In particular, we emphasize the value of helping, the protection and maintenance of the handicapped forms of human life and the strangers who need it, because such behaviour transcends our biological-natural dimension, or the basis that we have in common with many other representatives of the animal realm.<sup>16</sup>

In the first case, we understand humanity as a generic, natural-biological, quality typical of the behaviour of the members of human

species, while in the second case we understand it as a moral quality which, despite having some similarity with the first quality, differs in respect to the object of its realization. Despite the fact that, in the first case, we understand humanity as a biological-natural quality of man, this understanding of humanity cannot be identified with the biologism of humanity because my understanding of humanity is related only to the behaviour leading to the protection and maintenance of human life. If this understanding of humanity is not to be influenced by speciesism, then we have to accept that, in the animal realm, especially in mammals and primates, the protection and maintenance of one's own life, the life of offspring and other members of the herd, flock or pack, is a natural-biological quality typical of their species, and that we can call it animality and see it as equal in its forms or manifestations of behaviour to humanity as a natural-biological but not moral quality typical of the human species.

### **CONCLUSION**

To summarize our points, we can state that humanity is understood as all the forms of behaviour leading to the protection and maintenance (i.e., development) of human life. On the basis of the differences in the objects of our behaviour and conduct, we distinguish between humanity as a natural-biological quality and a moral quality. The moral value of the first kind of behaviour is determined by our biological and social relations to those close to us. In the second case, the moral value of our behaviour to strangers is a pure manifestation of our morality. In the first case, the protection and the maintenance of life are results of our basic value orientation, including our moral values that result from this orientation. In the second case, our behaviour and conduct for the benefit of strangers brings an additional moral value. The basic form of humanity resides, then, in the protection and maintenance of one's own life and the lives of our close ones, relatives, friends and acquaintances. It is the alpha and omega of our behaviour, which creates the basic natural-biological framework for our morality. It also creates the foundation for the basic rights and duties related to the protection and maintenance of human life. On the other hand, the protection and maintenance of the life of strangers is the additional moral value by which we create a new, higher quality in our behaviour in relation to other people. In this case, we can genuinely speak of humanity as a moral quality or value. It is something that is, indeed, specifically human and which deserves respect and admiration. By such behaviour man proves that he can, at least to a certain extent, transcend the natural-biological framework of his determination.

*Institute of Philosophy and Ethics  
Presov University,  
Presov, Slovakia*



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> I. Kant, *Kant's Ethical Philosophy* (Indianapolis / Cambridge: Hackett, 1983), pp. 127-128.

<sup>2</sup> Kant, *Kant's Ethical Philosophy*, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Kant, *Kant's Ethical Philosophy*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>4</sup> Ch. M., Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 299.

<sup>5</sup> M. Baron, "Kantian Ethics", in M. Baron, P. Pettit, and M. Slote, *Three Methods of Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 28-31.

<sup>6</sup> M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 224.

<sup>7</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, p. 245.

<sup>8</sup> L. A. Dugatkin, "Cooperation in animals: An evolutionary overview", *Biology and Philosophy*, Vol. 17 (2002), pp. 459-476.

<sup>9</sup> L. A. Dugatkin, "Animals imitate, too", *Scientific American* 67 (2000), pp. 67-72.

<sup>10</sup> B. N. Waller, "What Rationality Adds to Animal Morality", *Biology and Philosophy*, Vol. 12 (1997), p. 343.

<sup>11</sup> M. S. Dawkins, "Animal minds and animal emotions", *American Zoologist*, Vol. 40 (2002), pp. 883-888.

<sup>12</sup> M. Bekoff, "Animal Passions and Beastly Virtues: Cognitive Ethology as the Unifying Science for Understanding the Subjective, Emotional, Empathic, and Moral Lives of Animals", *Zygon*, Vol. 41 (2006), pp. 71-104; M. Bekoff, "Wild Justice and Fair Play: Cooperation, Forgiveness, and Morality in Animals", *Biology and Philosophy*, Vol. 19 (2004), pp. 489-520; M. Ridley, *The Origins of Virtue: Human Instincts and the Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Viking, 1996); M. Ridley, *The Cooperative Gene* (New York: The Free Press, 2001); M. Ruse, *Taking Darwin Seriously: A Naturalistic Approach to Philosophy* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1998); B. N. Waller, "What Rationality Adds to Animal Morality", *Biology and Philosophy*, Vol. 12 (1997), pp. 341-356; R. Wright, *The Moral Animal: Why We Are, the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> Bekoff, 2004, pp. 515-516.

<sup>14</sup> For clarification and the preservation of the continuity of the text, the concept 'stranger' will be used in the following pages in the above-defined sense.

<sup>15</sup> D. S. Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 195.

<sup>16</sup> In this respect, Bruce N. Waller speaks about the morality of care and the morality of duty. In his opinion, human rationalistic morality is an improved animal morality of care. Ethics of care is, in its essence, valid because affection, care, trust and generosity form a moral basis. The attitude based on rational principles is an important means of the widening, improving and supporting of moral behavior when affection reaches its limits. The moral basis of the morality of duty resides in care and affection.

The affection is rooted in biology, supported by direct and indirect reciprocity and exists prior to rationality. The rational morality of duty is an adaptive complement of the morality based on affection and care (Waller, 1997, pp. 353-354).

## CHAPTER X

# ETHICAL EDUCATION AND THE NEW AWARENESS OF VALUES AND VIRTUES IN MODERN CIVILIZATION

*MARTA GLUCHMANOVA*

This article will deal with ethical education and the awareness of values and virtues in modern society as well as in science and technology. Education has an important role in public, professional, cultural and academic life. Many educators call for global education and global interaction of cultures and civilization in order to create an atmosphere that promotes moral, humane behaviour among societal and cultural groups by providing better understanding and eliminating barriers. Global interrelationships and international cooperation are also very significant in culture, science and education. In recent years, educators have shown an increased interest also in the moral and cultural development of university students, and that education is the most powerful predictor of their cultural development. Many educators truly desire to teach students how to think and to act responsibly within a moral standard.

People who are responsible in the profession of education demonstrate a respect for each person as an individual, communicate honestly and truthfully, enhance the self esteem of other persons, and help to build fair and compassionate social and cultural systems that promote the common good. Faculty members should care deeply about the progress of each student. In education or in any other profession we must focus on our personal behaviour, because what we do as teachers, what we say, how we behave, the positions that we take, the decisions that we make, the recommendations that we propose, and so on, relate to other people.

Culture, new civilizations, as well as science and technology have created a new situation for modern man and reach all spheres of his life. So it is necessary to put a question to ourselves: How does technology influence our thinking, our culture, our relation to matters of fact, and our recognition of the world and ourselves?

Today, digital technology links cultures all over the world, making that world smaller and more accessible to all. The complex facets of technology account for many additional differences within our culture. Collaboration is a process of communicating and working together that produces trust and integrity, and builds true consensus. Sometimes modern science and technology lead to conflicts, for example, concerning the protection of the environment, genetic engineering, and so on. Culture needs the help, not only of empirical science but also of the social sciences, humanities, and ethics.

In the modern world, science and technology are two of the most significant sources of social change. Science and technology have brought about enduring and far-reaching changes in the social and cultural life of people. In this connection we may ask: How have science and technology changed our lives? One possible answer is that science increases the stock of reliable knowledge about the external world, and technology yields machines and processes that make new human accomplishments possible. On the one hand, we can say that science is a method for establishing reliable and useful knowledge about natural and social phenomena and, on the other hand, technology is the application of knowledge to the solution of practical problems. The relation between technology and society is interactive. It means that developments in one area force changes in another.

The implementation of technology influences the *values* of a society by changing expectations and realities. Technology, throughout history, has allowed people to complete more tasks in less time and with less human intellectual or manual labor. Society's traditional ethical values are challenged as technology enables new abilities and activities.

We can say that education can achieve its ultimate purpose of making an ideal life possible only if it helps fostering universal and eternal values in the minds of people. Meaningful education must not overlook any area of human development. Education, including science education, should be value oriented and not only academically oriented. No doubt, technology has brought revolutions in many spheres of life by opening new horizons. I think that the educational and information gap has been substantially overcome today through startling innovations in electronics and information technology. However the communication gap has become a chasm despite the global village produced by media, migrations, trade and industrial manufacture. No education and culture can ignore the comforts of life, efficiency, and economic productivity, but it also needs a poetic heart and a moral praxis that truly understand the meaning of the world. Only value based rationality can establish a balance between them.

Diana Cone claims that ethics as a multidisciplinary field has an important role to play in academic, professional, scientific and public life. A framework for guiding the moral life of students and also an understanding of why they perceive certain conduct as right or wrong, are key to a society's structural integrity. Education is a crucial part of it.<sup>1</sup> I think that science education provides a vital opportunity for meaningful ethical discussion. It is harder to agree on ethics in today's culture because diversity has increased significantly. Sometimes we see that a decision maker does not share common, fixed values with the society within which and for whom decisions are made. There is, then, a greater likelihood of ethical disagreement and concern.

The teacher's basic philosophy of life nurtures the development of implicit theories related to teaching and teacher-student relationships. Looking at teaching from a student perspective is certainly not the same as viewing it from behind the desk of the teacher. It means that the teacher is

an educator whose way of living, behaving, and acting may have a great impact on growing individuals who seek figures with whom they can identify, and adults who can satisfy their need for close social relationships and caring. They should be judged like everybody else. In the opinion of older female students, the job of the teacher is to disseminate knowledge. Students have to be allowed to decide for themselves what they want to believe and think. What the teacher believes to be right may not be right for everyone. Personality characteristics like empathy and social sensitivity, along with professionally-based understanding and caring, seem to be of the utmost importance. Students appreciated most those teachers whom they could “talk to” and who cared about them as human beings.<sup>2</sup>

The media (such as television, magazines, newspapers, and so on) are key sources of information, and certainly media accounts occasion a number of questions from students. New forms of entertainment, such as video games and internet access could have effects on areas such as academic performance. So the role of the science teacher is to teach values in talking about new developments in science. There we can see the significant opportunities for science educators or teachers in exploring the ethical dimension. Science education, which upholds the ideal of preparing students to be active participants within civil society, inevitably must equip those students to think critically about what is nice, normal, and natural. Science teachers should also consider the different ways of doing moral thinking. Are they to focus on consequences, moral rules or a case-by-case consideration? They learn to value students and others despite the fact that their opinions may be different from them. They learn to think in different ways and to identify the different premises that they use in arguments. They learn critically to evaluate other perspectives. Teachers must give to students some sets of values, if they are to be meaningful contributors and promoters of a democratic society. They should show an increased interest in the moral development of pupils and students, and education should be the most powerful predictor of the development of moral judgement. I think that many teachers truly desire to teach young people how to think and to act responsibly within a moral standard. So, in our democratic country, part of a meaningful educational curriculum should be honesty, acceptance of different races, caring, moral courage, and so on.

What the teachers undertake within their classrooms, the actions they perform, and the examples they set, not only has a significant impact on a student’s immediate academic life, but also provide a profound basis for the development and improvement of students’ characters. Ethical development is dependent upon education, but moral education is a lifelong process.<sup>3</sup> The power of formal education lies in the teacher’s ability to stimulate the learning environment. Then, later it provides students with a concrete reason to take an interest in their community and also in larger social issues. But education must be replete with an awareness of right and wrong. This awareness must shape teachers as well as learners. They need to ask what are the teacher’s responsibilities towards the learner and the

learner's responsibilities toward the teacher. I think that the teacher (as the more experienced person) is responsible for protecting the learner (the less experienced person) from danger and bringing structure to the learner's life. The learner's responsibility is to attend to the teacher's actions and words and to be instructed by the teacher. It makes teachers and learners responsible for seeing each other as human beings.

The co-existence of teachers and their students is based on a complex mutual ethical understanding with respect to behaviour on both parts.<sup>4</sup> In this connection, it can be stated that, bearing in mind the growing age of pupils and students as well as their growing cognitive, intellectual, and moral abilities, teachers should make efforts in their educational activities to create an adequate partnership based on mutual understanding. On the one hand, teachers should attempt to understand the position of pupils or students and their behaviour and actions; on the other hand, they should create the right conditions and atmosphere in which their pupils or students have the opportunity to understand the role and position of teachers within the relationship, including their moral duty and responsibility for students' moral development into morally mature individuals. In addition to the necessity of being professional in their educational activities, teachers are also expected to integrate their skills and knowledge and be aware of the moral and pedagogical responsibilities and duties towards individuals who are dependent on the teacher (i.e., the students). It is also necessary that attention be paid to the development of the ethical and moral competence of teachers.<sup>5</sup> Teachers as well as the family have a responsibility to address questions of moral choice, to encourage thinking and acting responsibility within some moral framework, and to assist students in building a foundation to show respect for human dignity.

Collaboration is a process of communicating, essential to the enhancement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. But what seems right today may be wrong in the future. Modern technology and internationalism give rise to the need for new rules, requiring educators to step outside the classroom. It is integrating ethical content into the curriculum that will enable students to view concepts, issues, and problems from several moral viewpoints while maintaining integrity and honesty. Science professionals as well as families are challenged to undertake the serious work of combining moral reflection with the demands of practice to raise ethical standards.

It is, of course, important that we recognise the value dimension of science education at all levels of education. The day-to-day interaction of the classroom is a model of society. Students of all ages wish to explore rights and wrongs. Today's science teachers are producing today's citizens and tomorrow's scientists, policy makers, and administrators. So we can say that science education has an important role in education as a whole.

*Technical University of Kosice  
Faculty of Manufacturing Technologies  
Presov, Slovakia*

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Diana Cone, "The Role of Educators in Promoting Global Ethics," *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, Vol. 93 (2001), pp.12-14, at p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Trygve Bergem, "The Teacher As Moral Agent," *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 19 (1990), pp. 88–100, at p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> P.J. Carruth and A.K Carruth, "Education in Ethics! The Role of Higher Education," *Journal of Education for Business*, Vol. 66 (1991). pp. 168-171.

<sup>4</sup> Kurt Aurin and Martina Maurer, "Forms and Dimension of Teachers' Professional Ethics – Case Studies in Secondary Schools," *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 22 (1993), pp. 277–297, at p. 293.

<sup>5</sup> Gunnel Colnerud, "Ethical Conflicts in Teaching," *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol. 13 (1997), pp. 627–635, at p. 628.





## CHAPTER XI

# THE RELIGIOUS ESSENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL

ANATOLIY G. KOSSICHENKO

The concept of the spiritual at the present time is extremely indefinite and blurred. Such a situation can be attributed to several circumstances.

First, our time in general has raised instability, uncertainty, and ambiguity to the rank of the truth, and has made them the norm of existence. It is a consequence of the loss of *raison d'être* both by human beings and by society. The purity and lucidity of understanding the import, not only of human life (which can be interpreted as conceiving of a new and even absolutely new – not correlated with the former – *raison d'être*, arising in principally new conditions of human existence), but also of every single fragment of reality, have disappeared; reality itself has become diffuse, many-faceted, and conditioned (which again can be understood as the multidimensionality of real existence, as its irreducibility to flat uniformity, as a wide view of the world, as pluralism, etc.). The ideas of the multidimensionality of spaces of imports (whatever they be) have won wide popularity. Imports have become similar to technology – one can build anything from them. All this leads to refusal from the import, but not to its expansion.

Secondly, contemporary culture has lost its connection with the previous one, liberating itself hence from the obligation to be exact about the concepts reflecting the previous culture. After the onslaught of the post-modern, the loss of definiteness has become the sign of the new culture. Words are used arbitrarily, without even an elementary connection with their previous content. One talks about the 'philosophy' of business (probably, meaning its basic principles), the 'philosophy' of furniture, and so on. The word 'spirituality' is used with the same ease. Talk of the 'high spirituality' of the latest insignificant exhibition of abstract painting has become a commonplace of art critics. One should note the general tendency to depreciation, profanation, of especially significant, 'high' concepts of earlier culture. The higher the meaning the word had before, the more insignificant is its meaning today. Audacities of such sort are clearly fixed in the youth and professional slang; common conscience has simplified to the utmost its conceptual structure, having reduced it to verbs and desires; scientific irresponsibility prevailing in the contemporary scientific environment leads to the loss of the accuracy of the conceptual structure of science, especially of the social-humanitarian sciences.

Thirdly, virtually every sphere of activity of the contemporary person has its own account of the same concepts, which again permits the use of such concepts arbitrarily.

The fourth, justified symbolism of language in our epoch of import breakup – which is inevitable – has been transformed into destroying the import of a concept’s metaphorical style.

And finally, the fifth circumstance: because of the steamroller-like growth of secularism with seemingly growing religiosity, the person has virtually completely lost the sense of responsibility for his work and for its import. Such sayings as “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” have been transformed into difficult to understand, abstract word combinations. Responsibility for the word, creative significance of the word – are absent in the conscience of the absolute majority of our contemporaries.

Is there any reason, then, to be surprised that in all the above circumstances the contemporary person easily and arbitrarily uses words differently? The word ‘spirituality’ is used now in place and out of place. Meanwhile, the word ‘spirituality’ comes from the word ‘spirit’, and spirit is what God breathed into Adam at his creation. And now the terms ‘spirit,’ “the spiritual” – Divine inspiration – are used out of turn; for example, people speak about the spiritual and, more than that, about the highly spiritual significance of a new insignificant method in pedagogy; the word is used in relation to films, stilted images of poetry and prose, ugly, deprived of any imagery – and at that, the more the subject is out of spirit, the easier it is called the spiritual, spirituality. Such is our poor-spirit time, and such are we contemporary people.

Why do we insist that the word ‘spiritual’ must not be used arbitrarily, relative to different situations, events, and subjects? The incorrect use of words is bad and reprehensible, since it disorients a huge number of the uninstructed, who today, alas, constitute the majority. It is bad since, with such use of words, the instinct for truth is distorted in human beings (for every person feels truth), truth is substituted by lies, and all know who the father of lies is. But if it is bad in respect of many other words, it is much worse and more dangerous when such a substitution is made in respect of the concept the ‘spiritual’. We unconsciously distort not simply the word ‘spirit’, but the content of the word. We reduce, we devalue, we refuse not the word, but the spirit itself.

It is not so tragic if we do this because of our ignorance, but more often it is made as a protest. The earthliness of our life consists in a loss of spiritual tact, which would have not permitted us before to be so negligent in the use of the term ‘the spiritual’. Deprived of spirituality, a person protests against the correct use of the term ‘the spiritual,’ since looking closely into the word ‘spiritual’ is able to spiritualize the person.

One can object that one should not be so supersensitive to the described situation: there is no malice, there is just simplicity, ease in the use of words. But just try to take from such an ‘easy-minded’ person his money – he will immediately protest. What is this discriminating ‘easy-mindedness’? This seeming easy-mindedness hides a clear and deeply

reasoned system of values, where money is something holy, and what is genuinely holy is a trifle, foolishness.

The spirit is so highly valued in religious systems that, for example, the Gospel says: "Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men." And the distorted use of the word 'spirit' is blasphemy. So, all this easiness in the use of the word 'spiritual' is not easiness at all, but a strategy for the destruction of the principles of faith.

Only in the religious sphere is the use of the word 'spiritual' appropriate, since religion is in essence the sphere of the spiritual. And when we today, being almost without exception illiterate religiously, try to defend the right to use this term relative to, for instance, art works, then at best we demonstrate this illiteracy; at worst, we protest against faith, fight with it.

The adequate sphere of the spiritual is religion – where the entire problematic of the spiritual comes from, and where the answers to all sincere spiritual questions reside. The only justified creative use of the word 'spiritual' is in referring to the development of the person in spirit, his spiritual development. The parameters and requirements of such a development are well known from religious commandments. Here is the genuine sphere of the spiritual.

Philosophers of the twentieth century have greatly contributed to the incorrect understanding of the spiritual. Even such a prominent thinker as N. Berdyayev wrote that the person is a co-creator with God – that this is the purpose of the person, and essential to his spiritual development. It follows from that that the person, in his creative work, has spiritual potential, which is embodied in the arts and similar spheres. And therefore, it is appropriate to use the term 'spiritual' for subjects of human activity. The closer such an activity is to 'spiritual creative work', the more justified is the use of the term 'the spiritual'.

This is an absolute lie. This has been recognized since the time of the Gnostics, who created unsolvable problems with attempts to substantiate the ontology of the world through 'condescension of spirit' and its 'dying in the substance'. The Scripture compares the spirit with the wind that 'blows where it wishes', and no 'material prison' can catch or capture it. This is just a Gnostic attempt to substantiate the Spirit outside His connection with its source – God. Strictly speaking, this is open atheism, and it must be called so.

But such is atheism. All other worldviews, primarily the religious ones, cannot so arbitrarily interpret the concept of 'the spiritual'. The religious essence of the spiritual shows through in the content of the spiritual and is evident in every manifestation of the spiritual. One needs to try very much not to see it.

However, denial of the self-evident is the characteristic trait of our time, giving preference to the absurd -- when nobody cares about the inanity of life, but all care about 'quality of life' – as a set of qualities similar to the

consumer basket. With oblivion of the spiritual, the spiritual will not suffer, but the person will suffer and suffers now. Without the knowledge of the spiritual, he thinks that he suffers from the lack of everything except the spirit, though all his sufferings come from a lack of the spiritual. Let us hope that the contemporary person will break through to the spiritual being, if for no other reason than that he just does not have any other way out.

“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit”. (John, 3:8)

*Department of Philosophy, Science, and Culture  
Institute of Philosophy and Political Science  
Almaty, Kazakhstan*

## CHAPTER XII

# THE UNITY OF SPIRITUAL COGNITION IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

*Sergey Nizhnikov*

Is there anything spiritual that has universal significance or some kind of superstructure above national interests? Fyodor Dostoevsky answered this question by saying that what is universal is born from the blossoming of what is national. Those things which are the best and the deepest products of national cultures are also, by nature, universal. The *Tao te ching*, the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, the *Dhammapada* and *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Bible*, the *Koran*, the dialogues of Plato the maxims of other early Greek philosophers, Aeschylean tragedies and Shakespeare's creativity — all these are works from spiritual traditions born of unique national cultures, but, at the same time, they are also the property of all mankind as a whole, and of each of its members. There is no the best or the worst; we cannot apply any scale of values to them at all, for they are invaluable. . There is no culture, religion or philosophy, *qua* deep spiritual tradition, that is either the best or the worst. All of them are original and unique. However, what is universal is not a set of ideas. Rather, it is the nucleus of each culture's ideas. The unique spiritual archetype of mankind shines through each of its national cultures in different ways. It is reflected entirely and completely in each of them, but in a special way. The more cultures there are, the richer is the spectrum of the spiritual content of the archetype. The real unity of mankind is not in slogans and ideologies; as the writer Chinghiz Aitmatov noted, this unity is found in the creation of common spiritual values.

When analyzing the history of cultures, it may seem that, although there have always been spiritual crises of different sorts, which have forced humans to develop spiritually, the present situation of the world is particularly frightening, for not all of mankind is at risk of destruction, not merely one group or another. The present worldwide spiritual crisis is menacing in both its depth and its breadth. The principle problems concern war, ecology and morality, which are closely connected to each other. Humankind is losing aspects of its spiritual archetype; people are losing their humanity. Consequently, it is now very necessary to present immemorial values more powerfully than before. These values form an integral part of *all* spiritual – cultural traditions of the peoples of the world. There is one spiritual archetype of humankind, but it is formulated in different languages, cultures, symbols, concepts and methods.

The proper consideration of any spiritual problem requires the study of the genesis of the concept of the spiritual, which is also the genesis of the human spirit. Philosophical categories are living pictures of this

spiritual self-creation of the person in history. Especially it concerns the central philosophical category – *being* or *essence*. This category should be considered not simply as an abstraction of reality as a whole, but also as a symbol of essence of the individual person. In the history of philosophy, the category of being undergoes the same metamorphoses as the concept of essence of the person: from *reality as the whole* to *being as transcendent*, from *soul* to *spirit*. Both philosophical concepts and religious symbols speak their own languages about the spiritual essence of the person, use their own material to reveal the position of the person in the world comprehend the person and form an ideal: the identity of thought and being in philosophy, or the person and God in religion.

The symbol of the spiritual, in this aspect, is, in the philosophy of Fichte (1762–1814), the pure consciousness as absolute *I*, but it is also known, in Buddhism, as *nirvana*. The pure consciousness is an unknowable ideal, one with which Eastern traditions have been particularly concerned. The spiritual way is here seen as the non-identity of consciousness and any of its possible combinations, which tries to grasp the whole field of consciousness. Alienated from the *not-I*, the person constantly opens new levels of himself, finding itself as something other. This spiritual cognition leads to the liberation of the consciousness from any of its present experience – the private world of the person – from the tyranny of inclinations, emotions, chaotic ideas etc. In Christianity, this process is carried out by means of prayer or by reference to the transcendent. In Eastern spiritual traditions, transcendence is accomplished by means of meditation, purifying *I* from *not-I*. It is a “mind-hearted” ecstasy, the achievement of the greatest possible perfection, the full expansion of his essence, the finding of the true significance of life and realization of all potentialities. It is the spiritual ideal in which all contradictions are removed: thought and being, alienation of oneself from one’s own essence, the accomplishment of one’s unification with God. All of these concepts can be reduced to one, spiritual contemplation, which is found in the traditions of all human cultures.

Until now, the concept of the spiritual has been considered historically, or even formally, from the point of view of the functioning of consciousness. But such approaches give only external representations about spiritual knowledge; we miss the essence of the problem, because the spiritual is present only when there is a spiritual person. When there is no person, there is nothing spiritual. Spirituality can be coded in the ciphers of cultures, their texts, but to decode it, to make it effective and alive, it is necessary that there also be a person. Spiritual self-knowledge is possible only when the person is truly grasped; transcendence in existential fullness occurs when a person’s senses are completely unpacked. The concept of existence will be analyzed more closely below.

True morality is found not in fanaticism, but in spiritual knowledge, which has both a historical and an existential being. Therefore, in the final section of this work, I will discuss such qualitative characteristics of

spiritual phenomena as love, conscience and creativity. Focusing on these three phenomena in particular may at first seem unjustifiable, but it will be seen that there is reason to do so.

Let us first consider love. Although love is so often spoken of, it is never fully understood, and never will be. The only guide to love is love itself, and love can be found only in the heart of a loving person. The one who is in love sees the essence of his beloved. According to Ibn Sīnā, love is an astrolabe of the truth. Philosophy is the love of wisdom and truth, and religion is the love of God. Through love, a person is incorporated to Being, and so to God, to his neighbor and so to his own essence. To love is to increase one's life; it is the same pure spiritual phenomenon as is contemplation. It is Love that binds together Truth, Virtue and Beauty, showing in this supreme synthesis the spiritual archetype of humankind. Without love, according to the Apostle Paul, all is vain. Love has become a banner of all spiritual traditions of mankind for good cause. The lover cognizes not only another person, but also the essence of World, of Being, of God.

Now let us consider conscience. It is conscience which causes the material and the spiritual to interact. Each person acts in the material world using the laws of the ideal world. One's conscience connects one's acts to one's ideals. One's conscience is informed by one's mind and one's heart, by one's belief and one's reason. Believers refer to the conscience as the divine voice within a person. Martin Heidegger defined conscience as co-message of Being and the person, where the person plays the role of a herald of Being in order to live in accord with it. Conscience, like love, connects people. Both love and conscience demand a constant development, enlightenment and spiritual purification or perfection. Such spiritual knowledge results in a more profound understanding of moral problems. Only such a person may experience the torments of conscience and be sincerely repentant and contrite. Life in conformity with conscience, though it is difficult, gives rise to a spiritual feeling, a moral satisfaction which in its strength, profundity and height surpasses any satisfaction that could ever be provided by material or sensual pleasures. In conscience one finds both freedom and necessity. The conscience calls one not to exterior cleanliness, but to 'interior cleanliness', correcting the motives and intentions of one's acts. In the purity of thought of a person is uncovered the real, spiritual significance of his life.

Finally, there is creativity. Apart from creativity, there is no spirituality. Only on account of creativity do philosophy, religion, love and conscience find spiritual significance and development. The supreme kind of creativity is self-knowledge; only the process of acquiring self-knowledge, of, as it were, creating oneself, can be defined as actually spiritual, as really creative. Aesthetic creativity is not external in relation to spirituality and essence of a person; it is their constitutive force. Creativity is not something auxiliary to metaphysics and ethics. Rather, it penetrates them, filling them up with life. Logic and the pursuit of knowledge require

that metaphysics and ethics be considered separately, but in true spiritual creativity, they are contained in unity, as in the work of the ancient thinkers. The beauty is as important for humanity's spiritual archetype as is truth and virtue: harmony is created only with their unity in love. It is on this account that the great Russian writer and thinker Fyodor Dostoevsky, repeating an idea of Plato's, asserted that beauty will rescue the world.

Thus, the present research represents a consideration of spiritual problems, the stage-by-stage expansion of the concepts of spiritual, self-knowledge, creativity, spiritual archetype of humankind, and essence of the human being. These concepts form the theoretical base of this essay and allow us to consider spirituality in its purest sense, without relying on religious symbols or concepts derived from any particular system of philosophy, represented as something original and unique. This principle can also be applied more broadly to the history of philosophy and culture, both of which have grown and developed without fully comprehending their concepts and symbols. Philosophy itself is beset by the many problems that present themselves to the human mind simply in the course of going through life on earth. The nature of man has become a subject of philosophy, religion and art almost from the moment of their respective origins, and we know no more about it now than our ancestors did three millennia ago. At the same time, a great deal of knowledge is found in the field of the theory and practice which philosophical judgment is able to present to a person as a spiritual essence, to tell him something new about himself, to disclose his essence even more deeply once he has more clearly seen what he is not, and to bring him nearer to the substantial and immanent unity of all human beings, – spiritual archetype of humankind. This archetype has not been well understood, even though it has been a subject of constant study for an exceedingly long period of time and by means of various religious symbols and philosophical ideas. Thus, Christ for the faithful Christian is such divine person who, having developed the essence as a human being, has presented himself as all humankind in its complete supreme and a perfective aspect, and for this reason (though not only) he is God. Thus, for the faithful Christian, Christ is known to be God in part because he—a Divine person who became incarnate as a man—presented himself as the perfect man.

I now wish to analyse the basic characteristics of spirituality. In an important respect, spirituality is like philosophy. Nobody can ever fully explain what philosophy is and what it concerns, because both are in constant flux. The fullest explanation of what philosophy is is simply its ever-lengthening history. The same is true of spirituality. Nonetheless, let us try to analyse and understand spirituality. Obviously, spirituality is important, for it is concerned with the very significance of the person. The question of one's own significance is important to every person, without exception, but not everyone thinks of it. Only when someone tries to ask this question can he begin to understand spiritual matters. The entire history of human spirituality has been oriented toward answering this question.



Unfortunately, some insufficiently spiritual people believe that the meaning of life consists in sensual pleasure and the satisfaction of materialistic desires. When such a person becomes wiser, he begins to focus less on material needs and more on spiritual ones, moving toward creativity, seeking the good of others, even all mankind.

A person's answer to the question of life's significance forms the nucleus of his worldview and determines his entire life. The presence of consciousness as itself assumes the necessity of sense, i.e., judgments about itself. Sense is inherent in consciousness. It is possible to say that consciousness is constructed by sense, and varies depending on what the person sees as the purpose of his life. Philosophy aspires to solve the problem of sense; religion gives its own answer to it. Without depending on whether a person searches (or does not search) for the purpose of life, for the logical sense of his existence, he already lives according to this or that "sense" that has been formed within him under influence of a certain social situation and according to the level of his development as a person.

The ancient Greek philosopher Anaxagoras (~500–428 BC) believed that the purpose of life is contemplation and the freedom that results from it. To the question of why humans exist, he replied: "For the sake of contemplation of the sky and the order of the universe."<sup>1</sup> In the contemplation of the eternal heavens, Anaxagoras found the meaning of life.

The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy concluded that "the purpose of human life is to promote a comprehensive development of all that exists"<sup>2</sup>. He was then 19 years old, but he adhered to this position for the rest of his life. Dostoevsky believed that no person or nation can exist without a supreme idea: the meaning of life is given by the supreme idea, unto which the person aspires and in which he trusts.

Asking about the meaning of life is not merely an idle occupation. The person who avoids this question can never properly realise his own being. The question of the meaning of the life is the basic existential question. It clears up for the person the essence of his existence – being. The person who considers the question of the meaning of life begins to sweep aside all that is contrary to it. He ascends from the consideration of things to being itself, finding the principle in the light of which all other things make sense. The person, who cannot be satisfied by the things of this world, seeks for the spiritual; he is on his way to it for he has heard its call.

To be fully moral, a person must not only abstain from evil, but also become virtuous. When a person develops spiritually, his life and its meaning move from the domain of the material to that of the spiritual. This move is inevitably connected with the love of his fellow man, beginning with the people around him. Hatred blocks this development. A life of hatred is deprived of true meaning, and is consequently unsatisfying, but kindness brings about great happiness in one's soul, filling one's life with the deepest significance.

The sense of life logically can be visualized from three points of view:

- a) Beyond the boundaries of biological life (religious, metaphysical) – above life (transcendent);
- b) Created directly by a material subject (immanent in respect to it, and thereby atheistic and existential);
- c) As originally inherent in life in its fundamental essence – in life itself (pantheistic).

It is not possible to choose between all of these views. All of them are true from different perspectives. The meaning of life is simultaneously within life itself and beyond its boundaries; it is at the same time immanent and transcendent. It is created by a man, but it is also intrinsic to him.

When a spiritual person is extremely honest with himself, he is capable to touch depths of his own life, to meet himself, sometimes for the first time. This self-recognition brings about a spiritual transformation of the person. The beginning of spiritual knowledge comes about when a person considers the depths of himself with perfect and unassailable honesty.

In the act of self-knowledge, a person is given to himself, but in a paradoxical way; his is a special essence, and he is in the dark concerning his own nature. Thus the ancient comment to “know thyself”, which first arose as an inscription on the temple of Apollo at Delphi. It was repeated by Thales, and Socrates found in it the meaning of life. Religion also utters this command. In its own way, it becomes the basic theme of art, especially in Aeschylus’s tragedies in Ancient Greece, in India’s *Bhagavad-Gita*, and even in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* in ancient Mesopotamia.

Philosophy has always sought self-knowledge. Even the first naturalistic philosophers studied the universe in order to learn about themselves. Heraclitus, who predated Socrates, was habitually engaged in self-study, sitting on the steps of a temple, playing dice with children and reflecting about eternity. According to Plutarch, “...as if having made something majestic and important, [Heraclitus] says: “I searched for myself”” – and one of the most divine Delphic sayings was “Know thyself”, For Socrates, this served as a starting point for raising this question and for his philosophical activity.<sup>3</sup>

Socrates focuses more on direct self-knowledge, he is not interested any more in other ways: “I have no interest in the nature of material reality”, he wrote<sup>4</sup>. According to Socrates, it is possible to say that spiritual knowledge is the “art which helps us to care for ourselves”.<sup>5</sup> For him, the acquisition of spiritual knowledge is directed to the nature of the self, which later Plato has defined as the *idea, eidos*, of a person.<sup>6</sup> The identification of *eidos* with the essence of the spiritual has resulted, then, in its being understood as something metaphysical and super sensual. To avoid this in the present work, spiritual knowledge is defined as the disclosing of essence of a person.

In ancient Indian philosophy, the spiritual end of man was referred to as *moksha*, i.e. “deliverance”, and *moksha-dharma*, the law of

deliverance, which is also the name of one of the books of the *Mahabharata*. The book *Moksha-dharma*, alongside the Upanishads, presents the basic conceptual system and principles, i.e. archetype, of ancient Indian culture. In Indian philosophy, spiritual knowledge and the essence of a person are defined through a transcendental-immanent understanding of Brahman-Atman. The same thing occurs in the Taoist book "Guanzi" (literally "[Writings of] Master Guan"), which states: "to search for wisdom outside of itself – is the height of nonsense", and the ancient Confucian philosopher Mencius said that "doctrine has only one purpose – to search for the lost human nature."<sup>7</sup>

The fundamental metaphysical categories of philosophy and the basic religious symbols can be considered as tools for conceiving the essence of a person. The category of being is also a symbol of the essence of a person, because each person is called to transcend his existence, finding himself, thus, in a *gleam* of being (Heidegger). A person is in a way external to himself, which makes it necessary for him to learn about the whole universe, in breadth to the heavens, and in the depths of his own psyche, the logos of which is infinite in its self-increasing (Heraclitus). For this reason, the person needs transcendence and immanence, being and the material world, and such concepts as *atom* (Democritus), *idea* (Plato), "the *unmoved mover*" (Aristotle), the supreme *unity* (Neoplatonists), *The One* (Vedanta, Vladimir Solovyev), etc. These are all symbols of the essence of the person, points that give a foothold for thought and self-creation. In acquiring spiritual knowledge, a person finds the way to his own essence.

A person can be a slave not only to his own views, but also to the ideas which are imposed on him by culture or ideology. Therefore, research on the forms of the spiritual and the analysis of this concept can help to free one's consciousness from illusions. The philosophical analysis of the spiritual is a way to freedom, as well as a process of self-purification and self-deliverance. In this sense, philosophy, is an esoteric science, accessible to, but not comprehended by, everybody.

The spiritual penetrates all spheres of human activity. Without the spiritual, a person does not exist, but there can be various levels of spiritualization. In this connection, we shall consider how spiritual phenomena are reflected in culture, mysticism, and morals.

The experience of spiritual self-cognition that is essential to the person creates a culture. It is the form-building core of the person. Think of the confessions of St. Augustine, Rousseau, and Lev Tolstoy. These texts not only reflect a revolution in culture, but in many respects have served as a catalyst for revolution. In the history of human culture, spiritual experience and knowledge are disclosed as Revelation; this is a tree with three branches: religion, philosophy, and art. They are united by the phenomenon of the spiritual that, however, is manifested in three different ways, based on various intrinsic forces of the person, his abilities, and his potentialities.

Strictly speaking, the phenomenon of the spiritual is not the property of culture in the sense that it is culture that arises on the basis of spiritual acts. From the spiritual, the cultural is created. In culture, the movement of the spiritual is objectified. Culture alone is capable of preventing the degradation of a person to a barbarous condition, and even then it is not always within its power. A person who has tasted the spiritual is always in opposition to prevailing views, whether he be a philosopher or a religious reformer, an art worker or a mystic. Culture lives on spiritual acts which, without culture, would be incomprehensible and useless. But, after having generated settled, objectified knowledge, culture can become hostile to any appearance of really spiritual creativity – a creativity which challenges established traditions and outlooks. However, at the same time there is also a way back – from a spirituality objectified in culture towards the spiritual as such.

Nietzsche is the best representative of one who struggled with a culture, with settled spiritual values. He alone has stepped up to struggle, face to face, against the might of a long-established thousand-year culture, but, eventually, it destroyed him. Gains of the spirit are not given to a person as a gift; one must pay in blood. F.M. Dostoevsky has shown very well the animosity of culture to any real display of the spiritual in the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* (especially in the tale of the Grand Inquisitor, where the established religious image became more important than its original source). The spiritual is always unknown, and it demands from a person his total self – the willingness to risk, struggle, and rebel.

The phenomenon of the spiritual, when present as a process of self-cognition during which the essence of a person is developed, manifests itself in the increasing degree of the humanizing of the person. Basic moral precepts arise as revelations in the deep experience of self-knowledge. And this means that spiritual knowledge is directly connected to morals. Spiritual knowledge develops humanity in a person, because it can come to light only through its own efforts. In this connection, Heidegger wrote: “The humanity of a person ... is based in his essence”. And further: the “non-humane”, “not humanistic” is the person “who has broken away from his essence.”<sup>8</sup> From this it is possible to draw the conclusion that a person in his essence, by his spiritual nature, is good-natured and that he becomes malicious only when he forgets himself, deviating from his essence. Out of such forgetfulness by the person himself, grows the spiritual crisis of humankind – the loss of humanity by a person, the loss of humanism, and the loss of his own countenance. Heidegger writes: “It starts to seem to the person that now only he appears everywhere, while actually he does not meet with himself anywhere.” A person’s essence is hidden from himself both by technology and by his own not-spiritualized sensuality. From spiritual knowledge also grows true humanism, which is the intrinsic characteristic of the spiritual phenomenon. Heidegger, examining the ontological roots of humanism, thinks of it as the “humanity of a human being which has an affinity with being.”

Persons find freedom and dignity in spiritual creativity. Spiritual acts give rise to real values, social and juridical rules, and morals. The person, being an extremely versatile essence, nevertheless is compelled to make his way to the integrity of spiritual knowledge through the absolutization of one of his intrinsic forces. As a result, there appear various spheres of demonstration of the spiritual that, despite their intrinsic unity, are inconsistent: reason may be opposed to belief, and mind to feeling – but these contradictions stimulate spiritual development, and humanity along the way of the creation of the complete person.

In ordinary consciousness, the spiritual is frequently identified with ethics and moral norms that do not correspond to the truth. As we have seen, however, the spiritual knowledge that arises from the disclosing of the essence of a person is a way of finding humanity. Morals are essentially connected with the spiritual. Morals are moral only then when they are born from the depths of the spiritual, instead of being postulated from the outside and prevailing over a person. Morals, having their basis in the spiritual, are based not so much on the law, but on blessedness, from which the laws derive. Spiritual love is the supreme legislator and entails a duty.

Basic moral precepts, then, arise as revelations from within the depth of the experience of self-cognition. So, for example, the precept “Don’t kill!” has been known for thousands of years, even though wars continue and many countries include the death sentence in their legal codes. All this reminds us of the spiritual level of the person who does not understand that the life of any person is beyond price, and that nobody has the moral right to take it away. It is not well understood that evil cannot overcome evil, but only goodness is capable of transforming it. Lev Tolstoy’s sermon of non-resistance to harm by violence was not understood even in his homeland, and Mahatma Gandhi was killed by people to whom he had devoted his life. The existence of murder, regardless of whatever “plausible excuse” it is based on, means that humanity has not yet entered the spiritual phase of its development.

After the preceding analysis of some of the intrinsic characteristics of spiritual phenomena and an explanation of some of its manifestations, for greater clearness we also need to define what is not spiritual and what it is frequently identified with by ordinary consciousness. We also need to move further to the analysis of mysticism and its relations with the phenomenon of the spiritual. This is a very challenging issue to ordinary consciousness, especially when it is not supported by the old traditions, and when we have today a huge number of all possible kinds of psychics, parapsychologists, sorcerers and preachers, many of whom characterize their activity as spiritual. Even many serious people place mysticism entirely in the area of imagination and superstition. Therefore, first of all, it is necessary to define the term.

In classical Greek, mystical means “mysterious.” This term may, however, simply mean ‘what is unknown.’ While the mysterious is unknown and even incomprehensible, there is nothing intrinsically

unnatural in it. Mysticism always deals with the mysterious, always looks with skepticism at what is already known. This stimulates a person to search for new knowledge. New types of cultures and knowledge arise within this mystical frame, and then slowly transform to a certain rationality. Heraclites and Pythagoras were closely connected with priests and all sorts of diviners; the archetype of Christianity has been developed in the mystical philosophy of Philo Judaeus (of Alexandria), Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor; Meister Eckhart's and Jakob Boehme's mysticism served as the catalyst of thought for German classical philosophy; and so on. Thus, it is clear that, from within a mystical shell, the spiritual itself acts – though intuitively and not in a clear shape, because it is not illuminated yet by light of consciousness. Eventually, the mystical is the root of religious views – as we have seen already in Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna). Even metaphysical philosophical categories reflect this, as first many of them are mostly postulated, and only later proved. Mysticism in a positive sense is a constant openness of a person to the unknown; this means constant inquiry and searching. (In other words, we have, again, the presence and realization of a spiritual phenomenon.)

But mysticism can also have other meanings. It can be understood as extrasensory perception and parapsychology, or simply as something that deals with other levels of reality. The problem, however, is not that all these things are only imaginary; perhaps they are not. It is that all this has no relation to the spiritual. In the above case, mysticism is only an expansion of usual ways of human knowledge, although in ways that are unconventional for modern culture. The problem is that spiritual knowledge is not quantitative expansion of what we know through empirical observation. It differs qualitatively from all other methods of knowledge. It is deeper. While perception of any kind, scientific or extrasensory, is distributed horizontally, the spiritual introduces a vertical dimension – not knowledge that relates only to the abilities of a person and his properties and their development, but knowledge of personhood or knowledge of essence, ego, and human nature. The spiritual person is not so much anxious about the development of his abilities or the expansion of the horizon of his knowledge, but is anxious about his essence or the perfection of his nature, i.e., moral purification. He is interested in, first of all, how to dispose of that which he already has in the proper way.

The aforesaid understanding of spiritual does not coincide with the anthropology of Ludwig Feuerbach. The latter reduced all understanding of the spiritual to love – and here, mostly the sensual rather than the spiritual. In the process of bringing the transcendental down to earth, he ignores the importance of the essence of the person to disclose itself through the process of transcendence, without which the birth of the spiritual is impossible. Love, as the strongest and deepest experience, irrespective of object at which it is directed, already comprises in itself an element of transcendence, self-rebellion and moving beyond itself. For this reason Descartes said: “my perception of ... God, is in some way prior to my

perception of ... myself.”<sup>9</sup> This short phrase contains more wisdom than in all purely anthropological statements. The above statement suggests that a person is born spiritually from the supreme idea, original pattern, and transcendence, and is not purely a natural being. “The pure concept” – explains Descartes in another place – “is that there is a God.”<sup>10</sup> Only as understood in this way is the person is able to engage in spiritual cognition, which creates his essence. By means of this cognition, a person pulls himself out of an animal life – like Munchausen pulled himself by his hair out of a bog. In this sense, a person has his origin either from God or from human being, depending on what conceptual system we shall select. As to traditional anthropology, Heidegger re marked, that on “such an interpretation, the person basically already knows what he is, and consequently is never able to be asked the question of what creature he is.”<sup>11</sup>

However, despite everything that has been said above, spiritual knowledge, as constructing or developing the essence of a person, should nevertheless be studied in anthropology, i.e., by the science of the human person, or, in this case, if possible, in ‘spiritual anthropology.’ The latter should not study a person as something that is unchanging or as a static concept. Even when a person thinks about himself and describes himself using the pronoun *I*, *I* is only its name and – *I* is nothing more than a symbol of something of infinite depth. The essence of a person is not something static; each day, the creative person is capable of recognizing himself as something other. The essence of a person is developed during the process of spiritual self-cognition that leads a person to the Person, to perfection, and to an ideal that is to open the spiritual archetype of humankind to the fullest. This process itself is the supreme kind of spiritual creativity whereby a person creates not something alien to itself or something auxiliary to his existence, but his very essence.

Up to now we have succeeded in our attempt to clear away a place for the concept of the spiritual as something different from all others. But, having done so, we inevitably gave birth to a word. Heidegger remarks that “everything that occurs in the “logos” is the task of “sophia,” i.e., philosophers.”<sup>12</sup> Thus we have a vicious circle. If we try to separate the problem of the spiritual from religion, philosophy, and other spheres, and start to regard it as independent, it becomes impossible to avoid *logos* and *sophia*. And if the love of an object of research – philosophy being the love of ‘*sophia*’ – is present, then all characteristics of philosophy remain. It seems to be ineradicable. Thus, those who break the established stereotypes and opinions about philosophy are the true philosophers. That is exactly what happened with Pascal and Kierkegaard, with Camus and Kafka. The true philosophy (re)appears as meta-philosophizing, for which there are no boundaries. Then the analysis of the problem of the spiritual becomes an attempt to express all its intrinsic manifestations in *logos*, and these manifestations are not limited by the sphere of traditional philosophy, but

also include both ancient mysteries and the latest scientific research about persons.

The ideal of Eastern Christian anthropology can be expressed through the concept of theology<sup>13</sup> (derived from the Greek. θεωσις – theosis – that is, characterized by the ecstatic experience of direct uniting with the Absolute). Though a historical analogue and prototype of deification can be found even in ancient times in shamanism – in orgies and cults that aimed at removing the distance between man and the Gods (or the world of spirits) – nevertheless deification in the true sense of the word exists only when spiritual cognition comes to concept of a transcendental Personality – i.e., personalist theism.

Deification is not just a “moral” unity with something that is the utmost limit or the achievement of perfection, but an ontological unity. At the same time, it does not mean identity with God. This is impossible in personalist theistic traditions of a transcendental type. In these traditions, there is the following problem: How can one speak of the ontological deification of a man and yet retain the transcendental incomprehensibility of God? The source of the deification of a man is not his essence (nature), but is a grace of God-blessing energy. This grace of the spirit is distinct, but it is not separated from one’s essence. Thus, the presence of divinity becomes possible, despite the absolute transcendence of God. Today’s basic postulates that define deification were approved by the councils held at Constantinople of 1341 and 1351 (sometimes called by Orthodox Christians the Fifth Council of Constantinople and the Ninth Ecumenical Council), and connected with the activity of St. Gregory Palamas (1296-1359) who defended the doctrine of Hesychasm (from the Greek ἡσυχάζω or hesychazo: "to keep stillness"). In Russia, hesychasmist ideas of deification were developed by St. Sergius of Radonezh (ок. 1315-92), Nil Sorsky (St. Nilus of Sora, 1433-1508), Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky (1722-1794), St. Seraphim of Sarov (1760-1833), the Optina monastery Elders (startzy), St. John of Kronstadt (1829-1909) and others.

Deification is the transformation of a man as a biological being into a man as a spiritual creature; it does not diminish or destroy humanity but enriches it (see J. Meyendorff). It is realized through a transcendence of real existence, and means a break with natural being and reason on the basis of religious-existential experience. At the same time, not only does the identity (personality) of the person remain, but there also occurs a fundamental self cognition that leads to deployment of man’s essence and revelation of a spiritual archetype of humankind. Deification not only keeps human personality intact (holism) but, for the first time at the ontological level, it establishes it – it is not just the soul but also the body that is glorified. Thus, the doctrine of deification is expressed in the anthropological ideal of Eastern Christianity which, to some extent, was the foundation for Russian philosophy – contrary to the substantiality of the I, by Kant and Hume, based on a metaphysic of faith; contrary to personalization in Hegel; and different from the account of the origin of personality in Feuerbach.



The spiritual phenomenon can also be defined through the concept of transformation. The spiritual comes to exist when a certain essence is transformed in the Person. Further, this process can acquire its own symbols and terms, depending on how it is accomplished: through religious, philosophical, or other creative materials. But in its essence, the spiritual act is only spiritual. When asking a question about the spiritual, we inevitably find ourselves involved in a thousand-year cultural tradition. To reach spiritual knowledge, a person requires some levers which would enable him to release him from himself. Here, we inevitably enter the three spheres mentioned above; each has language in which and by means of which spiritual knowledge is gained. Certain methods of spiritual knowledge are developed appropriate to the specifics of the spheres of its realization: philosophizing on the basis of thinking, and religious belief on the basis of the ability of the person to reach the highest emotions. According to the young Karl Marx, “the originality of each intrinsic force”<sup>14</sup> of a person creates “the original way of its objectification”. The process of spiritual knowledge has results in different areas and, through these channels, allows a person to create himself. The phenomenon of the spiritual cannot be separated from its manifestations in the material, but it is also impossible to reduce it to them. The spiritual shows itself only in an image. Only then can it can be seen by a person – but an image can also disguise the spiritual as such. Jesus said: “Images appear to the person, and the light that in them is latent. In an image of light of the father, it (light) will open, and his image is in shadows due to the light.”<sup>15</sup> Identifying images of the spiritual with what is, limits the person and, thus, deforms his own essence, and runs into narrow dogmatism and fanaticism. However, like living in a world of alienation, in the world of the spiritual the person is compelled to proceed by way of trial and error.

We say that the spiritual *is*, but it is *nothing* in the common world. The spiritual is boundless, both in breadth and in depth, but manifests itself only concretely. A person cannot cognize himself directly; it would contradict his position in the world. Doing so would either eliminate his consciousness or make him into God. He is capable of cognizing himself only indirectly, through manifestations of his essence and its symbols. And though the spiritual essence basically cannot be objectified, it is possible to know it only in and through its existence. The cognition of the spiritual can be carried out only through what it does. A less direct way can turn out to be the shortest way, just as a road winding uphill is easier to take than trying to climb straight up. Therefore, everything that is created in culture is a mediated way to the spiritual. And each person chooses a way appropriate to him, which appeals to him and to his essence. It is wrong to say that A. Pushkin’s aesthetic creativity was not a spiritual way, compared to St. Seraphim of Sarov’s method of prayer.<sup>16</sup> For the writer or the poet, artistic activity is a form of spiritual creativity, and the appropriate method for disclosing one’s essence. From this point of view, it is probably difficult to determine what has most importance or priority – religion or philosophy,

artistic creativity or performing music. A concrete personal approach is necessary here, the criterion for which is the depth of disclosing his essence.

Spiritual knowledge as a revelation that splits into three basic spheres is, nevertheless, a unity. Philosophy, religion, and art as specific ways of manifesting the spiritual, not only enter into contradictions with each other, but also communicate and interact with each other throughout the whole culture of humanity.

So, some intrinsic characteristics of the spiritual phenomenon are already determined, and the spheres of its actions and objectivization are allocated. Given the definition of the concept of the spiritual, it is impossible to stop at any of the pre-established points of view, for example, the extremely religious or atheistic. This would deform the concept of the spiritual, as this would be only a one-sided consideration of it. In the modern world, we notice an innumerable number of sometimes opposite types of world-views. The task is to see whether we can find a common language, and, moreover, a general spiritual basis for dialogue. But, all the same, it is necessary to find some starting point for research, and we already see that the spiritual is the process of the uncovering of a person's essence. The basis of this analysis is the position of a person in the world, the position in which he discovers himself in the act of consciousness. He discovers himself as an essence, which contains contradictions and moves forwards and backwards between them. The essence of this motion is one as if the person is crucified between two worlds: the empirical and the theoretical, the sensual and the speculative. He is simultaneously a spiritual and a material essence. This position of the person in the world is reflected by religion in the basic doctrines, and by philosophy in categories: through the symbol of the fall from grace, on the one hand, and a category of being or essence on the other. Disclosing the religious symbolism and the philosophical categorical apparatus is the answer; it is the attempt of judgment and feeling to overcome the contradictions of one's position in the world. Here we see concepts of ideal and material, goodness and maliciousness, and so on. The concept of the spiritual in this case is considered not as a category that is opposed to the material, and not as some absolute that would have removed itself from matter, but as the highest level of intelligence and sensibleness of a person in the world. Spiritual truth is nothing else than what is true and correct about the attitude of a person to himself and the world. "Truth," wrote Kafka, "is necessary for each person for life and yet he cannot receive or get it from anybody else. Each person continuously should give rise to it from within himself, otherwise he will be lost. Life without truth is impossible. Truth is life itself."<sup>17</sup>

Originally, the spiritual existed for a person as a mystery, in such a way that he lost himself in it, experienced some kind of ecstasy, and changed the state of his consciousness, accomplishing thus some transcendence of his routine existence. But all this occurred mainly due to putting aside rational conscious life, rather than due to increasing sensuousness. However, each person needs a way of transcendence, and

even now, having come to a deadlock, he can choose alcohol or drugs as a remedy. Today, a qualitatively new understanding of the spiritual and of the method of its achievement has appeared with the occurrence of philosophy and monotheistic religions. Here, the spiritual attitude to life began to appear when a person started to comprehend life metaphysically from his position in the world. On this basis, the representation of *idea* was born; the idea about the ideal relation to life, i.e. the spiritual, appeared. Idea as spiritual vision is well expressed, though not without some problems, in Plato's philosophy. In religion, the metaphysical comprehension of life is fixed to its central symbol. Through such a symbol or idea of human consciousness arises the possibility of an entry into the spiritual, the realization by a person of a spiritual life. Christ, Buddha, and Plato have found the spiritual essence of the position of a person in the world, and to express it in symbols and concepts. These positions contain speculative truth, which is demonstrated in various cultures and by various methods. And as spiritual knowledge concerns not just the abilities of a person, not just what he has, but what he is in his essence, the spiritual truth is he himself at the highest level of his being when his essence is completely developed, resulting in the appearance of the spiritual archetype of humankind. Thus, Christ said "I am the way", and the Sufi mystic Mansur al-Hallaj said "I am the Truth."

The spiritual results from the position of a person in the world, which is characterized by such concepts as freedom, will, consciousness, speculation, and so on. The necessity of the spiritual comes from the position of a person in the world who is characterized by a duality and contradiction: *a human person by nature is a biological creature, and by essence spiritual*. But a person is a unity and integrates everything that he has. He enters the sphere of the spiritual, which is also an essentially human area, when he starts posing existential questions about the significance of his life. The spiritual is represented as the truth of human life which is born from a comprehension of life itself. The spiritual is the supreme product of life which comes to self-consciousness in the person. Searching for the meaning of life necessarily results in self-knowledge, knowledge of the essence of being. Spiritual cognition is vertical, whereas all other kinds of knowledge are horizontal. This vertical, or the intrinsic cognition of the meaning of life, is nothing else but self-cognition, a result of which is that the essence of a person is developed and created, showing the spiritual archetype of humankind.

Self-cognition as knowledge of the cognizing subject is speculation about his essence that, in its turn, is characterized by the humanizing of a person and results in his humanization. Such knowledge is the supreme kind of creativity – self-mastery. In such an ideal of spiritual perfection, it is possible to see the one who has developed his essence, has humanized himself, and has revealed in himself the spiritual archetype of humankind.

The process of spiritual creativity in the history of culture splits into three basic streams in which the spiritual is the most direct manifestation:

religion, philosophy, and art. The spiritual, as it is, is unified in its concept, but during historical periods it has been carried out in various ways. It is the transformation of a person into a spiritual creature – which is impossible without “points of a support”, symbols of religion, and metaphysical categories of philosophy, based on which one’s consciousness is capable of purifying itself. The spiritual penetrates all human life and without it, strictly speaking, there is no person. However, the spiritual can come to self-consciousness, if it is sought, not through something else, but through it itself; not in its own sphere, but through an initial revelation, through contemplation in which all the intrinsic forces of a person result in supreme harmony and perfection, and when his essence is completely realized in existence, history, and culture.

First of all, the genesis of the concept of the spiritual is simultaneously the formation of a person as a spiritual essence and the reflection of this process in philosophical concepts, religious symbols, and works of art. They are important because play a creative, resourceful and original role in spiritual knowledge. Based on these spiritual instruments, a person with greater depth is capable of comprehending his position in the world and of thinking about the meaning of his own life. The genesis of the concept of the spiritual accomplishes both in history and in each separate person. In the former as in the latter case, it develops a spiritual archetype of humankind through the disclosing of the essence of a person. In the history of spiritual culture, there are two regular methods of knowledge which are realized in *logos* or *theos*. The analysis of the genesis of the concept of the spiritual is needed for carrying out research in a speculative way – which goes from *mythos* to *logos*, from *apeiron* to *nous*, from immanent to transcendent, and vice versa. The essence of a person, then, is no longer just soul, but spirit. The concept of being as transcendental is unprecedented, and introduces new horizons of spiritual knowledge. It has, however, brought with itself a number of problems, such as the necessity of how to correlate the transcendent and the immanent, reality and being, being and thought, mutual relation and connections of a body, soul and spirit, a person and God, the world and God, and so on. All spiritual culture tries to engage these tasks, and to remove these oppositions which are the driving force for both spiritual culture and philosophy.

The ordering of various approaches to the spiritual and to its manifestations in various cultures already comprises some kind of understanding of a subject. As a result of research, however, a certain spiritual phenomenon which all cultures contain comes to be known. At the same time, the realization of the spiritual in the different fields of a person’s activity does not destroy its specificity. So, whether it is the East or the West, religion, philosophy or art – despite the variety of forms, appearance and understanding – the spiritual comprises something essentially uniform that comes out of the position of a person in the world, regardless of what culture or spiritual tradition he belongs to. This intrinsic unity can be defined as the *spiritual archetype of humankind*.

Research on this problematic and on the concept of spiritual, focused on the logic of its development, results in an integrated and holistic approach to spiritual phenomena. The spiritual archetype of humankind represents by itself the essence of a person in a developed, but formal way, demanding an existential 'filling up' of the life of each human being. Spiritual knowledge as self-cognition, remembering or deployment of what has already been initially incorporated, requires a definition of the essence of the final goal. The spiritual archetype represents such a cell that grows up into the plant of spiritual culture.

The process of the unfolding of a person's essence and the displaying of the spiritual archetype of humankind are already determined from the conceptual, abstract side, but when confronted with concrete material, there appear to be several problems. The archetype is uniform, but it develops in the material of various cultures and is shaped in various languages by different concepts and symbols. This subsequently results in religious wars, philosophical contradictions and, eventually, an imaginary opposition of cultures and civilizations. In order to remove the above-mentioned contradictions, it is necessary to scrutinize the sources of various cultures. Only then will their intrinsic unity be clear. The person who has already looked deeply into himself carries within himself the universal knowledge and reflection of his essence that is manifested in the codes of various cultures.

*Department of the History of Philosophy  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia  
Moscow, Russia*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Abstracts of Early Greek Philosophers*, P. 1 (Moscow, 1989), pp. 505, 513.

<sup>2</sup> L.N. Tolstoy, *Complete Collection of Fictional Works*, Vol. XXI, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Abstracts of Early Greek Philosophers*, P. 1 (Moscow, 1989), p. 194.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Works*, in 3 volumes (Moscow, 1970), Vol. 1, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Works*, p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> Plato, *Works*, in 4 volumes, Vol. 1 (Moscow, 1990), pp. 256, 733.

<sup>7</sup> *Anthology of World Philosophy*, in 4 volumes, Vol. 1. Ч. 2. (Moscow, 1969), p. 210.

<sup>8</sup> *Problems of the Person in Western Philosophy* (Moscow, 1988), pp. 318-319.

<sup>9</sup> R. Descartes, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1950), p. 363.

<sup>10</sup> A.J. Lyatker, *Descartes* (Moscow, 1974), p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> M. Heidegger, *What is Metaphysics?* (Moscow, 1986), p. 117.

<sup>12</sup> M. Heidegger, *Main Concepts of Metaphysics*. «Questions of

Philosophy», № 7 (1989), p. 136.

<sup>13</sup> For more on this thematic, see the following materials: Hilarion Alfeyev, *St Symeon the New Theologian and Orthodox Tradition* (Oxford Early Christian Studies, 2000); *Life and doctrine of Saint George Theologian* (Moscow, 1998); *Macarius the Egyptian (the Great), Spiritual talks of Saint Trinity Sergio Monastery* (1994); *Mythical theology* (Kiev, "Way to the truth", 1991); Gregory Palamas, *Triads in Defense of the Holy Hesychasts* (Moscow, 1995); I.V. Popov, *The Idea of Divinity in the Ancient Eastern Church* (1909); Saint Simeon the New Theologian, *The deity anthem* (Sergiev Posad, 1989); Kern Kiprian, *The Anthropology of St Gregory Palamas* (Moscow: «Palmer», 1996); G.V. Florovsky, *Gregory Palamas and divinity // Dogma and history* (Moscow, 1998), pp. 386-393; S.S. Horougiy, *The Phenomenology of Austerity* (Moscow, 1998); N. Russell, *The Concept of Deification in the Early Greek Fathers* (D.Phil. thesis. Oxford, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> K. Marx, *F. Engels: Early Works* (Moscow, 1956), p. 593.

<sup>15</sup> See the *Gospel of Thomas*.

<sup>16</sup> A.S. Pushkin is a great Russian writer, while Seraphim of Sarov is a famous saint of Russian Orthodox Church. They lived at the same time at the beginning of the XIX century.

<sup>17</sup> F. Kafka, *The Castle. Stories and Legends. Letter to his Father* (Moscow, 1991), p. 568.

**CHAPTER XIII**

**SOME REFLECTIONS ON KEY ORIENTATIONS  
IN PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH  
IN VIETNAM TODAY**

*PHAM VAN DUC*

In this paper, I wish to analyze and clarify three key orientations in philosophical research in Vietnam today: First, the research on practical problems raised by the social practice of Vietnam: the problems posed by building and developing our country in the context of globalization and international economic integration. Second, the research on Vietnamese philosophical thought -- i.e., research on the development of Vietnamese philosophical thinking which has been formed during the productive activities, social construction, and struggles against natural calamities, as well as research on the process of indigenization of philosophical thought acquired through acculturation and cultural interaction with Eastern and Western cultures. Third, the research on trends and ideas of eminent world philosophers, in the East as well as in the West, especially on the philosophical tendencies, views, and thoughts that have had an influence on Vietnam or can theoretically and methodologically contribute to the solution of problems raised by its development.

**INTRODUCTION**

For the last two decades, the comprehensive renovation in Vietnam has brought about historically very significant achievements. During that period, the army of scholars engaging in researching and teaching philosophy in Vietnam has grown considerably both in quantity and in quality. Many research themes, which have been either directed or financially supported by the Party and Government, have been oriented toward strategic problems of the development of our country or fundamental problems of philosophy.

The theme of the 21<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Philosophy in August 2003 in Istanbul, Turkey, which was *Philosophy Facing World Problems*, signalled that the development of the world has brought about many problems, the solutions to which require the joint effort of nation-states worldwide. Philosophy cannot ignore those problems. The problem of *Rethinking Philosophy* becomes the main theme in this 22<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of Philosophy. It also means that, until now – in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – the issue of what philosophy can and should contribute to understanding the contemporary world is widely discussed among the

people who choose reflection on the world and man's place in it as their main profession.

From 50 years of experience of building and developing the Institute of Philosophy, as well as starting from the real demands of the country's development in the context of globalization and international integration, philosophical research in Vietnam today, in our view, should be oriented in the three following directions:

### **RESEARCH ON ISSUES RAISED BY SOCIAL PRACTICE**

First of all, it should state clearly that we all live in the context of globalization. Philosophy faces world problems brought about or deepened by globalization, which is widely acknowledged as a general and necessary tendency. Therefore, the task of philosophy is to contribute to a full awareness of globalization and the problems it has brought.

As a developing country, apart from great advantages and opportunities, Vietnam also faces considerable challenges in the context of globalization and economic integration. Recently, many Vietnamese leaders and scholars have pointed out very serious economic, as well as social, political, and especially cultural challenges. What should Vietnamese philosophy do in order to take full advantage and overcome the challenges brought about by globalization in the present international and national context?

If international philosophers are focusing research on problems posed by globalization, Vietnamese philosophers, starting from the demands of the cause of renovation, should focus their research on the practical problems raised by building and developing our country in the context of globalization and international economic integration. Therefore, the problems raised by the development of Vietnam will be closely linked to regional and international problems from which it cannot be detached in the present context. But as an independent country, Vietnam will have to deal with its own problems during its development. On the other hand, world or global problems themselves have different manifestations in various countries. The specific manifestations are determined by local historical conditions. Therefore, despite having common problems, there will also be problems that have Vietnamese characteristics. Therefore, there exists a dialectical unity between the universal and the particular in the practical problems raised in every country. The main task of philosophy is to research that relationship.

This means also that philosophers must contribute to a philosophy of development for their nation and, in the context of globalization and international integration, answer such questions as what is a philosophy of development of their nation and how can the nation choose the optimal way of development in order for it to take full advantage of the opportunities and overcome the challenges brought about by globalization.



History has shown that, by taking advantage of the opportunities, many underdeveloped countries have been able to shorten their development period and catch up with developed countries. Underdeveloped countries can acquire capital, technology and skills from developed countries in order to accomplish an abridged development, thereby “reducing suffering.” This is an advantage for late-developing countries, or the “post-development advantage.” For example, the four so-called “Asian Tigers,” which developed later than countries like the U.S. and Germany, have made gigantic progress. They have caught up with and even overtaken capitalistic countries such as England and France.

Actually, building a philosophy of development is not only the basic task of philosophy but also an important task faced by other branches of science. During our thousand-year history of existence and development, our forebears have often acquired valuable wisdom from their activities. This wisdom often addressed inter-human relationships and the relations between man and nature. During their fight against foreign aggressors, our forebears generalized and summarized their strategies, and converted them into profound philosophical and military wisdom, such as that of ‘all-people and comprehensive war’ (all of the people are warriors), ‘quick-fight-quick-win,’ ‘steady-fight-and-steady win,’ and so on. Today, in the context of national construction, even an enterprise, after a long time of looking for its own path to success, wants to summarize its own practical experiences in order to determine its business philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Every successful enterprise has its own business philosophy. Similarly, every industry and business ought to build their own development philosophy.

However, we all know that philosophy is on a higher level of generalization than philosophizing. Philosophy is a system of theoretical views on social development or issues raised in areas of human activity. The building of that kind of a system of views is the task of people engaging in theoretical research and, primarily, of people engaged in teaching and researching philosophy.

## **RESEARCH ON VIETNAMESE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT**

Apart from the task of reflecting upon and researching problems raised by the practice of development in the world in general, and in Vietnam in particular, philosophy has its own logic. No system of philosophy or philosophical view has started from scratch. On the contrary, philosophy has always been inherited from previous philosophical views and systems, which have served as its premises or its ideological materials. Therefore, one of the important tasks for Vietnamese philosophers is to research the philosophical thought of Vietnam. A satisfactory answer to the question of whether a Vietnamese philosophy exists has not yet been found. Here, we would like to state briefly some of the various understandings of Vietnamese philosophy

*On the Subject Matter of Vietnamese Philosophy*

Many Vietnamese scholars hold the view that philosophy necessarily involves philosophers, philosophical theories, and schools. If that is the case, then Vietnam has no philosophy. Other scholars claim that, if philosophy is to be understood as a system of rigorous views and categories as in the West, then it is true that Vietnam has no philosophy. But if philosophy is understood as wisdom or the love of wisdom, as deep philosophical thoughts which guide or orient human activities, then there is no reason to deny the presence of philosophy in Vietnam, a country with a thousand-year history of existence and development. Recently, there is even a tendency to claim that Vietnam has not only its own philosophical thought but also philosophical theories, which are original and authentic.

There is a common assumption that, while Western philosophy has often been associated with scientific achievement, especially those of natural sciences, Eastern philosophy has had close links either with religion (Indian philosophy) or socio-political and ethical issues (Chinese philosophy). Vietnamese philosophical thought has always been attached to the cause of building and safeguarding the country. Vietnam has philosophy because our country is known as one of the cradles of human civilization. In addition, based on the views of Vietnamese scholars, we would like to bring forth the following arguments:

- Philosophy means generalized (theoretical) thinking. The Vietnamese developed generalized thinking very early. They knew how to generalize the general while observing and investigating social and natural phenomena in order to find out general laws. They knew how to look at the present from the past, and take the present as the foundation to orient the future; they were aware of seeing things and phenomena in their movement and development.

- Vietnam has achieved many victories in the history of building and safeguarding the country. After every victory, the Vietnamese have reflected on their achievements and drawn general lessons. Every historical dynasty has summarized what it has achieved in its struggles against foreign aggressors or in response to natural calamities, as well as in the cause of national construction in order to draw valuable lessons and wisdom. These lessons and wisdom have achieved a high level of generalization, and therefore, are more or less philosophical.

- Due to its particular geographical and historical conditions, Vietnam has been in contact with many of the world's great cultures. For example, Vietnam has acculturated to: the great culture of China when Northern feudal lords invaded Vietnam, the grandiose culture of India through the introduction of Buddhism to Vietnam, the culture of Christianity when Western colonialists invaded Vietnam, and so on. The philosophical thought of the above-mentioned Eastern and Western cultures

has been acquired and accepted selectively by the Vietnamese and, consequently, it has then become localized.

Thus, based on these arguments, researchers on philosophical thought in Vietnam affirm that the subject matter of the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought is the research on the development of native philosophical thought, which has been formed during the productive activities, social construction, and struggles against natural calamities, as well as research on the process of the indigenization of philosophical thought acquired through acculturation and cultural interactions with Eastern and Western cultures.

#### *Research Scope*

While Western philosophy often addresses the relation between being and thinking, nature and mind, matter and consciousness -- or what is called the basic questions of philosophy in accordance with the above-stated subject matter -- the research scope of the history of Vietnamese philosophical thought consists of the four following points:

- The issues of the relationship between Heaven and Man, mind-heart and things, the conditioned and unconditioned, li (principle) and shi (events), yu (being) and wu (non-being), and so on.
- The relation between the non-moving (metaphysical) and the dynamic (dialectical), the permanent and the changing, heaven and the human, and so on.
- The issues of social philosophy, such as the policies of feudal regimes, the relationships between the king and his mandarins, the king and his subjects, the issue of human talent, and so on.
- The basic issues of human life, such as human nature, success and failure in training and educating people, the human way of being, ethical norms, and so on.

#### *On the Characteristics of Vietnamese Philosophy*

There exist different views on Vietnamese philosophy. Generally speaking, there are three main approaches:

According to the first view, Vietnamese philosophical thought consists of fragmentary copies, or miniatures of Chinese and Indian philosophies. The holders of this view think that the Vietnamese are very pragmatic, that they have no creativity, and that all that they can do is to accept and assimilate different systems of thought and religion which seem to be suitable for them. "No creativity but borrowing, adaptation and utilization. This is the truth about the real history of Great Viet". Even the religions and spirituality of the Vietnamese are superficial, without profundity. The Vietnamese are, in general, intelligent but there have not

been many outstanding scholars or geniuses. There are only people who have some talent for art but not for science, their intuition is stronger than theoretical thinking; they can imitate, adapt and assimilate but are less creative. This kind of view, in essence, is the rejection of the existence of philosophical thought in Vietnam.

According to the second view, Vietnam has only the history of thought in general but not a history of philosophical thought. Philosophical thought in Vietnam can only be classified in the form of philosophizing, but not philosophy as such. The holders of this view absolutize the systematic character of Westerncentric philosophy, which makes Western philosophy as setting the standard for other philosophies. If it is the case, even China and India would have no philosophy, let alone Vietnam.

The third view suggests that Vietnam has philosophical thought, which is not only different from those of Western philosophy, but also from Eastern philosophy

Indeed, many ancient thinkers have been able to produce only generalized sayings and wisdom relating to human life and natural phenomena. And not every thinker can be classified as a builder of comprehensive philosophical systems like Plato or Aristotle.

Countries with great philosophical traditions, such as India and China, have their distinctive features, which are quite different from those of Western philosophy. What is important is to research into the specific characteristics, and articulate the differences that a nation has in comparison with others, but not to deny or marginalize them. After all, every culture has its own features, and it is ridiculous to put one culture higher than other. Thus, research on Vietnamese philosophical thought is necessary in order to clarify the distinctive features of Vietnamese philosophical thought.

#### *Some Specific Features of Vietnamese Philosophy*

1. Due to the influence of the Asian mode of production, the natural sciences and trade have not been much encouraged in Vietnam. (Traditionally, in Vietnam, people's respect has been given first to (feudal) intellectuals, and then peasants, and then workers; traders have often received almost no respect.) There was virtually no basis for the development of capitalism. That is why feudalism was so prolonged. Philosophically speaking, Vietnamese philosophical thought can be classified as feudal.

While Western philosophy was greatly influenced by scientific achievements, especially those of natural sciences, Vietnamese philosophical thought was attached to the cause of building and safeguarding the country. Many researchers claim that the key ideas of Vietnam philosophy are patriotism, socio-political issues (including a system of theoretical views on how to construct and safeguard the motherland from foreign aggression and how to build a strong country), and how to make the people wealthy and happy. In philosophical terms, the

category of 'country' implies human communities, a nation, and a state. Therefore, love toward the country, in philosophical thought, is the theorized responsibility toward one's compatriots and the community. The distinctive feature of the patriotism of the Vietnamese is manifested in the spirit of unity, the spirit of protection of national sovereignty, and cultural identity.

During the cultural interaction with China, India, and the West, Vietnamese philosophy, with its thinking based on a strong indigenous foundation, has played a dominant role in the process of acquiring and acculturating foreign cultures. For example, whereas Indian Buddhism inclines to the unconditioned and renounces the world, Vietnamese Buddhism is oriented to the conditioned and engages the world. In Vietnam, Buddhist temples have their own land for agricultural cultivation, and monks and nuns engage actively in the world. Before being introduced to Vietnam, Buddhism had been a 'self-less' religion, i.e., a religion that excludes the ideas of ego and individuality. But, after coming to Vietnam, Buddhism was converted into a religion encouraging individual strength for engagement with the world and the life of the community. In China, Daoism had been adopted by unsuccessful feudal mandarins and intellectuals who renounced politics in order to live closer to nature and the "tranquil word." But, after arriving in Vietnam, Daoists have pursued harmonious relations with heaven, the earth, and the gods in order to help people cultivate morality, to stabilize social life, and to maintain the close relationship between family, community, and society. The main ideas of Confucianism had been those of establishing virtuous and humane governance and social order based on rituals, but had retained ideas of class, generational, and gender inequality. Upon its introduction to Vietnam, however, Confucianism underwent significant transformation. Thanks to its strong indigenous character, the thinking of the Vietnamese has not been assimilated. Evidently, during their years of domination in Vietnam, Ming Dynasty invaders tried everything -- including burning books, destroying cultural relics, and so on -- to impose their Han culture. But after the victory over the Ming, the Vietnamese started to build their own cultural model.

Vietnam philosophy pays more attention to social and human issues and less attention to the issues of natural sciences. People tend to focus on issues relating to socio-political and ethical life and education.

Whereas Western philosophy starts from the world and the cosmos and moves to issues about human life, Vietnamese philosophical thought tends to start with human life and then develop views on the world and cosmos. Therefore, Vietnamese philosophical thought was developed starting from plain ideas on human life and then moved to theoretical ideas on human life and the world. In addition, its theories on human life and the world seem to lack a rigorous systematic character, and are often manifested as modifications of imported doctrines. Apart from many similarities, there exist also differences in the systems of categories and concepts between

Vietnamese, Chinese, and Indian philosophies. Therefore, in doing research, we should clarify and articulate these differences.

The basic problems of philosophy are not clearly articulated in Vietnamese philosophy because it starts with human life and only gradually moves to views about the nature of the world. Thus, the relations between matter and consciousness, mind and being, and spirit and nature have not been thoroughly addressed. Vietnamese philosophical thought has not been clearly divided into schools and tendencies, or by research problems such as the ontological, epistemological, and so on.

The debate between materialism and idealism is not clearly and distinctively articulated, but it is often manifested through the mode of the debates between subjectivism and objectivism, atheism and theism, democracy and despotism, and independence and dependence. In this debate, while aggressive forces often represent objective, atheistic, democratic and independent tendencies, conservative forces represent subjective, theistic, despotic, and dependent tendencies.

2. Vietnamese philosophical thought, in academic terms, tends to be inward and idealistic. People often use spiritual models to explain the phenomena of the world outside – such as “Joy is not in things; it is in us”. But in terms of folk literature, Vietnamese philosophical thought is in the form of unsophisticated materialism.

In order to generalize and develop their theories, Vietnamese thinkers have often started rather with given (predetermined) presuppositions than (concrete) objective development. Thus, there exists a number of historical generalizations, but they are mainly grounded uncritically on given presuppositions and, therefore, many of them are dogmatic, stereotyped, subjective, and empirical.

Vietnamese thinking inclines toward a pantheistic faith and religion, with the presence of a god of rivers, a god of mountains, and so on. Hence, historical heroes and people who have made great contributions to villages and the country have been revered and deified.

Vietnamese philosophy, in its method of thinking, often pays attention to unity (while Western philosophy focuses on struggle). Movement and development are understood in Vietnamese philosophical thought as circular (whereas Western philosophy often conceives movement and development as a spiral).

From the above, we can say that the task of the people engaging in researching and teaching philosophy in Vietnam is to discover and investigate Vietnamese philosophical thought. However, this task is not limited to the restoration of earlier philosophical thought but, and more importantly, it implies the clarification and articulation of the positive meaning and value of earlier thinking for Vietnam and its people today. And only in so doing can we see which philosophical ideas and traditions should be further developed as well as which are no longer suitable for us.

Additionally, in the present context of globalization, the greatest challenge and threat to developing nations is the loss of national cultural

identity. This concern is not without foundation. Therefore, research on the values of national culture, including those of philosophical culture, is necessary in order to preserve and promote national cultural identity.

### **RESEARCH ON TYPICAL PHILOSOPHICAL TRENDS IN THE WORLD**

One of the no less important tasks for people engaging in research and the teaching of philosophy in Vietnam is to investigate the trends and ideas of eminent world philosophers, both in the East as well as in the West.

However, faced with many difficulties in material conditions, people engaged in teaching and research in philosophy in Vietnam today concentrate their research primarily on the philosophical views which have had more influence on Vietnam, or can theoretically and methodologically contribute to the solution of the problems raised by the country's development.

First of all, we should focus on rethinking – the proper understanding and development of – the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism in the present context of globalization.

In the history of the Vietnamese revolution, the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism has been regarded as the ideological foundation and guideline for the socialist-oriented development of Vietnam. However, Marxist-Leninist philosophy was formed as a result of the generalization of the historical practice of the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, apart from theoretical points which still have value for orienting our present practical actions, there are some points which are not appropriate for new historical conditions.

The practice of twenty years of our process of renewal has shown that the persistence of Marxism-Leninism does not mean implementing it wholly and mechanically, but scientifically and creatively in new historical conditions. The success of renovation in Vietnam in the last twenty years has demonstrated that point. Therefore, the rethinking, proper understanding, and development of the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist philosophy is of utmost importance in terms of theoretical and pressing practical significance.

In the coming years, our task is to research the theoretical points in the views of Marx, Engels and Lenin, to clarify the elements which are still correct and retain their full value as the theoretical foundation and guideline for practical action, and to identify those elements which need to be amended and developed further in order to be suitable for new conditions of the age. Simultaneously, we also need to specify clearly the theoretical points which were appropriate in the past, but have been overcome by our practice and are not applicable in the present situation.

Besides research aiming at rethinking, understanding, and developing the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, we need also to continue to concentrate on non-Marxist philosophy. Since the

beginning of the period of renovation, more attention has been given to research on the tendencies of non-Marxist philosophy. However, what has been achieved in this area is still modest.

The greatest challenge that our philosophers face in research on non-Marxist philosophy is that only a few scholars have special training in that area. In addition, most of the literature and resources on the subject are in foreign languages, and not many people are fluent in those languages in their research. In recent years, some research materials in the area of non-Marxist philosophy have been translated into Vietnamese. However, there have not been Vietnamese translations of many masterpieces of world-famous philosophers.

In the future, we must actively train scholars specializing in non-Marxist philosophy or, if possible, in particular thinkers. For the time being, due to the shortage of research materials and the limited proficiency of our scholars and teachers in foreign languages, it is of utmost necessity to continue to invest in translating some typical works of outstanding philosophers of the various philosophical schools.

As past practice has shown, upon introduction into other countries, many foreign doctrines have undergone changes and been modified as a result of local economic, political, social and cultural conditions. Thanks to that kind of variation and modification, foreign and imported philosophical doctrines have been able to survive in countries other than those of their origin. In spite of the fact that Confucianism was born in China, Confucian scholars have striven to find similarities and differences between Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese Confucianism. In addition, there are different views on the impact of Confucianism in modern society. While many scholars note the great contributions Confucianism has made to the growth and modernization of the Asian tigers, others still insist that for modernization it is necessary to renounce Confucianism. So the role of Confucianism remains a topic for further investigation.

Similarly, during its long history, Vietnam has been influenced by various cultures. Yet foreign philosophical views themselves have undergone changes in order to be adaptable to the conditions of Vietnam. We can say that not only such doctrines as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, which have exerted much influence in Vietnam, or Existentialism and Pragmatism, which have been influential in southern Vietnam under the former Saigon regime, but even Marxist-Leninist philosophy have been differently impacted and have undergone variations in different periods in our history. Our main task here is to investigate and clarify their manifestations and values.

## **CONCLUSION**

Vietnamese philosophers engaged in researching and teaching philosophy in Vietnam are fully aware of the truth that “a nation that wants to climb the pinnacles of science cannot possibly manage without theoretical thought.”



“But theoretical thinking is an innate quality only as regards natural capacity. This natural capacity must be developed, improved, and for its improvement there is as yet no other means than the study of earlier philosophy.”<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, in the present age of globalization, learning the values and traditions of different cultures is necessary in order to enrich one’s own national culture. At the same time, in order to develop, every nation must preserve and promote its national cultural identity, including its philosophical culture.

However, in our opinion, regardless of the specific research area (e.g., practical problems, or world problems, or the history of philosophical thought in Vietnam, or Eastern and Western philosophies, and so on), the ultimate point of philosophical research in Vietnam is to serve the development of the country and the people of Vietnam, as well as to enhance the thinking capabilities of the Vietnamese. The ultimate goal of all development and progress remains human development, progress, and happiness in order to help humans achieve the True, the Good and the Beautiful. This is also the goal for which research and teaching in philosophy in Vietnam is striving.

*Institute of Philosophy  
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences  
Hanoi, Vietnam*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Inamori Kazuo, *ƯỚC MƠ CỦA BẠN NHẤT ĐỊNH SẼ THÀNH HIỆN THỰC* [Your Dream Will Come True Without Fail] (HCM City: The Youth Publishing House, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx, F. Engels, *Complete Works* (in Vietnamese) (Hanoi: The National Political Publishing House, 1994), Vol. 20, pp. 487, 489.



## CHAPTER XIV

# PHILOSOPHY, CULTURE, AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE

*S.R. BHATT*

### EXPERIENCE-CENTRICITY OF LIFE

To undergo experiences is a feature common to all living beings. But nature has endowed human beings with the unique capacity to heighten, deepen and widen experiences, and also to reflect upon them. It is a prerogative of the human being to retain them, to ratiocinate about them, to discriminate among them, and to articulate them all in clear, distinct and logical terms. Conceptualization and verbalization of experiences provide human beings with immense empowerment. A human being who possesses reflective awareness can exercise rational ability to regulate experiences by manipulating both one's innate endowments and one's external surroundings after examining the veracity, utility and significance of one's experiences. Human cognitive and reflective potentiality is tremendous and unfathomable. It is wondrous and variegated. It admits of expansion, manipulation, regulation, and systematization. It would be a sheer waste of human potentiality if such a task were not undertaken. The *Vedic* thinkers describe humans as the offspring of the infinite, and enjoin them to utilize their potentialities for betterment and excellence.

### CULTURE-EMBEDDED-NESS OF PHILOSOPHY

To philosophize is one of the significant ways of utilizing human potentiality, such as thought constructions and system building, with practical orientation and use. Every system of thought is an outcome of felt needs and aspirations of an age and a cultural milieu. Philosophical reflections do not originate in a cultural vacuum or void. To be meaningful and useful they have to be rooted in culture-specific experiences. But this does not mean that they cannot have universal relevance or utility, since human nature, needs, and aspirations are more or less the same. So philosophy should have at once local and global, and individual and universal dimensions. That is why the Vedas insist: let noble thoughts come to us from all over the world. Human cultural heritage is open to all and should be shared by all. There cannot be any closedmindedness about it.

### PHILOSOPHY IN INDIA AS *DARSHANA*

Philosophy stemming from Indian culture is called '*Darshana*'; this stands for the systematic reflection by a thoughtful mind upon *lived* experiences in order to be benefited by the same for the realization of quality of life and the *summum bonum* of life. It is mainly an enterprise of self-awareness and self-reflection. It is an activity that is critical and ratiocinative and involves both analysis and synthesis. But this enquiry is to be undertaken keeping in view the entire, wide, and variegated reality that is the object of reflection. By its very nature it cannot be piecemeal, fragmented, and compartmentalized, even though there can be selective focus on some specific aspects with some specific objective. It is a holistic and integral perspective keeping the whole of reality in view. It is an enquiry into the entire gamut of reality, knowledge, and values in order to understand their nature, meaning, and significance, and to shape human and cosmic existence accordingly. Thus, it has a definite purpose and an end to realize. It is not a non-purposeful endeavor. It is to be done with the objective of shaping present existence, the future projections, and the ultimate destiny of humankind in particular, and of the whole cosmos in general. Naturally, therefore, the individual human self, human society, cosmic evolution, the natural environment, scientific and technological and cultural enterprises, and so on, become focal points in purposeful philosophizing. Considerations of deeper issues concerning these areas provide it with practical orientation in the context of human life planning, social engineering, science policy and environmental stewardship.

### EXPERIENTIAL CHARACTER OF *DARSHANA*:

Philosophy as *darshana* stems from experience, is embedded in experience, and culminates in experience. It thus begins from experience and ends in experience. It is rooted in experience and is tied down to experience. To be meaningful and useful it has to confine itself to the arena of experience alone. Experience is the only gateway to reality, knowledge and values, and their realization. They are apprehended in experience and there is no other way or means to have access to them. They are amenable to experience and a genuine experience must pertain to them. To experience is to experience a real. An unreal is never experienced but only imagined or hypostatized and superimposed. The human mind has this capacity of abstraction, computation, and superimposition. It can also discriminate between the real and the unreal, the experienced and the mentally construed. Of course, the construed also has its significance, value, and utility. It is given the status of knowledge in a different context. It is sometimes called speculation. A speculative enterprise begins in experience but it gets entangled in the labyrinth of imagination and becomes removed from reality. It has importance, but its role is ancillary and subservient to experience. So long

as it helps experience in revealing the depths and subtlety of reality it has meaning, value, and utility.

**PRACTICAL ORIENTATION OF *DARSHANA*:**

Doing *darshana* is not speculative or brooding. It is primarily theoretical and not speculative – and, therefore, it must have practical overtones. It must entail practice. There is a popular saying that knowledge without action is a burden. If philosophical reflection is not applied to concrete life-situations, it is incomplete. It will have an abrupt end if it does not contribute to action. There is no chasm or incompatibility between being and knowing on the one hand, and between knowing and doing on the other. The relation among the three is to be viewed as symmetrical and transitive. The reality is at once all three, but the modes of their realization are different and varied. This is because reality is multi-layered and multifaceted. This fact is vouchsafed by experience only. We have not to go beyond the ambit of experience to apprehend reality.

**NATURE OF *DARSHANA*, REALITY AND EXPERIENCE:**

According to many scholars, the Indian view of reality is wide, varied, and variegated. It is experienced as multifaceted and multi-layered. Because of its many-fold-ness, there can be multiple ways and approaches to comprehend reality. The Indian seers emphasized that, though reality is unitary in its *proto-form*, in its *assumed-form* it expresses itself in multiple forms, and there are multiple ways of expressing our experiences of multifaceted reality. In view of this rich diversity, there should not be any insistence on uniformity or unanimity in our ways of thinking and modes of living. There cannot be any regimentation in this respect. So it would be improper and unjust to insist that there can be only one particular mode of philosophizing that has to be universally acceptable. Genuine philosophical activity has to stem from concretely lived experiences that are culturally conditioned and, therefore, democracy in ideas has to be the guiding point. There should always be a scope for healthy philosophical disagreement. Thoughtful and creative minds need not always agree or think along a fixed path. There is room for debate and discussion, mutual exchange, and give and take, in arriving at truth. This is enjoined in a well known saying that is exhibited in philosophical circles. But this enterprise has to be rational, logical, and methodical. Then only it is reasonable and acceptable. In the past this viewpoint was properly appreciated and practiced but later on some sort of dogmatism vitiated philosophical atmosphere. There is a need for revival of this approach. Then only can fresh approaches, newer intuitions, novel insights and innovative ideas be possible.

Reality is a symbiosis of unity and multiplicity. The multiplicity originates from, is situated and embedded in, and is sustained by one all-inclusive reality. It is an organic unity, a multiplicity-in-unity, not unity

brought about in or superimposed on multiplicity. Multiplicity issues forth from unity, and is accommodated in an ordered way in unity, and that is why it is cosmos and not chaos. It is universe and not *multiverse*. It is universe in the sense that it houses many in one as parts of an organic whole. The Sanskrit words *jagat* and *vishva* are suggestive of this fact. This is how the ontological issue of 'the one' and 'the many' is to be approached. Both one and many are inevitable facts of our experience. In a satisfactory philosophical position, both are recognized and accommodated in a holistic and integral system, in a synthesis, in which the two are not posed as opposites but as complimentary. Such a position can be called *organicism* – that fulfills this task by postulating a primordial unity that expresses itself in and through the multiplicity of diverse forms and functions. An analogy to the living organism given to us in our experiences is well-suited to explain the nature of reality.

A living organism is neither an assemblage of scattered and unrelated multiple parts, nor is it a barren unity or an abstraction that is bereft of the multiplicity of its organs. It is a concrete unity that realizes itself in and through the multiplicity. Just as a part is not intelligible except through the whole of which it is a part, and just as a whole is not conceivable without any reference to its constituent parts, so also the organs are not intelligible except as inhering in an organism, and the organism also is not conceivable without any reference to its organs. Thus organicism regards the one and the many as members of an organic whole, each having a being of its own but a being that implies a relation to the other. This is a holistic and integral approach based on the principles of interrelation and coordination, mutuality and cooperation, reciprocity and interdependence.

In no other system of thought can one speak of such a world of mutual appreciation and organic interrelation and interdependence. In absolutism there is no manifoldness but solid singleness. In dualism there is no mutuality but rigid bifurcation. In pluralism there is no interrelatedness but monadic exclusiveness. So these systems cannot entertain the idea of mutual give and take, mutual appreciation, and mutual caring and sharing that is the core of organicism. The chief value of organicism is that it recognizes the inalienable individuality and the reality of manifoldness of finite spirits and matter, and assigns them a proper place, function, and value in the unifying framework of an all-embracing unity, without in any way destroying its wholeness. The unity differentiates itself into multiple finite entities without being exhausted by them, just like a whole which is not a mere summation of the parts. It is both immanent and transcendent. Multiplicity is not annihilated but preserved and protected in the unity, derives its being, discharges its functions, and realizes its value within the concrete unity. Both are necessary to each other and realize themselves in and through the other.

Like reality, our experiences are also multifaceted and multi-layered. They have to be so in order to be genuine, veracious, and

comprehensive. The variety of experiences is in tune with multiplicity of reality.

Ordinarily our experiences are sense-generated. We possess cognitive senses that provide us variety of experiences, both internal and external. The functioning of cognitive senses is both amusing and bewildering, and at times beyond the ken of human understanding. They also undergo expansion and contraction with the increase or decrease of cognitive capacity. They can be thwarted by impeding forces, and augmented and reinforced by supplementing agents. Ever-increasing scientific and technological inventions and advancements have devised many apparatus that serve as aids to the enrichment of our experiences, particularly of the objects that are remote, or subtle, or covered. There is constant and perhaps endless improvement in our cognizing capacity.

There is something called super-normal perception that opens up a new field of experience. It is a cognitive domain that is sometimes suspect, but its veracity cannot be rejected outright. The availability of such experiences to some gifted persons cannot be denied on the ground that they are not available to everyone.

The evolved human consciousness is bi-faceted in so far as it is self-consciousness as well as object-consciousness. We know, we know that we know, and we also know whether what we know is true and useful or not. On the basis of ratiocinative discrimination we form judgments. We make a distinction between fact and value. These two are distinct but closely interrelated and interdependent. Fact is already in existence and value is to be brought into existence through our efforts. Experience of facts enables us to postulate value and engages us in the pursuit of its realization. When value is realized, it becomes fact. So the fact-value dichotomy is only apparent and for practical purposes only. Consciousness of values and their planned and systematic realization is another unique feature of human being.

## **VALUES AND CULTURE**

The quest for value and its gradual and methodical realization have been prominent concerns and aspirations of humankind in general and of the Indian mind in particular. This involves value-schema based on concrete social and historical realities. It also calls for a symbiosis of being, knowing, and doing. Value schema are multi-layered and multifaceted, involving the mundane and trans-mundane, empirical and trans-empirical, physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. All these are distinguishable but not separable. All these are to be pursued in simultaneity or in succession depending upon needs, requirements, and situations. A value-schema has four phases: end, means, modalities, and realization. Knowledge of the end, proper acquisition of the means, skilful employment of the modalities, and judicious utilization of the result are the prerequisites of a rational value-pursuit. This means adequate management of the reality-

situation, knowledge-field, action-program, and distribution-system. In Indian philosophical thought, distinct and specific attention has been paid to theories of management, keeping in view the unity and diversity of the nature of reality and human existence.

### **CULTURE AND TRADITION**

In Indian philosophical thought, emphasis is placed on the utilization of one's past experiences as well as the experiences of others. The past is handed down to the present in the form of tradition. In this sense, tradition is rooted in culture. Tradition is a movement (*parampara*). It is embedded in the past, it lives through the present, and it flows into the future. It is an accumulative process of acquiring and transmitting, adjusting and applying, lived experiences and embodied values and norms cherished in a culture. It is continuity as well as change. In a good and healthy tradition, there has to be judicious discrimination as to what is to be retained and what is to be discarded as dated and outlived. It thus admits of creative freedom and innovative change. No culture can survive and thrive if its seminal ideas, key concepts, and fundamental doctrines become fossilized and outworn. Therefore, a constant reflective review of tradition is necessary; otherwise it becomes a dead weight and burden on the individual and society.

### **HUMAN EXISTENCE AND CULTURE**

In Indian thought, value-realization and civilized living imply constant and all-round development. Culture in all its facets and dimensions is a crucial constituent and instrument of this development. It is a state of being, a way of thinking, a mode of living, and a set of commonly shared values, belief patterns, practices, and efforts. It is a complex whole, comprising a stock of knowledge, beliefs, customs, conduct, morals, laws, and artistic, scientific and technological pursuits, humanities, and social sciences. It is an individual as well as a social affair. It is a totality of heritage, borne by a society. It is a crystallization of material, mental, intellectual, and spiritual wealth, generated and preserved by society. It contributes to the discovery of the meaning of life and enhances the quality of life. Thus, it enriches life, enlarges fullness of life, brings delight of mind, sharpens intellect, and ushers in plenitude of peace. But it is for humans to live up to them or falter and fail.

### **HUMAN EXISTENCE, CULTURE AND NATURE**

In Indian thought it is believed that human existence, culture, and nature are intimately correlated. With a firm base in nature, the human being has the ability to rise above nature with the help of nature alone and to become a creator of culture. The human being has the paradoxical awareness of dependence on nature and possible freedom from nature. He is an



inalienable part of nature, is born and brought up in the lap of nature, is sustained and nourished by nature, and ultimately reaches his culmination and consummation in and through nature. But in spite of all this, nature does not exhaust human being; nor does human being exhaust nature. The laws of nature condition him, and he can cope up with nature and with the laws of its operation to some extent. But he can liberate himself from nature with the help of nature only.

Nature is lawful and law-abiding. Therefore, human beings can know and regulate the lawful functioning of nature. But the human mind is prone to perversion and susceptible to wrongdoing. It is unfortunate that the perversity-prone human mind more often than not indulges in law-violation out of ignorance or weakness of will or habit of mind. This is one of the facets of free will and karma. Nature is kind and benevolent. Initially it gives us a mild warning but, if no heed is paid, it reacts violently. It is left to sweet will of human being to care for nature and enable nature to care for him or to suffer from his misdeeds.

Both nature and culture encompass human existence and inform human being. These are distinct but not separate. Both are equally necessary. Culture is humanly-transformed nature. Ideally speaking, nature should be humanely transformed but quite often it becomes inhuman. Human existence is a part of nature, and culture is nurtured nature, but human beings tend to make it unnatural. This is the travesty of human rationality and free will. In an ideal situation, nature, human existence, and culture should constitute a continuum or an organic unity, but human egotism and selfishness come in the way.

The human being is a *tertium quid* between nature and culture. He possesses the capacity of innovative creativity. Culture is shaped and reshaped by creative human consciousness. In creative consciousness, past experiences are relived and renewed. It is also involved in previewing the future. Re-enacting the past, enlivening the present, and visualizing the future are tasks of a dynamic culture. Here, past, present, and future coalesce into one. The present envelops the past and contains the seeds of the future. In this respect, the present occupies a pivotal place, as it is a symbiosis of the actual and the potential. A living culture renders the past contemporaneous, and makes the contemporary the foundation of the future. The human being is the highest emergent in the cosmic process so far. He is a rational, free, and responsible agent. On the basis of planned endeavor and successful behaviour, he has been able to achieve wonderful feats. A mechanistic understanding of human ontology and human evolution cannot do justice to the spontaneity, creativity, and goal-oriented human pursuits. This apart, sociality is built in human nature and no human existence is possible and conceivable without society. Human beings themselves constitute society. So there is reciprocal interdependence. Human progress coincides with social progress. The entire cosmic existence is corporate coexistence and, therefore, human progress coincides with cosmic progress as well. There is inclusive pluralism with mutual cooperation and supportive

partaking. All social organizations are means for collective progress. If a particular form of social organization is not fully conducive to this goal, there should be innovative changes and transformation. Nothing should be regarded as final, inevitable, and conclusive. The cosmic process is an ongoing movement. It does not halt or wait. If it is turned and twisted in a wrong direction it will keep on moving in that direction only. But if it is given a right turning and tuning, it can move in a desirable direction. It is for the free, rational, and responsible human agent to choose the correct path and provide a right direction to the cosmic process. Here the role of knowledge and education comes under the guidance of philosophical reflection. For this purpose, there is need for reviewing and rethinking of the required mode of philosophizing.

## CHAPTER XV

# PHILOSOPHY, CULTURAL AUTONOMY, AND VALUES

MARIN AIFTINCA

The issue of “philosophy emerging from culture” is not only significant, but reflects a challenge derived from a number of concerns in the contemporary world. In its various expressions, this issue states a truth that is not to be taken as a given, since philosophy is neither beyond the reach of culture, nor wholly emerged in it. Philosophy as conceived in the Greek classical period, for example, was the highest human pursuit, though it rested upon the fertile soil of the entire culture. There is a relationship that is revealed at this point, which I will try to explain further on. Yet let us first clarify the sense in which I employ the concepts of *culture* and *philosophy*.

There is a long history of attempts to reach a generally-accepted definition of *culture*, as a complex, multi-stratified phenomenon. Some of them failed, but none of them was in vain. Apart from that, we cannot but agree that culture in fact has to do with human behaviour – from the simplest daily gesture, to the most elaborated products of mind; from our usual relationship to the world, to the most disturbing questions concerning the meaning of life<sup>1</sup>. Culture makes up the whole that the reflexive mind is a part of. Accordingly, my starting point is the human being in his or her integrity, as a unity of reason and emotion expressed in a variety of acts, symbols, and values, composing the world of culture.

There is a paradox that arises at this point: though biologically finite, the human being challenges the infinite through thinking and creation<sup>2</sup>. It is out of this endless struggle that love, joy, hope, the big questions, and the tragic sense of life are nurtured; they are the spiritual energies from which the colourful web of culture is woven. Culture, which represents the defining human way of being in the world, is broadly the same everywhere, and this shows its universality and validity.

But if we switch the point of view to a temporal-spatial one, we immediately notice the existence of a plurality of cultures, each shaped under the influence of history and cosmic agents. As a result, we find a large number of national cultures: Chinese, Korean, Egyptian, Greek, American, Russian, French, Romanian, and so on. Each of them possesses in its core a collection of spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that accounts for the distinctiveness of that national/ethnic/regional community. The ontological structure of each particular culture comprises – besides arts and literature – patterns of behaviour, as well as a system of values, customs and beliefs that make up its identity and let it participate in the richness and beauty of universal culture.

By understanding things from the standpoint above, we cannot deny the truth of the idea that culture is essentially universal but also particular, according to the spatial-temporal patterns of behaviour and creation. This is the truth that substantiates the contemporary discourse on *culture* and *cultures*, deprived of the postmodernist tendency of overvaluing the relative, in the forms of the individual, local, and fragmentary.

Besides the variety of its concrete aspects, culture as a whole is structured in distinct forms, as language, myth, religion, art, science, morality, politics, and so on.<sup>3</sup> These forms serve as a principle of order for cultural actions and goods. As an embodiment of values, each culture is marked by an inward unity, complete in a harmonious whole, conferring identity to national cultures. Among these forms, philosophy has a specific content and finality. This is how it has gained its own special position in the system of culture that nurtured it. Considering the way it has developed from the seventh century to the present day, philosophy is the highest expression of a culture.<sup>4</sup>

Before determining its position in the cultural universe, I would like to clarify the way that I employ the term *philosophy* in this paper. The concept of philosophy itself is not without difficulties. Of course, I do not intend to review the entire history of its definitions, roles and values. I shall confine myself to mentioning the idea that Plato ascribed to Socrates, according to which non-utilitarian *wonder* is the reason man looks for wisdom<sup>5</sup>. This wisdom understood as a science of primary causes is nothing but philosophy.

Taking over this idea, Aristotle added: "... therefore since they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance, evidently they were pursuing science in order to know, and not for any utilitarian end."<sup>6</sup> By knowledge, Aristotle did not mean *any* kind of knowledge, but – definitely – knowledge of the truth. This is why he considered himself entitled to assert further: "It is right also that philosophy should be called knowledge of the truth",<sup>7</sup> or *epistemé tes alétheias*. The truth we are talking about is neither the common sense truth of the manifest being, nor the truth of phenomena and things as objects of the particular sciences. Aristotle pointed to a prime truth which is both grounded on Being and a fundamental quality of it,<sup>8</sup> that is, an absolute truth which is valuable thanks to its universality, as Heidegger used to say. Hence, a certain thing *participates* in Truth only as far as it *participates* in Being. Taking into account the Heideggerian "ontological difference", truth is the subject of alteration as soon as it reaches the level of existence. At this point, the truth as "coming-into-presence" is conceived as ἰδέα. It also could be understood as "correctness of representing existence."<sup>9</sup> Becoming *correctness* through its submission to the Idea, truth ceases to be the fundamental feature of Being, and becomes "the distinct mark of knowing existence."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, our permanent striving for "truth" – as an adequation of thinking to Idea – guides us to know existence. Thus, we could generally say that "man thinks according to 'ideas', and appreciates all that is real according to 'values'."<sup>11</sup> From this

standpoint, Heidegger maintains that, from Plato onwards, “thinking the being of existence” becomes “philosophy.” Having the features of what would be known later as “metaphysics,” thinking is understood as a raising of the eyes to the “Ideas.”<sup>12</sup>

By developing this issue, we have imperceptibly reached the middle of the Heideggerian school – which is neither the only, nor the most relevant for contemporary philosophy. Contemporary philosophy goes beyond the boundaries of different schools and streams. On the impulse of its own reflections and under the influence of culture, generally speaking, philosophy structures itself around problematical patterns that compose its image. This image still bears the marks of the crisis of the last century. Beyond the multiple definitions assigned to it – science of truth, science of all sciences, theoretical explanation of the world, conception of the sense of the human being in the world, doctrine of values, etc.; beyond its fragmentation caused by its actual specializations, that divided it in *traditional, practical, and scientifically-oriented philosophies*<sup>13</sup>; beyond its understanding from the standpoint of one or another of the well-known paradigms (the ontological, the mentalist, or the linguistic) – philosophy can be defined as a “nonprejudiced science of prime principles or grounds through which knowledge and life gain their unity and meaning.”<sup>14</sup> To synthesise, let us say that philosophy kept its scientific, rational character, and remained, at the same time, what it has always been: a science of truth and of world’s meaning. Under the influence of the contemporary crises, philosophy is determined to focus its reflexive discourse on the present, to encompass its own age of thoughts, as Hegel would say.

Complex both in its content and evolution, philosophy is a fundamental form of cultural creation, its distinguishing marks being critical reflection, the profound analysis of existence as unconditioned infinite totality, and the comprising of the latter through thinking. Philosophy does not confine itself to grasping the luxuriant overwhelming outer existence; her other equal (even higher) tendency is to gain knowledge of the inner reality of man as a spiritual being, a reality containing emotions, representations, ideas, aspirations, and ideals, all of them building together a spiritual existence which becomes manifest in culture. This is the reason why philosophy sees culture as a way to man and, at the same time, as a fertile soil for its growth.

By questioning the wide material offered by mythology, religion, language, customs, ethics, law, technique, science, and art, philosophy discovers the rich sources of fundamental topics of reflection and metaphysical construction, as well as relevant suggestions concerning trends of knowledge and conceptual elaboration. Mythology and religion, for instance, explain and interpret the world and human life in connection with the absolute and eternity, by giving a worldview. Not substance or matter, but the mythical imagination and thinking<sup>15</sup> challenge the act of philosophising again and again. In its turn, language as a form of culture is not a mere means of communication, or a storage room for the experience

that human beings have gained through an unceasing endeavour to perceive, know, and interpret the world they live in; it is both the premise and the condition of philosophising itself. The same could be said of science, which delivers the partial and concrete results of knowledge under the form of concepts and theories. It offers a causal explanation for observed reality, which philosophy takes over as a ground for its further theoretical elaboration. In addition, art, which is the most striking form of culture, brings in a sensitive perception of reality, expressed by way of aesthetic symbols. In works of art, these symbols grasp the metaphysical harmony of beauty, maintaining together the worlds of matter and spirit. Thus, aesthetic symbols reveal a truth that cannot be reached in any other way,<sup>16</sup> a fact that emphasises the philosophical significance of art.

The forms of culture, though interrelated, do not produce an undifferentiated mixture. Each culture is an autonomous reality based on the embodiment of specific values in cultural goods. An autonomous reality as well, philosophy detaches itself from the rest of the cultural forms. Though emerging from culture and nurtured by its values and achievements, philosophy places itself higher than every other cultural form, inquiring into culture as a whole and trying to disclose its unifying elements, its points of convergence which it brings under concepts and principles of universal value. As Cassirer stated, “we seek not a unity of effects but a unity of action; not a unity of products but a unity of the creative process.”<sup>17</sup> Against the excesses of relativism, philosophy attempts to emphasize the cognitive, creative, and normative unity of the human species. We have to underline that philosophy does not patronize any particular field of culture, but shows the values that guide human life and, at the same time, identifies the meaning and the ideal of culture, whose vocation is to guide human beings in their striving at self-realization through education.

In approaching the issue of “philosophy emerging from culture”, we cannot avoid two important aspects. First, the general and individual evolution of the cultural forms prepares the emerging of philosophy as a result of a spiritual need. This statement is based on the fact that man, once attaining self-consciousness, cannot live only for the ephemeral present. He deliberately seeks the essence and the universal, digs into the infinite, and searches for absolute spiritual values in order to understand the sense of his own existence. Strengthened by the spiritual dimension of culture, human thought transcends limited experience, becoming philosophy. In this respect, Hegel held that “a certain stage is requisite in the intellectual culture of a people in order that it may have a Philosophy at all”<sup>18</sup>. Philosophy, as a “doctrine of absolute truth”,<sup>19</sup> and therefore as an autonomous form of culture, has appeared in different ages and only with certain peoples. It also penetrated into other cultural spaces, where it had to be first appropriated by learning in order to become an autonomous form of culture. In this respect, history attests to a number of otherwise valuable cultures that could not yet provide a written philosophy. This fact proves

that philosophy requires special conditions to emerge. Among these conditions, language and tradition are the most important.<sup>20</sup>

The second aspect mentioned above is linked to the following question: given that culture is an expression of the ethnic or national soul, can we talk of philosophy in the same terms? Could the latter be described in terms of its own national character? There is not a simple answer to this question. The problem implies an extensive analysis that exceeds my intentions here. While postulating the emergence of philosophy from culture, we have to admit that philosophy has a special status among the other forms of culture, a position somehow comparable to that of the science, which is essentially impersonal. Like science, philosophy is free of any restrictions, its object being neither the particular, nor the ephemeral, but the universal, the infinite, and the absolute. Therefore, we cannot talk of a national spirit in relation to philosophy. This type of knowledge is possible neither through immediate perception, nor through sensitive or intellectual intuition, but only through the conceptual effort of thought.

But it is also true that philosophy is not born without regard to its specific origin. Plato's remark that the "crowd would never become a philosopher" is still an important insight.<sup>21</sup> As with any other type of spiritual creation, philosophy requires the work of individuals who belong to a nation. No matter how much they strive to avoid subjectivism, they cannot entirely escape the traits of their national character which reflect a particular way of relating to the world. In this respect, there are analyses that identify a correlation between philosophy and the spiritual condition of a nation. Accordingly, we talk of a rationalist French philosophy, of an idealist, speculative German one, of an empiricist English philosophy, or of a pragmatic American one, and so on.<sup>22</sup> We could further assert that a philosophy can bear the mark of a dominant national character. But the complexity of the national spirit and the phenomenon of cross-culture communication make of this dominant character a non-exclusive one. Some philosophical systems go beyond national boundaries. In Germany, for instance, besides the local metaphysical currents, there were other streams as well, such as positivism, materialism, and existentialism,<sup>23</sup> which penetrated the spiritual life in all its fields. Such examples prove the universalistic character of philosophies, but also the fact that each of them expresses the spirit of its age. At the same time, any true philosophy goes beyond its age. It regards its age as an object of philosophical reflection, anticipating new forms of development by way of knowledge. Thus, philosophies harmoniously complete each other, as complementary forms in a wide universal horizon, exerting at the same time a retroactive influence on the other forms of culture.

We come to the conclusion that a culture – seen in its spatial-temporal dimension – is the manifest form of a national spirit. Emerging from culture, philosophy bears to a certain extent the mark of a national spirit, though this does not mean that we must deliberately look for and subordinate ourselves to its influence. "The national dimension of a

philosophy could be a fact, but never a plan.”<sup>24</sup> A philosophy is not confined to its “fatal heredity”, to what is particular and relative. It is in search of the whole, of the universal absolute values, by way of an endless rational effort, and not an emotional one. If we agree that philosophy does not stand above its age,<sup>25</sup> we must also agree that it has the duty to reflect its age, in order to envisage a new paradigm for future development. We believe rationality could be such a paradigm, though it is not without its dangers. The fact is that only rationality can both make the necessary differentiations and preserve the differences, to contribute to the inheritance of universal culture, rendering human and cross-culture communication possible, which is a major condition of a lasting development.

*Department of Philosophy  
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology  
Romanian Academy of Sciences  
Bucharest, Romania*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Marin Aiftinca, *Filosofia culturii* (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Georg Simmel, *Philosophische Kultur (Gesammelte Essays)*, Dritte Auflage (Postdam: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag), p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> See Heinrich Rickert, *Grundprobleme der Philosophie* (Tübingen, 1936), pp. 169–197; Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man. An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), translated into Romanian as *Eseu despre om*, and published in Bucharest at Humanitas Publishing House, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Mircea Florian, *Îndrumare în filosofie* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1992), p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Theaitetos*, în *Opere*, VI (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1989), p. 199.

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. I, 982b.

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. II, 993b.

<sup>8</sup> See: Martin Heidegger, *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*, translated into Romanian in the volume *Repere pe drumul gândirii* (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, *Platons Lehre*, p. 202.

<sup>10</sup> Heidegger, *Platons Lehre*, p. 198.

<sup>11</sup> Heidegger, *Platons Lehre*, p. 202.

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, *Platons Lehre*, p. 199.

<sup>13</sup> See Helmuth Fahrenbach, *Zur Problemlage der Philosophie* (Frankfurt/M., 1975), Apud: Ekkehard Martens, Herbert Schädelbach, *Philosophie. Ein grundkurs* (1991), translated into Romanian and published in Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1999, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Mircea Florian, *Philosophia perennis* (Cluj-Napoca, Grinta



Publishing House, 2004), p. 71.

<sup>15</sup> Cassirer, *Eseu despre om*, p. 105.

<sup>16</sup> See Marin Aiftincă, *Misterul artei și experiența estetică* (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2007), p. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Cassirer, *Eseu despre om*, p. 102.

<sup>18</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Prelegeri de istorie a filosofiei* [Lectures on the History of Philosophy], Vol. I, translated into Romanian by D.D. Roșca (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1963), pp. 55, 56.

<sup>19</sup> Hegel, *Prelegeri de istorie a filosofiei*, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> See Alexandru Surdu, *Forma universalității în cultură*, în *Teologie și analiză*, ed. Mihai Vasile (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2007), p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Apud: Max Scheler, *Die Stellung des menschen im Kosmos*, translated into Romanian by Vasile Muscă (Cluj-Napoca: Paralela 45 Publishing House, 2001), p. 103.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Ion Petrovici, “Naționalitatea în filosofie”, in *Opere filosofice* [Philosophical Works], eds: Gh. Vlăduțescu, Alexandru Boboc, Florin Frunză, Sabin Totu (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2006), pp. 904–906.

<sup>23</sup> See Ion Petrovici, “Naționalitatea în filosofie”, pp. 906, 907.

<sup>24</sup> Petrovici, “Naționalitatea în filosofie” p. 908.

<sup>25</sup> Hegel, *Prelegeri de istorie a filosofiei*, p. 58.



**PART III**

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
PHILOSOPHY IN A GLOBAL ERA**



## CHAPTER XVI

# METAPHYSICS AND THE TRANSCENDENCE OF CULTURES

*OLIVA BLANCHETTE*

Metaphysics is about transcendence in human action. When we speak of global interaction among cultures and civilizations, we have to think of metaphysics as already there, raising the question of what there is beyond the diversity of cultures and civilizations, if anything, other than the richness and amplitude of these cultures and civilizations in being simply what they are.

I take the order of history, which is the order of achievements by different cultures and civilizations in the world, to be a higher order in being than the order of nature, which, without the initiative of human beings in history, would have remained closed in upon itself in its interlocking physical, biological and ecological spheres of chance evolutionary happenings. Human beings, in their rational, historical consciousness, find themselves in some form of the natural order of things, which is a given for them, however transformed it may be by human intervention in it, but which humans always undertake to transform in new ways as they strive to better themselves and to raise themselves to higher forms of life in diverse cultures and civilizations.

Natural ecological systems allow individuals to survive only at some form of average lowest common denominator for different species of living and non-living things. This is how all natural, biological, and zoological species survive in the order of nature, as long as favorable conditions for the survival of a species last in the ecological order for that species. When the favorable conditions disappear, the individual and the species disappear. But that is not the way things go for the human being in the order of history, which transcends the order of nature in so many different ways, not by stepping out of that order, but by transforming it and humanizing it in different cultures and civilizations.

There is a long history of such transformation and humanization that has been going on in many different ways in the world ever since humans first appeared and spread their enterprising spirit to every part of the globe in a way that no other species has been done or been able to do. We cannot go into any great detail about this history of human initiatives in the world here, nor do we have to. All we have to recognize is that, in whatever culture or civilization that has taken shape in the world, or is still taking shape in different parts of globe, there is always an original factor of transcendence due to the rational being's capacity to assess his situation in the world and to imagine new possibilities for itself in world, in what we

have to call its historical consciousness, over and above its natural consciousness. It is this rational factor in historical consciousness that has given us, not just the capacity to survive and to prosper in any natural environment, as no other natural species can, but also a wide diversity of cultures and civilizations, each of which has something original about it as a product of the human genius, with respect, not just to nature itself, but also with respect to every other culture and civilization. We see something of this originality not only in the wide diversity of artisanship and of the arts that are to be found wherever human beings have come together to make a place for themselves on the face of the earth, a home, a village, a culture, a civilization.

All of this does not happen without some transcendence in the natural order of things, something real and original in the order of being that comes, from the initiative of human reason, and not merely from nature, something created by human beings, if you will, as nature is created by God, something that exists now as a result of human action and interaction among selves for us to reflect on as given by and for the rational being in our own historical moment. I want to insist on this transcendental aspect of culture in a human community, not just as original with each community, but also as real, as something in being to be reckoned with over and above the order of nature, precisely as an order of spirit. We could speak of it as a new creation, but only in the sense that rational creatures create something new for themselves, a culture, in coming together in a community.

## I

The transcendence I am speaking of is one that begins from the very first moment of individual subjects coming to self-consciousness in the presence of other self-consciousnesses. This first moment of self-consciousness in communion with other self-consciousness entails a transcendence in two senses: first, a transcendence for the individual coming to his or her own self-conscious subjectivity, where there was no such self-conscious subjectivity before, but only an individual consciousness isolated as an object for other individual consciousnesses; and second, a transcendence for subjectivity as such among selves mutually recognizing one another and rising together to a new form of communicative interaction with one another, a transcendence of the spiritual, or of culture, over and above a merely natural dependence of the one on the other.

In this second sense of transcendence we come to understand that there is no such thing as a purely individual subjectivity isolated from every other individual subjectivity. There is only intersubjectivity among rational selves to begin with, from which individual self-consciousnesses can then separate themselves, as if they were independent of any other, as if the language in which they come to their rational self-consciousness were not one shared with others when they first begin to speak, and as if it were not

already a culture of communicative interaction into which they were being nurtured as rational self-consciousnesses.

For every human being who comes to his or her own self-consciousness, there is always already a culture into which it is being borne as a self-consciousness. This is at first the culture of the family, or of the immediate caregivers who are nurturing the individual from infancy to childhood, and initiating it into some form of rational culture through a language that is in conformity with the culture. The budding consciousness cannot divorce itself from this culture or this language in which it finds itself as a rational self-consciousness, since it is the culture itself, and the language in which it expresses itself, that vehicles the very consciousness of the budding rational self-consciousness.

## II

However, as one moves out into broader social circles, broader cultures come to the attention of the individual self-consciousness, for it to reflect on, cultures that also mark the self-consciousness of different individuals in diverse ways as each chooses or falls into other customary ways of thinking and acting in these broader social circles, such as the school, the corporation, the village, the clan, or the nation. At every level of communicative interaction, there is a culture that vehicles the rational self-consciousness in its human endeavors to better itself. In some respects this culture may alienate an individual self-consciousness from itself, when it is seen as purely objective and external to the self, as the culture of technology often presents itself, but underlying this feeling of alienation there is always the supposition that one has come to this feeling of alienation through the vehicle of the of a more subjective culture that has been internalized as various dispositions and habits built up under the influence of the culture itself, which affect each self as well as others taken up into the same culture.

The first moment of transcendence in intersubjectivity among various communities that form around the globe under varying circumstances of need and for various purposes, thus yields a diversity of cultures, each of which represents a shared way of thinking and of doing, an ethos, by a community in the pursuit of its communal good for the community as a whole and for individual selves who are the essential constituents of that good. Comparative studies of these diverse cultures have yielded different judgments on their relative standing in the course of history in terms of advancement, development, or other values seen as essential for any culture or civilization in human history.

We should note, however, that such judgments usually come from one particular culture or another passing judgment on other particular cultures that do not match up to the one particular culture in some respect or another. Every culture has a tendency to judge other cultures from a point of view that it values most, and to see other cultures as falling short in that respect. There have been some who have seen their own culture as the only

one worthy of the name, as in every age of colonialism, ancient as well as modern, and have seen every other way of life in the world as uncivilized, uncultured, inhuman, not to say downright evil, and therefore in need of being conquered, civilized, cultured, humanized, and made good by the one culture worthy of the name, that is, subjugated to the dominant culture. Whenever there is more than one culture with such ambitions of being the dominant one confronting one another, there is war of the one with the other.

Hegel's philosophy of history was conceived along the lines of one such dominant culture with pretensions to being the only one worthy of the name, the modern Northern European Protestant culture, having the right to invade and annihilate any other culture that stood in the way of its world domination. His was for him the culture that had come as the culmination of the course of world history in his time, a course that had started with the ancient Chinese imperial civilization as the first stage of civilization in the far east, run through India and the near east, only to come finally to the Mediterranean basin in Greece, and then passed on from southern Europe to the Germanic Protestant Culture in the north. The earlier forms of culture that Hegel recognized along the way were lesser forms than the modern one in which he found himself, but they were still moments of culture, or of ethical wholes, for him in the course of world history, something which he did not find in Africa, which he spoke of as the dark continent in which nothing of world historical significance, no sign of culture or civilization is to be found.

Now this judgment on the values of cultural diversity in world history is one that purports to be from on high, from the standpoint of a universal and transcendent culture that supposedly comes to the fore only at the end of history, and enables one to look back and look down on all other cultures as only partial steps on the way to the fullness of culture that comes at the end of history. Such a view is often attributed to Hegel, with good reason, but it is not clear that even Hegel himself took it to be a final judgment, since at the end of his philosophy of history, with his own Germanic culture as its final stage, there was still the question for him of where the World Spirit would go next, a question that his philosophy could not answer without supposing that history had come to an end in the stage that history had reached in his day and in his culture. Hegel understood that his culture was still only a particular culture among other cultures and that the World Spirit could not be contained in any one particular culture, even one he thought to be dominant over all others.

In raising the question of the transcendence of cultures and civilizations in world history as rising above any order of nature left to its own devices, I am following Hegel's way of thinking about the plurality and the diversity of cultures and civilizations that have arisen in history, and that still continue to arise, often in contention with one another for supremacy and for control over their own fate in the course of world affairs, if not over the fate of every other culture as well. World History is the struggle of



diverse cultures who have transcended their state of nature seeking recognition from one another in their transcendence, not from one another, but from the state of nature from which they have emerged, in the same way individuals struggle for mutual recognition with one another as they come to self-consciousness in the presence of one another within the culture that nurtures them as rational self-conscious individuals, as we saw earlier in speaking of the first moment of transcendence from sheer individuality of consciousness, relating only to objects, to a rational self-consciousness relating to oneself and to other selves as subjects in the intersubjectivity of a culture.

I do not, however, subscribe to the idea that there is one culture that is so universal and so absolute in its reasoning about world history that it can take the place of any other culture, especially not that of Western Europe and North America that is still intent on colonizing all other cultures in its global expansion, making them subservient to itself and to its way of doing business around the world. I take every culture in world history, however primitive or advanced it may be, to be constituted by communities that come together through a process of rational initiatives taken by the members of the community in their mutual recognition of one another striving to make a better life for themselves.

Reason is not the prerogative of any one culture, especially not absolute reason, if there is such a thing. There is reasoning at the heart of every culture that comes from the rational animal, again however primitive or advanced that reasoning may be. But it is only a particular kind of reasoning, practical as well as theoretical, that constitutes any particular culture. In every culture there is a shape of reason to be found, which is something all cultures have in common as human initiatives or creations in history. From this shape of reason in every culture, we derive our concept of history as a whole, in which diverse cultures are at work toward some common achievement of humanity. From the particularity of the different shapes of reason in which diverse cultures find their identity as distinct from that of other cultures, we come to the idea of confrontation between particular cultures, where a higher, more rational sense of transcendence comes to the fore, no longer in the sense of individual selves relating to one another in some intersubjectivity, but now in the sense of particular cultures relating to one another in the context of a common history for humanity as a whole.

We could call this higher transcendence of one particular culture to other particular cultures, each with its own rationality, horizontal transcendence, in the sense that it stays within the order of history. It is a transcendence in the sense that a particular culture has to confront another culture that is other than itself, which, even while being particular and rational, like the first, remains mysterious from the standpoint of the first, something that has not yet been reasoned to in that first culture, but that remains in question from the standpoint of any other particular culture, calling for dialogue among the diverse cultures that have sprung up in

history as a way of entering into the reasoning of another culture than one's own, and a way of making one's own historical reasoning more complete and more universal, at the same time as the other is also making its own reasoning more complete and universal, through this dialogical transcendence of the particularity of the diverse cultures confronting one another in a rational discourse of mutual recognition.

Rational dialogue is the key to this horizontal transcendence among the diverse cultures that have made their presence felt in a historical order that transcends any merely natural order. Such presence of particular cultures to one another in history comes as a result of reason taking shape in different ways or different values in diverse cultures, each of which is known in the self-consciousness of each particular culture, but remains hidden from the other cultures as long as they have not entered into dialogue.

Inter-cultural dialogue presupposes that there is something to be learned about human culture as a whole from every culture, no matter how strange or foreign it may seem to one's own; and it presupposes a willingness to listen and to examine, or to cross examine as Socrates did, what is said from the standpoint of the other, as well as a readiness to speak in reply for the enlightenment of the other as well as oneself, in order to rise to the higher, more universal truth about human culture in world history. No particular culture can rise to that higher truth of human culture as whole, in its essential diversity, without hearing of the truth that has been parceled out by other cultures as part of the truth of human culture as a whole. Nor can the wholeness of that truth, which transcends the truth of any particular culture, ever be brought to the fore without having its say in a properly inter-cultural dialogue.

This does not mean that we have to think of every particular culture as equal to any other culture according to some rational lowest common denominator in the inter-cultural dialogue. It is important to recognize the richness of diversity in the truth of human culture as a whole, which implies all sorts of inequalities from one culture to another in many different respects. We have to look for what is original and positive in any culture we encounter other than our own, no matter how little that may seem to be, to see what may still be lacking of human value in our own culture. The point of inter-cultural dialogue is for every culture to learn more about all that is at stake in the historical struggle for mutual recognition of the communal good to be achieved through human endeavors in history as a whole.

### III

There is yet another dimension of transcendence in human cultures to speak of, that metaphysics has to take into account, and that has been called vertical, as distinct from the horizontal one we have just been speaking about in the order of the historical struggle for inter-cultural mutual recognition. I refer to a transcendence that comes with the expansion of

one's philosophical outlook, not just from one culture to another in the global horizon, but also from the entire realm of diverse cultures in world history, to a higher or a deeper dimension in human action that presents itself in every particular culture, as transcending the order of nature, and in the communion of the diverse cultures through inter-cultural dialogue. For, in our historical consciousness, we are open, not just to other cultures in the order of history that are a matter of concern for us, but also to a higher or deeper realm of meaning that encompasses and transcends all cultures and their meaning.

This a realm that is usually referred to as metaphysical, in the West at least, in the sense that it transcends the physical, or what I have been calling the order of nature here, and in the sense that it comes into question for philosophy only after the questions concerning the physical and the natural have been exhausted. Here I would refer to this realm of transcendence as metahistorical as well, in the sense that it transcends the historical order of the diverse cultures as we have been speaking about it, and that it comes up for questioning only after we have developed some critical sense of historical human cultures as such. But the most common way of referring to this realm in most cultures has been that of religion, or that of the divine, which seems to hover over and to permeate all things human in the world.

We do not have time here and now to elaborate much philosophical discourse about this realm of ultimate transcendence as it presents itself in human action. I have tried to elaborate such a discourse in a book on the *Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics*, which takes a very long time getting to some language about God as Creator from the standpoint of the Western tradition of metaphysics, contrary to what Heidegger says about that tradition as a modern. Philosophers from other cultures have also elaborated similar discourses about religion and the divine from the standpoint of their own understanding of nature and of their historical or cultural standing in the world.

Such discourses are usually very long and difficult because they presuppose a thorough understanding of the rational process that constitutes the culture and the science from which they come. We cannot go into anyone of them here. But we can reflect on how they could be affected by the inter-cultural dialogue we have been talking about. Such a dialogue goes far beyond anything like the globalization being promoted by multinational corporations, where we find mostly invasive monologue and propaganda promoting products of large corporations that ignore cultural diversity and even suppresses it, to make way for a global standardization that obliterates the richness of cultural diversity. The push toward globalization by multinational corporations so far has been anything but a push toward dialogue among subjectivities or cultures of any kind. It has been a push toward domination by a corporate culture bent on reducing all things human to some economic lowest common denominator under the control of its neo-colonial power over diverse peoples and their governments.

Where it has allowed for cultural diversity, however, and occasioned some contact from one culture conscious of its own identity with other cultures, we could say that it has occasioned some inter-cultural dialogue of the sort we are engaging in here in this conference, not thanks to the corporations themselves, but thanks to the initiative of individuals from diverse cultures interested in pursuing such dialogue, where new questions begin to arise for participants in such dialogue, and a consciousness of different ways of dealing with such questions as they arise from one culture to the next.

We have just said that questions of religion and of the divine, or of the metaphysical and the metahistorical, or of what there is beyond all cultures in all their historical richness, as we put it at the very beginning of this inquiry into transcendence of cultures, arise in all cultures in one way or another, as they arise in any sort of human action or existence conscious of having transcendent ramifications beyond world history. Different cultures have found different ways of dealing with these questions through their own religious practices and speculation, which have given rise to different forms and different philosophies of religion, each specific to a particular culture and rooted in the experience of that culture, even though it has to do with a realm that is beyond all experience, all culture, beyond all history and nature, and yet is rationally advanced in any human culture.

Whatever there is beyond nature and history for human initiative in history to refer to, in the realm of the strictly metaphysical and metahistorical, has to be thought of as somehow absolute, universal, and one, as divine and not subject to the fluctuations of nature and of cultures. The question then arises as to how dialogue among cultures might affect how we think about this metaphysical realm of the divine, which so far surpasses anything we can conceive within any particular culture. Nevertheless, it takes some rational discourse and imagination to just begin thinking about such a Being that surpasses all that we have come to know in our diverse cultures, in a discourse that has taken so many different shapes in diverse cultures and religions.

When we raise the question of a totally transcendent Being to whom we relate necessarily in our action as human beings, we always do so from within our culture and our understanding of what there is in that culture that is transcendent, not just historically, but also metahistorically, or eternally. Others raise the same question of a totally transcendent Being, or of something divine, in the same way, from within their culture and their understanding of what there is in that culture that is transcendent. Their approach to the divine is historically bound, just as ours is. And as good as anyone's approach to the divine in any particular culture may be, Western or Eastern, there is always something to be learned from others in their approach to what we all call God. Inter-cultural dialogue in matters of religion can be very enlightening concerning the diverse ways of relating to God in widely differing cultures, assuming that participants are interested in relating to God rationally in their culture, and not just in defending or

holding on to positions they take to be absolute in their own historical culture. Every human culture has something to learn from other human cultures with regard to how we relate to the divine and the eternal in human history, not just as a matter of comparative religions in an academic and abstract sense, but more importantly as a matter of existential commitment in the way we transcend both nature and history, as we come face to face with God in our action as human beings.

Critics of the influence religion has had in world history often accuse it of fomenting war and strife among the diverse cultures that have taken shape at different times and in different places, each with its own particular shape of religion. But that may be so only if we look at religion in its human forms, where many kinds of opposition can be found in the diversity of cultures, as they confront one another in the historical struggle for recognition. If we look at religion as a way of relating to the absolutely Transcendent in human action and in world history, from within whatever culture it may be, far from being a motive for war and contention, it should rather be a motive and a reason for dialogue and reconciliation among the many cultures of history in relation to the one true God of all.



## CHAPTER XVII

# EXPORTING VALUES

G. JOHN M. ABBARNO

### INTRODUCTION

The term “globalization” has become more than a catch-all for rapid economic changes throughout the world. The expansion of the global market to maximize the wealth of nations has minimized the well being and the moral/political ends of lesser developed countries (LDCs). Many of these countries struggle with the negative dimensions of this tide that challenges local values and forces modifications of varying degrees to many long-held beliefs.

In this chapter, I shall focus on the reaction to this global engine of change for its impact on some cultures. There are external needs that this wave of change satisfies, but there are systemic or internal needs that deeply conflict and challenge this reformation of values. Who or what is responsible for this cascade of effects that sweep over countries before they realize where it takes them? There are two aspects of this change agent which I shall refer to as ‘visible opaque’ and ‘invisible transparent,’ respectively. The visible opaque are recognizable driving forces in the global economy to which we can attribute much of the movement: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The invisible transparent agents are the adopted ways of daily living and preoccupations. For these I borrow the term *mental model*.<sup>1</sup> These permeate the LDCs with Western ways of thinking and being that is public enough for acceptance, yet only on the surface. The threat felt by many is that, over time, these models replace the deeper manner of living values in these cultures. Yet, there are portions of mental models that, I argue, can be selected to ameliorate the dominance over the cultural life of societies. There is some optimism in the following, but first I want to clarify the term “mental models” and how it is used as an exported value from the Western or wealthier nations to the third world.

### MENTAL MODELS

The phrase ‘mental model’ was used by Patricia Werhane, discussing how western cultures treat problems in foreign countries, that is, as they would if it were in their own culture. A mental model is a “mechanism whereby humans are able to generate descriptions of a system’s purpose and form explanations of the system’s functioning and observed system states (thereby prediction) future system states.”<sup>2</sup> Mental models are established structures “for dealing with experience . . . framing, organizing, and

ordering what we experience, mental models bracket and leave out data . . . and can be altered by education and experience.”<sup>3</sup> One of the perspectives that Westerners bring to environments that have natural resources beyond their confined uses is the entrepreneurial imagination of transforming it into the market. As much as this presents the glitter of gold for which many struggling societies recognize as their opportunity to enrich their lives in the marketplace, it also comes with a trade-off of values that are not retrievable. Yet, those who pursue it wonder how can the resource be brought to everyone’s attention and sold for a profit or exchanged for other goods that would bring products from abroad to an impoverished environment. The conditions are ripe for exploiting local labor and resources with meager benefits to the culture. The Neem tree of India serves as an example.

The Neem tree is a wild scraggly tree that grows well throughout India. For thousands of years, in hundreds of villages throughout the country, the Neem tree has had a special place in the community. The tree has a special religious meaning in some Hindu sects. Its leaves are used as pesticides, spread on plants to protect them from insects. Various herbal medicines are made from Neem leaves and bark, its products are used as contraceptives and for skin ailments, and many Indians brush their teeth with small Neem branches. Because of its effectiveness as a pesticide, recently the W. R. Grace Company began studying the tree, and in 1992 they developed a pesticide, Neemix. Neemix works as effectively as Neem leaves and has a long shelf life, thus making it more desirable as a pesticide than the leaves. Following the guidelines of the Indian Government regarding patenting, Grace patented Neemix, opened a plant in India, and manufactured the product. There have been mass protests against patenting, both from Indians and the Foundation on Economic Trends, a biotechnology watchdog organization. The argument is that Grace committed bio-piracy because the Neem tree belongs to the Indians and the products from the tree cannot be patented. Moreover, such patenting and manufacture of Neemix and other products drives up the prices of Neem such that the indigenous poor, to whom the tree belongs, can no longer have access to the trees.<sup>4</sup>

One of the more effective ways of informing a community of a product is through marketing. In capitalistic societies, this is commonplace and potential consumers expect to have the product being sold to be advertised in a way that appeals to needs such as those satisfied by Neemix. Similar strategies are employed by other products such as CocaCola, that promotes global unity as it wants to be the beverage of friendship that quenches universal thirst and “could teach the world to sing in perfect harmony.” Automobiles of every design and speed are advertised to attract different age groups and income groups. This has proved successful in many domains as the product is placed in the context of healthier and happier images that can be achieved through the use of their product. Image association with values of health, prosperity, and liberty is a very effective means to desire a good. The most successful means are those we cannot see; these are referred to by Vance Packard as “hidden persuaders.”<sup>5</sup> The art is



typical of Western cultures to manipulate desires through sometimes subtle images and language to make the product a created desire to be satisfied. When this approach is used in LDCs, the image that sells is the Western measure of “the good life.” It sets the bar of success and desires must fall in line to satisfy them. George Brenkert remarks that such influences in LDCs effect “a change in their society and culture.”<sup>6</sup> In many instances there is a paradox created by the global market influence. Where a company establishes itself on land for production it provides the conditions of liberty from an environment of poor conditions in education, health care, and unemployment. Yet, it also contains use of land for food production, issuing labor conditions that overlook religious practices, compromising family values by Western attitudes toward work. Behavior that is assumed in the West to be individualistic and goal-oriented behavior is often counter to the communal and cooperative value expressed in many cultures outside the West. Cultures generally feel forced to choose what is dictated as an economic fallout for their people and abandon their cultural identity.

The infamous Nestlé case<sup>7</sup> from the 1970s epitomizes the exported mental model of selling goods to an unsuspecting people in need. You may recall that Nestlé, a Swiss-based company known for their chocolate and powdered milk, expanded their market of instant infant formula to Africa. They sought acceptance under the guise that their milk supplement was sufficiently nutritious to replace the mother’s breast milk. In fact, the information dispensed indicated that it was better, safer than mother’s milk. To make matters worse, sales were led by representatives who posed as nurses to make their claims more convincing to those mothers who might have second thoughts. This scam inflicted both physical and psychological harm as many infants became ill from malnutrition and mothers suffered loss of confidence and dignity. Nestlé has since been the classic example of multinationals presupposing that the goods shared by Western nations would be attained without the displacement of other long standing values such as maternal pride in providing the nutrition for their own infant. The greatest offense among Nestlé executives of marketing at the time: They did not recognize this as being morally wrong.

This example reflects how mental models in globalization change the landscape and terms of conducting business. From one perspective this is amoral, a mere layer of facts of how business is done in the global age. Economic drive impugns nothing regarding the poor and LDCs. In fact, the remark is often made that since the markets have opened worldwide, employment and wages have increased in Central America and Asia. Yet from another perspective, the process of admitting some and excluding others creates an inconsistency in the aims of having LDCs join the free market – namely, the moral implication of a country being left to choose under these narrow provisions which could have been less free if they join. If they decline, they are relegated to the “natural state” to fend for themselves; free from the yoke of global markets but not in a position to be free to attain more wealth due to the shrinking number of countries with

whom to trade apart from the global marketplace. This is indeed an economic analogy of David and Goliath.

### **POWER OF DEVELOPMENT**

The struggle for the soul of a culture is no less one of power than is the struggle for the soul of any one person. Two major forces are the WTO and the IMF. (Where the former provides the mechanism to invigorate trade between all countries in their membership, poor and wealthy alike, the IMF finances projects for infrastructure needs, paving roads, building power plants, as well as determining loans for countries refinancing their debts.) These two organizations operate under the assumption that the more goods that are exchanged across national boundaries the greater chance there is to produce needed jobs for exporting the goods. Another level of assumption is that economic growth in underdeveloped countries could lead to stabilizing weak governments. This is referred to as the liberalization of poor countries which would be an advantage that they did not have prior to their membership. However, when two or more countries produce the same thing, one of them may qualify for a larger loan for its already enlarged debt and/or become the market for a multinational corporation (MNC). This could be described as “breaking down trade barriers” but, upon closer examination, it appears that it is a manipulative system that maintains indebtedness of poor countries to wealthier countries, both economically and politically. It was the IMF and the World Bank which forced open the economies of the world’s countries by using the leverage of indebtedness to condition loans to desperate governments on measures that would invite foreign investors and MNCs to play leading roles in developing country economies, thereby making those countries dependent on international trade, regardless of the terms.

Economic change is not an isolated good. It is intricately connected to deep customs of life, whether religious – exhibited by the faithful worshipping at the synagogue, Buddhist temple, or mosque – or demonstrated in dietary regimen or work load. The times set aside for business and family may be resistant to uniform expectation rendered by global economy. The anxiety felt by some cultures is that once you enter or accept membership, you also must accept the pace to be competitive within the market. The conflict with other values as the need to earn and retain a reasonable trade rating intensifies, and slowly erodes the cultural base. It is not clear whether this must be an “all” or “nothing” affair. Can cultures decide which aspects may be integrated and those that should not? Is it possible to embrace these forces for enhancing select social goods, for retaining cultural identity without sacrificing more than is recognizable as their own original identity? The answer lies in the overall claim that wealthier nations and the MNCs have a responsibility to honor the rights of host countries to practice their cultural values. By enlisting the guidance of a “rights and responsibilities” framework as one among the value exports of

the West, we may find a mechanism that can prevent the apparent exclusivity of economic good and cultural heritage.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

What responsibilities should be imposed on the MNCs? What rights can be protected among the targeted society? Political philosophers make the distinction between negative rights and positive rights. A negative right is honored by recognizing the party's right to pursue its notion of the good unimpeded, that is, without interference by external authorities. The other side of this right, the positive right, enlists a set of duties that the person or group has against others and this group is under an obligation to intervene and help satisfy those rights. Where the line is drawn is not always clear. Surely, we would want to resist acknowledging a poor country's right to be left alone if it would imperil the welfare of their people, placing them at greater risk to either survive or be able to sustain their way of life. Yet, this is what some would argue under some circumstances. The wealthier nations are signatories of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The language clearly calls for a positive right to be acted upon that would satisfy the civil and political rights of a poor country.

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.<sup>8</sup>

Here we could adopt the other side of Peter Singer's principle for obligatory charity, that is, how one should assess how much to give: "If it is in our power to prevent something very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything else morally significant, we ought, morally, to do it."<sup>9</sup> The emphasis was entirely on the side of the donor so that charity was calibrated according to what one had to give. In this case, however, it is important to address limits of charity received, namely gratitude. It plays a role in being selective among the goods charitably accepted while maintaining one's dignity and self-regard and other values that may be compromised. This can be paraphrased in the interest of the consent of the recipient of charity: "Agree to accept the means for development and improvement so to enhance capabilities of the land and citizens up to the point where it does not sacrifice anything morally significant of sustained cultural value."

The open market often moves into regions too quickly, only having the hosts to learn that much more work and time was required for a successful transition to a global economy. The global economic growth is estimated at a \$33 trillion value, but it is a gain leveraged off of an integration of technological services that some more remote societies were not prepared to make. The effect had some countries overwhelmed and further in debt as they agreed to share revenues they earmarked for

education but now are directed to pay back in loans to the World Bank. When wealthier nations open trade with lesser developed nations, as they come from a position of greater resources, they have a moral responsibility to satisfy the rights to health, education, and liberty with LDCs they believe can be helped through the global economy. Without fulfilling these rights, further participation would be difficult without spiraling into compounded debt. In order to address this broader notion of corporate responsibility, a stakeholder view of the corporation must be in place.

There is a familiar distinction between stakeholder and stockholder theory that can be useful to delineate the social responsibility corporations have when conducting business abroad. The two views reflect a philosophy of business that attempts to justify the purpose MNCs have when doing business in another country. The classical stockholder theory contends that establishing itself in a society with the expressed purpose to increase profit margins could only help the society at large. In some cases a deal is struck with the host government that may allow drilling for oil, extracting gems, or seeking increased production of a goods for lesser wages. The measure of success is determined by the value on trade imports and exports of identified goods to other countries. Other indices include the rate and use of technological innovation helping the productivity and profit margins with trading partners. This benefit was realized at the loss of focus in infrastructure, family unity, and relegated funds to care for the elders of the society. The externalities of what untoward effects this may have on the community other than increased economic value raises serious moral issues that are typical for these contrasting viewpoints of corporate social responsibility. The social impact is best expressed in yet another example of the ill effects that are invited by the narrow stockholder view of the corporations conducting affairs with LDCs.

The H. B. Fuller Company from Minnesota opened a glue manufacturing plant in Honduras.<sup>10</sup> It provided expanded employment and the usual industrial climate that follows. What Fuller did not offer was an educational program on the ill effects of improper use of glue. It was not long that the youth of Honduras found this to be a “choice drug.” It was sniffed and injured the lives of many children through eventual addiction. It appears that Fuller did not use due care knowing about the culture within which they established business. The jobs were important and needed in Honduras but at the risk of their children’s health? When companies enter a region they are guests, not citizens, of that country. On the one hand, the expression of rights from a poor nation was satisfied, but a portion of this agreement not involving profits was overlooked. This externality, being mindful of the community and how its quality of life can be affected negatively as well as positively, is a minimal moral requirement.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is an artificial distinction made between cultural identity and

economic progress and attaining well being. The rights of citizens from the LDCs are repeatedly trumped by the presumption that what the MNCs offer them is to their advantage. Yet, without the land and labor, the MNC does not achieve its contribution. So, there is ground for a mutual good. The cultural aspect must outline the intrinsic worth of the history it provides along with the labor available. Provisions must be written in that abide by the religious and cultural practices long established. For MNCs to pursue their goals without doing the labor-intensive research of the specific needs and character of the culture they aim to serve, they only presume to know their type of need for economic uplift. Respect for the people, the land, and the history of a LDC is the responsibility of the guest company. Likewise, the cultural leaders must determine whether the foreseeable good that can be gained by this inclusion is worth the real risks of changing who they are. Economic growth need not be an exclusionary effect from central values of family, religion, and friendships. It is simplistic to believe that one can simply overlay the values of the developed countries on all others, no matter what. The homogenization resulting from the turbines of Western wealth would exhaust the moral space for conducting exchanges of values between cultures; not merely the trade of fungible goods. The conception of what the “good life” entails is the province of each society, and to think it to be less compromises an opportunity for a global morality.

*D’Youville College*  
Buffalo, NY, USA

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Patricia Werhane, “Exporting Mental Models: Global Capitalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” in *Ethical Theory and Business*, eds. Thomas Beauchamp, Norman Bowie, and Dennis G. Arnold (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson, Prentice-Hall, 2009), pp. 590-97.

<sup>2</sup> Werhane, p. 591.

<sup>3</sup> Werhane, p. 591.

<sup>4</sup> Werhane, p. 593.

<sup>5</sup> See Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: Pocket Books, 1958).

<sup>6</sup> George Brenkert, “Marketing, the Ethics of Consumption and Lesser-Developed Countries,” in *Contemporary Issues in Business Ethics*, eds. Joseph R. DeJardins and John J. McCall (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishers, 2005), p. 517.

<sup>7</sup> See Peter French, et al., *Corporations in the Moral Community* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), p. 165.

<sup>8</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality,” in *Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life*, eds. Christina Sommers and Fred Sommers (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth Publishers, 2007), p. 369.

<sup>10</sup> Kevin Gibson (ed.), “Case Study: H. B. Fuller and Substance Abuse in Latin America,” in *Business Ethics: People, Profits, and the Planet* (New York: McGraw Hill Publishers, 2006), p. 637.

## CHAPTER XVIII

# CONCRETE HUMANITY AND EDUCATION FOR TOLERANCE OF CULTURES AND TRADITIONS<sup>1</sup>

HANS LENK

In this paper, I will first briefly discuss different versions of the concept of tolerance. I will then outline the relationship and a substantial (or substantive) interrelationship towards human rights and practical (or *concrete*) humanity. I will conclude by adding some remarks about the movement of the interpretation of human rights from protective towards participatory and creativity<sup>2</sup> – endorsing rights and ethically legitimate dignity claims (which are a kind of *moral* human quasi-rights, by contradistinction to normal *legal* human rights). Indeed, what I call “concrete humanity”<sup>3</sup> and rendering it practical instead of merely indulging in the rather abstract ideas of humanity and humaneness are the most important objectives for any human rights education whatsoever.

First, some rather sketchy remarks on tolerance.

### SOME CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENTIATIONS OF THE IDEA OF TOLERANCE

According to the UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1995), tolerance is not just tantamount to giving in, condescension or indulgence, but is instead an “active attitude” that is based on the acknowledgement and respect of universal human rights and fundamental liberties of others as a cornerstone of democracy and the constitutional state in a pluralistic society. Tolerance is here considered incompatible with dogmatism and absolutism; its practice should be in accord with the norms decreed in the international human rights documents. But this shall not be the main topic of the present paper. In addition to considering the perspectives of legal implications of tolerance amounting to basic legal rights in free and democratic societies, I would like to discuss the relationship between what I call practical humaneness and co-humaneness with further connotations of tolerance. With regard to the latter, however, some analytical remarks have to be provided.

I.1. Tolerance is certainly a *relational* concept concerning a person or institutional (or legal) system to be tolerant *with* another person and/or her/his lifestyle, 2. with acts and actions of persons and groups, 3. with norms of the respective groups, belief systems, etc., 4. with particular opinions and beliefs in the narrower sense, 5. with attitudes and general dispositions, 6. with cultural and value systems, mainly religious ones, etc.

II. Another classification of tolerance may be made according to formality and content: tolerance might concern *formal* rights and procedures to respect other opinions, belief systems, perspectives and lifestyles under the general idea of value neutrality or a kind of “negative” tolerance relying on formal equality or comparison with regard to value neutral procedures or formal rights, etc. On the other hand, we have *substantial*, connotational ideas of content trying to spell out positive connotations of respect, humaneness, charity, etc. (This ties into the theme of “concrete humanity”, see below III.)

III. Among the value neutral and formal types of tolerance, one may distinguish between a *vertical* and a *horizontal* neutrality.<sup>4</sup> Vertical tolerance is a grounding tolerance oriented or institutionalized in a top-down direction: the classical and traditional tolerance of the sovereign of a state with regard to religious minorities is certainly the prototypical instance of that vertical tolerance. Conversely, horizontal tolerance relies on mutual respect between equal partners and materializes principally in democratic egalitarian societies.<sup>5 6</sup>

IV. Substantial, legal and constitutional tolerance norms and ideas can be called “*institutional*” or even “*etatistic*.”<sup>7</sup> This idea of tolerance focuses on the legal aspects and liberty aspects in the narrower sense.

V. By contrast, one would deem it necessary to develop a truly *individual*-oriented, *humanistic* tolerance of brotherliness, co-humaneness and positive attitudes as well as respectful and indulgent reactions with respect to personal partners or different – possibly religious – belief systems. (That already ties in neatly with the topic of practical humanity as covered below, sub III.)

VI. The constitutional state – and democracy in particular – presuppose *procedural* tolerance, i.e., egalitarian treatments according equal rights to any citizen, human person or even every human being whatsoever. On the object language level, attitudes and opinions regarding the action level and *attitudinal* tolerance are characteristic of a tolerant character or person. Such an attitude might be instilled by a respective moral education.

VII. Moreover, we find a general or *metatheoretical* kind of tolerance regarding the theoretical principles and formal or analytic procedures dealing with opinions and ideas showing the metalevel character of a rather formal idea of tolerance.

In general, tolerance is understood as having a general and metalevel character if we emphasize the rather formal, metatheoretic and abstract analytic-procedural aspects. However, tolerance has to be exercised in a down-to-earth manner in action situations. It has to be translated to actual situations and to practise in everyday life. Unfortunately, tolerance as pertaining in the first place to opinions, attitudes and situations, primarily addresses situations in general terms. The more formal a discussion on tolerance is held or carried through, the more it will tend to forget about practical humanity in real social and day-to-day contexts.



Consequently, remarks concerning the relationship between practical humanity and the concepts of tolerance are certainly in order.

### THE MORAL IDEA OF HUMANITY AND ETHICAL HUMANITARIANISM

For reasons of brevity, I cannot deal here with the history of the idea of humanity or humaneness and its development since antiquity. It was Socrates who was the first Western philosopher to emphasize the specific value of the individual person and thus the idea and virtue of the human being in philosophical and practical life. The middle Stoics, including Panaitios and Cicero, developed the idea of the “*homo humanus*” comprising in an emphatic sense our idea of a humanity cultivated by education and a refined moral and intellectual development, morality, noblesse and dignity, elegance, taste, solidarity, cosmopolitanism, kindness, goodness, hospitality, magnanimity etc., consider humaneness (according to Vauvenargues, the highest virtue) as a special ethical or moral virtue. Johann Gottfried Herder, however, developed an *ethical* theory of humaneness or humanity (“*Humanität*”), including also practical humanity, i.e. situation-oriented, and thus practically realized humanity in everyday life transcending abstract general rules in the sense of a concrete sympathetic solidarity by practice-oriented ethical reasons.<sup>8</sup> Whereas the traditional ancient idea of *homo humanus* was rather static and educational, Herder conceived of this idea as an *anthropological* and *ethical* fundamental concept. He might also be seen as an intellectual opponent of Kant’s moral rigorism, which in his eyes relies too much on ethical and moral lawfulness. The ideas of practical humaneness and co-humaneness in the extant situations and practical contexts may even be expressed by an apparently paradoxical formula: “Don’t rely always and strictly merely on abstract moral rules and commands, but exercise a more humane individual- and situation-oriented way of life.” The strict enforcement of rules and commands *per se* should not be the guiding idea in morality. – Instead, the respective consideration of humane perspectives and moral values beyond pure and strict legal or moral norms, in a sense which Christian ethics called the works of supererogation, is required. That is, super-regulatory and supererogatory aspects of humaneness are particularly relevant in the field of practical humanity, admitting of exceptions and special considerations according to the general leading idea of co-humaneness or participatory and mutual respectful humanity. It is the idea of a theory of practical humaneness (“*konkrete Humanität*”<sup>9</sup>) which dates back to Herder’s idea of a practical humanity under the rather telling slogan, which I coined: “*In dubio pro humanitate concreta sive practica*.” The primary modern proponent of this principle was Albert Schweitzer<sup>10</sup> who considered ethically valid only that which is “compatible with humanity” and a truly human practical responsibility in concrete everyday situations. Schweitzer<sup>11</sup> also said that humaneness and practical humanity consist in the believing that never a

human being should be sacrificed on the altar of an aim or objective whatsoever.<sup>12 13</sup> “Abstraction is the demise of ethics: for ethics is a living relationship with real life.”<sup>14</sup> However, both of these statements are abstract ones; they are not really able by themselves to render situation- fitting concreteness and practicality. We need values, virtues, *and* viable norms to render and engender “concrete” humanitarianism.

### “CONCRETE”, SITUATION-ORIENTED HUMANITY

Already in the late eighteenth century, Herder, in dealing with humaneness, emphasized its peacefulness, sociability or community-orientation and its participatory and empathetic aspects, as well as sympathy, human dignity, human love and charity, justice and human duties (along with human rights), and the supererogatory idea of going beyond formal duties and obligations.<sup>15</sup> He also explicitly mentioned tolerance as the respect and acknowledgement of other opinions, attitudes and valuations of other people(s) and individual persons. Tolerance, for him, is not separable from humaneness. Tolerance is a basic value of a character, of an attitude, and of a way of liberal and pluralistic thinking and valuation. This value of tolerance as an attitudinal value closely combined with the respect of individuals and other persons in practical situations and in general, is, for Herder, a modern cardinal virtue that should be instilled by education. Next to co-humaneness and the ideas of human solidarity and charity, it is tolerance (as the respectfulness for other individuals’ opinions, beliefs, “*Lebensanschauungen*”, i.e., views of life, and the respective other’s civilization including her/his religion) that characterizes an important trait of philanthropy, including a way of practising co-humaneness in the form of mutuality of respect, sympathy, empathy, co-emotionality etc.

**Table 1: Characteristic Traits of Humanity according to Herder**

- peace-loving, **peaceableness**;
- Conviviality, **community-orientation**, companionableness;
- Compassion, sympathy, humaneness or **co-humaneness** (human solidarity) („empathy”);
- The connection of **human-dignity** and **love of humanity** (philanthropy);
- The relationship between **human rights** and **human duties**;
- Justice;
- Tolerance;
- Capacity and readiness for supererogatory deeds and words, to do the **not demanded good**;
- Practical humanitarianism (charity) or love for humanity;
- “Unity of a true & potent immaculate moral character” (“die **Einheit** eines wahren wirksamen reinen **moralischen Charakters**”).

All these attitudes and moral values and virtues also draw heavily on the supererogatory character or really ethical, or moral, motivation in the narrower sense; they transcend and at times even transgress strictly enforceable rules under the perspective of an extended practical humanity. In particular, the noble idea and practice of forgiveness is well-nigh the climax of humanitarianism and genuine humaneness. The Good Samaritan of the Bible is the perfect example of the exercise of practical humanity. Practical humanity is definitely not pharisaic. We also find similar examples in the Koran, in Buddhism, and in Confucianism.

Practical humanity highlights not only adequate and person-oriented ways of coining, instilling and transmitting attitudes and valuations, assessments, etc., but also leaves open a free realm of formally guaranteed liberty for one to develop and cultivate oneself. It concentrates on a comprehensive view of persons as against segmentalisation and division into roles and partial functions. Concrete humanity and substantial tolerance are in that sense person-oriented and holistic, although always in a practical setting. They also exercise justice as fairness after Rawls and a certain kind of fair behaviour in everyday life. Practical humanity emphasises co-humaneness in groups, in all ways of valuations, feelings and aspirations, as well as in everyday life. It stresses co-humaneness not only as a way of knowledge, but also philanthropy as characterizing empathetic, communicating, sympathetic beings.

**Table 2**

- Concrete humanity / Practical humaneness
- Always to respect the human dimension. Self-imposed (“wise”) moderation.
- Take into account conditions and restrictions in practical situations but also from a logical perspective (consistency).
- Not to split up humans in segments or just partial roles or functions but to treat the other person from a holistic point of view.
- Argue as far as possible fair to the individual and the personal including attitudes, valuations, assessments.
- Leave open space to others for actions, opinions and decisions; exercise and grant tolerance.
- Cultivate this liberty also for yourself.
- Justice as fairness (Rawls): being fair in daily life – not only in sports.
- Respect humanity and exercise humaneness in, by and in front of groups.
- Grant and realize charity to the needy ones in your realm of responsibilities, encounters and scope of actions and decisions.
- Adopt personal responsibility in your own practical realm of action.
- Forgiveness and condoning are a true climax of humaneness.

- Take all of us humans as empathetic, compassionate and communicative beings.
- Act in and contribute to an environment worth living in, one with a respectable quality of life.
- Exercise a human(e) treatment also towards other creatures, e.g. domesticated animals and primates.
- Reverence for the extant existing life (following Albert Schweitzer)
- Including self-respect and responsibility for your own person and human self-cultivation in the form of aesthetic refinement of taste, personal experience and forming of your own values (including erotic life).

In the age of all-encompassing globalization, indeed situation-dependency, action orientation and one's responsibilities have all changed dramatically. Most of the suffering people who were traditionally speaking deemed as very remote from us are now our "functional neighbours" depending on help from the privileged parts of the world for a chance at survival and a modicum of well-being. Even if the problems of too little food and too little available healthcare cannot at present easily be solved by political, legal or economic measures, this situation sets new ethical responsibilities and certainly *redefines* the concepts of "dependence", (functional) "neighbourhood" and "concreteness" or even "situation-orientation" in terms of interdependencies and worldwide interactions. If not (only) from a legalistic perspective, we certainly need a new way and extension of applied ethical approaches highlighting the new worldwide functional adjacency, interdependencies and interactions. We need a new understanding of humanitarianism as such in terms of the enlarged situation-dependence by using new concepts of the "concreteness" of social "situations", interactions, interdependence, etc. in a functionality-based sense. Ethically speaking, this drastically changed situation on our finite planet Earth with its limited resources and the extant overpopulation and undersupply as well as distribution problems would really "call for a revolution in our ethical thinking"<sup>16</sup> and in our ethical and humanitarian practice.

Certainly, the idea of a general practical humanity or co-humaneness (practical human solidarity) implies and involves also aspects of a formal *and* substantial tolerance and fairness if we deal with opinions, rules, communication and conflict regulation. Therefore, it contains subordinate ideas and procedural norms and rules for social communication, action systems and strategic situations (in particular rules for procedures of conflict regulation abiding by some ideas of basic fairness and tolerance).

The motto "In dubio pro humanitate concreta sive practica" may be changed to "In dubio pro humanitate concreta sive practica atque tolerantia."

Practical humanity, co-humaneness and tolerance are concepts and norms or values that are mutually dependent. This is especially true of

horizontal tolerance and humanistic (individual-oriented) tolerance, but it also has large implications for the procedural, legal and public strategies of the constitutional state. Tolerance as a moral ideal is a pervasive, primarily functional (not only procedural) way of respect for differing or even opposing opinions and for regulating conflicts in a pluralistic society on the intellectual level according to the principles of fairness and procedural reason under the auspices of basic egalitarian conceptions of humankind bestowing equal worth on any human being whatsoever. Tolerance is part of the essentially humanitarian tradition of the human rights movement and of human moral tradition, as highlighted by the above-mentioned UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. Tolerance has to be spelled out according to the above-mentioned types and functional differentiations to render more substantial and effective some rather formal insights into different subkinds and sorts of the general humanitarian approach. There is no true humaneness and co-humanity without general legal and moral as well as situation-oriented tolerance. *In dubio pro humanitate concreta sive practica atque tolerantia formale et substantiale!*

#### **FROM LEGAL HUMAN RIGHTS TOWARDS AN ETHICAL INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY CLAIMS AND A PROPOSAL FOR A HUMAN RIGHT OF CREATIVITY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

The tradition of human rights discussions and conceptions as well as declarations – including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948 – would construct human rights as legal *protection rights against* encroachments by the state or ruler, i.e. human rights were conceived of as prevention rights for the protection of individuals. They reinforced rights and legitimate moral claims of the individuals as against the state and other holders of power in a legally codified way. However, starting at least some decades ago, the protective or preventive human rights have been widened so as to include positive self-determinative and participatory rights for the individual's legitimate opportunity to design his/her own lifestyle. In addition, participatory rights for one to take part in the guaranteeing of life-securing healthcare, sustenance and social participation as well as in making possible a life according to human dignity have developed. There is a noticeable progress from the pure interpretation of the human rights as protection rights against the state or ruler towards the rights of active participation in social life and partaking in guaranteed social opportunities, etc.<sup>17</sup>, as well as towards the inclusion of sometimes so-called collective human rights of groups, minorities, etc., guaranteeing them equal treatment. There has been a remarkable development from the interpretation of just legally codified protection rights towards *participatory social opportunity rights* and for guaranteed life-improving resources (at least in principle). The latter human rights can be called *social human rights* or *positive beneficiary rights*, as I have stated elsewhere.

To be sure, there is a characteristic extension of the original intuition of negative protective rights (against non-encroachments) towards positive participatory and beneficiary social rights as well as the guaranteeing of opportunities and chances. If this holds true even for the legal interpretations of the codified human rights, it is all the more true for the ethical interpretation of moral claims to enjoy the privilege of being treated according to the principles of human dignity. Instead of just speaking of moral human rights, I prefer now to talk about legitimate moral or ethical *claims towards human dignity* (“*Menschenwürdeanrechte*” or “*Menschenwürdigkeitsanrechte*”) instead of the apparently all too much legally shaped moral “rights” in the narrower sense.<sup>18</sup> I shall not go into the details of these differences and the historical development here.

Instead, I would like to add another moral human quasi-right or an ethically legitimate participatory claim regarding human dignity towards freely chosen, non-alienated creative activity (*eigenactivity*) or for that: “creativity”<sup>19</sup>, i.e. “*Eigentätigkeit*” or “*Eigenleistung*.”<sup>20</sup> Like the above-mentioned reflexive programmatic human rights to a job, a proportionate standard of living, etc., this would also propose as human rights, rights to being educated, to indulging in non-alienated free creative activity (including, at times, recreation), to enjoying and performing meaningful *eigen* activity, i.e. productive activity being part and parcel of free self-determination and self-forming. Volunteering *eigen* activity and *eigen* achievement would be considered as a legitimate ethical claim for human dignity and even proposed as a human right of a participatory social provenance (like the “reflexive” right to have or get a job). The state would have to see to it that the conditions and opportunities for such a creative free activity of one’s own, in short, for *eigen* activity and authentic proper achieving and creative performing of one’s own self have to be fostered, if not guaranteed, at least in the sense of rendering free space for such some activities. This would also include a reorientation and new appreciation as well as an appreciative valuing of volunteering activities in social realms.

A new positive cultivation of freely chosen, personally engaging non-alienating meaningful activities (*eigen* achievement and authentic personal activities and creativeness) should be developed and fostered under the auspices of a human right (or ethical claim) to social and meaningful *eigen* activity and creative personal actions as well as recreation. This may be understood as an extension of, or as in agreement with, some of the UN declarations of human rights, e.g., those of 1948 and 1966.

This special variant of a participatory positive ethical human right is certainly a special interpretation of the human right to education; human rights must certainly be taught by educators to their students. Indeed, education toward abundance by and through such interpretation of human rights is part and parcel of such an extension of an activist positive interpretation of extant human rights and the principles underlying them.

Whereas we have first of all to teach human rights in the strict and basic sense of protective and participatory rights – in particular in

situational settings taking into account concrete (practical) humanity – we should also see to it that the ethical human right or legitimate moral claim to meaningful *eigen* activities and creative endeavours is guaranteed; it should be included in the general discussion of human rights and human dignity. Humans are creative and free beings: education should foster this objective and emphasize the positive activist connotations of the thus extended human rights ideas.<sup>21</sup>

UNESCO is certainly the international institution best fit to deal with such ideas. Philosophy can and should play a constitutive part in developing and differentiating as well as spreading out these high ideals of an ethically extended conception of human rights.

*Institut für Philosophie  
Universität Karlsruhe  
Germany*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was originally an invited presentation at the UNESCO World Day of Philosophy, Paris, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> In the first typed version of this manuscript there occurred a nice and telling misspelling: it said “*creativity*-endorsing” instead of “creativity-endorsing”. The intelligent translator asked me whether this would be an intentionally coined neologism of mine. And a true one indeed – see below, IV (and my *Eigenleistung. Plädoyer für eine positive Leistungskultur* (Osnabrück – Zürich: Interfrom, 1983), as well as my keynote address titled “Youth, Creativity, and Achievement Orientation,” presented at UNESCO’s 3rd General Congress of 1985 in Sofia (see UNESCO (ed.): *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance* (Paris: UNESCO 1995), 23 C/26 vr, p. 46ff.).

<sup>3</sup> H. Lenk, *Konkrete Humanität. Vorlesungen über Verantwortung und Menschlichkeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> See E. Garzón Valdés, “Nimm Deine dreckigen Pfoten von meinem Mozart!”. Überlegungen zum Begriff der Toleranz,” in E. Garzón Valdés and R. Zimmerling (eds.), *Facetten der Wahrheit* (Freiburg – Munich: Alber 1995).

<sup>5</sup> W. Becker, “Nachdenken über Toleranz. Über einen vernachlässigten Grundwert unser verfassungsmoralischen Orientierung, “ in S. Dietz, H. Hastedt, G. Keil, Thyen, A. (eds.), *Sich im Denken orientieren* (Frankfurt a.M., 1996), pp. 119-139.

<sup>6</sup> Horizontal tolerance is “basically egalitarian and characteristic for democratic societies: for democracy horizontal, i.e. mutual, tolerance has greater significance, since that belongs to the constitutional morality of democracy” (Becker, “Nachdenken über Toleranz,” p. 137).

<sup>7</sup> See UNESCO-Commission/Germany (ed.), *Menschenrechte. Internationale Dokumente* (Bonn-Paris: UNESCO 1981).

<sup>8</sup> H. Lenk, “Some Remarks Concerning Practical Humanity and the

Concept of Tolerance,” *Philosophica*, Vol. 66 (2000) No. 2, pp. 33-40.

<sup>9</sup> See H. Lenk, *Konkrete Humanität. Vorlesungen über Verantwortung und Menschlichkeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> A. Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik* [1923] (Munich: Beck, 1960), p. 352, see also pp. 348 f.) See H. Lenk, *Albert Schweitzer – Ethik als konkrete Humanität* (Münster: LIT, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Schweitzer even expanded the idea of a practical humanity to a “humane” treatment of animals (Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik*, p. 349. See also Schweitzer, “Über Humanität,” in Schweitzer, *Wie wir überleben* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik*, p. 313)

<sup>13</sup> The idea and theory of practical humaneness and co-humaneness implies some approach like Fletcher’s “situation ethics” (J. Fletcher, *Situation Ethics* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966]). It cannot however be restricted to just situation-orientedness of action, but is generally regulated by a *universal* principle of taking into consideration co-humaneness, solidarity, a typically humane morality, whereas situation ethics only brings to the fore the particular aspects and the situation-orientedness within special circumstances.

<sup>14</sup> Schweitzer, *Kultur und Ethik*, p. 325.

<sup>15</sup> J.G. Herder, *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, in J.G. Herder, *Werke in zwei Bänden*. Vol. II (Munich: Hanser 1953), pp. 458ff.

<sup>16</sup> R. Bernasconi, “Cosmopolitanism, Globalisation, and Ethical Responsibility,” *Revue Internationale de Philosophie Moderne*, Vol. 20 (Tokyo 2002), pp. 67-80.

<sup>17</sup> N. Brieskorn, *Menschenrechte* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1997, p. 17f.

<sup>18</sup> In fact, the latter development would also include the general non-suable human rights as, e.g., the general collective human right for jobs and other so called “reflexive” “program statements” within the *General Declaration* as well as in the *European Social Charter* as of 1961 (II, art. 1) stating just general guarantees, no suable individual rights or claims. The same is true regarding the human rights for education (ibid. art. 26), participation in cultural life (art. 27); also in the UN human rights Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as of 1966 (III, art. 6).

<sup>19</sup> See above, footnote 2.

<sup>20</sup> See my *Eigenleistung. Plädoyer für eine positive Leistungskultur*.

<sup>21</sup> For further discussion on this topic, the reader may refer to my: “[The Situation of] Youth, Creativity, and Achievement Orientation,” Plenary address at the 23 Session of the UNESCO General Conference, Sofia, 26th Plenary Meeting, Oct. 23, 1985, see 23 C/vr 26, p. 46-48)/long version published in *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Vol. 3 (1986), no.2, pp. 69-78; “Value Changes and the Achieving Society,” in OECD (ed.), *OECD Societies in Transition. The Future of Work and Leisure* (Paris: OECD 1994), pp. 81-94; *Konkrete Humanität. Vorlesungen über Verantwortung und Menschlichkeit* (Frankfurt a.M. : Suhrkamp, 1998);



“Menschenrechte oder Menschlichkeitsanrechte?,” in G. Paul Robertson and C. Wensauer (eds.), *Traditionelle chinesische Kultur und Menschenrechtsfrage* (Baden-Baden: Nomos 1997/1999), pp. 25-36; Albert Schweitzer – *Ethik als konkrete Humanität* (Münster: LIT 2000); “Some Remarks Concerning Practical Humanity and the Concept of Tolerance,” in *Philosophica* Vol. 66 (2000) No. 2, pp. 33-40; “Values as Standardized Interpretative Constructs,” in W.L. McBride (ed.), *The Idea of Values* (Charlottesville, VI: Philos. Documentation Ctr. 2003), pp. 85-125; “Responsibility and Globalization,” *Sandhan (Journal of the Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi)*, Vol 1, no. 2 (2001), pp. 113-150 [with M. Maring].

Other relevant texts include: Auswärtiges Amt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (ed.), *Menschenrechte in der Welt. Dokumentation von 1979* (Bonn, 1979); P. Bayle, *Aspekte einer Theorie der Toleranz* (1682-86); I. Fetcher, *Toleranz: Von der Unentbehrlichkeit einer kleinen Tugend für die Demokratie* (Stuttgart: Radius, 1990); W. Heidemeyer (ed.), *Die Menschenrechte* (Paderborn: Schöningh (UTB) 1972); C. Herdtle and Th. Leeb (eds.), *Toleranz. Texte zur Theorie und politischen Praxis* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987); I. Kuçuradi (ed.), *Human Rights in Turkey and the World in the Light of Fifty-year Experience* (Ankara 2002 (Hacettepe University, UNESCO chair)); I. Kuçuradi, *The Ethical Education of Human Rights as a Way to Combat Racism and Other Intolerables* (Manuscript OSCE Conference on Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination. Vienna, September 4-5, 2003); J. Locke, *Ein Brief über Toleranz* [Letter Concerning Toleration, 1689] (Hamburg: Meiner 1957); A. Schweitzer, “Über Humanität.” in A. Schweitzer, *Wie wir überleben* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder 1994); S. Shute and S. Hurley, eds., *On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures, 1993* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); C. Tomuschat (ed.), *Menschenrechte. Eine Sammlung internationaler Dokumente zum Menschenrechtsschutz* (Bonn (UNO) 1992); UNESCO-Commission/Germany (ed.), *Menschenrechte. Internationale Dokumente* (Bonn-Paris: UNESCO, 1981); UNESCO, *La tolérance aujourd’hui. Analyses philosophiques* (R.-P. Droit, ed.) (Paris: UNESCO 1993); United Nations (Office of Public Information) (ed.), *The International Bill of Human Rights. International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. and Optional Protocols* (New York: UN, 1978); United Nations (Office of Public Information) (ed.), *The United Nations and Human Rights* (New York: UN, 1978).



## CHAPTER XIX

# INDIAN CULTURE AND ITS GLOBAL OUTLOOK: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

*MD. SIRAJUL ISLAM*

Culture is a vital part of every nation. A country is to be considered rich and developed if its culture is rich and developed. Culture may be conceived in diversified ways, such as the colloquial meaning of culture that basically refers to the realm of intellectual production at large, and the sociological meaning of culture where the intellectual, material and institutional realms are characterized. Therefore, a very careful philosophical analysis of the notion of culture is a pre-requisite for any analysis of culture.

The term culture has a broad range, which encompasses all intellectual, material, spiritual, social accomplishments of human beings and, hence, a careful description of customs, folklore, religious rites, cooking, dress, etiquette, social and family ceremonies, industrial and technological progress, art, music, so on, are to be considered as elements of culture. It is a most valuable, potent and dynamic characteristic of society.

Today, in the age of globalization, due to the tremendous pressure of big cultures, many small cultures have lost their identities. Hence, the preservation of the cultural identity of small cultures is a very difficult task. I strongly believe that in this regard philosophers can find some solutions here.

Historically, it is evident that, in the last phase of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, we have seen that various cultures have vanished; this is an irreparable loss to our ultra-modern or scientific world. We are unable to fill those gaps with what is left. Instead, we need to show respect for culture – but this may mean that we also need to judge the value and importance of each culture. There are some customs in tribal cultures that are thought to be essential parts of the culture, but that are also barbaric and inhumane in nature, violating basic human rights. These need eradication, but the issue is very delicate and sensitive – and therefore, very careful change is needed for this issue of culture.<sup>1</sup> Each and every culture in the world has a distinctive value if viewed in a constructive and dispassionate way. It is the challenging task of philosophy to find a way to respect all cultures of the world, so that we can construct a new global culture where everybody has an equal share and also contributes to global society. But this is not an easy task.

Now philosophy stresses *cultural progress* that is keenly related to the needs of society, because it directly affects the thinking of both the individual and society. My paper is an endeavor to explore some clues to

solve the latest crucial problems of the world where, I think, philosophers have a responsibility to tackle the issue reasonably and systematically. While philosophy is sometimes regarded as an abstract speculation, it actually is an analysis for the correct understanding of and solution to world problems. Now, it is not mere love of knowledge, but involves taking care to eradicate or solve global problems.

From the early 1980s, cultural development became a central concern of world philosophy. The U.N. Proclamation of the World Decade of Cultural Development was mainly confined to international economic thinking that has not been successful because, there, development had reduced to economic development only. From these long term effect, it is clear to us that development cannot be purely reduced to the economic aspect, because culture has a pivotal role.<sup>2</sup> If any development or progress does not cover the whole of society, it obviously will fail. Development will be ineffective unless it enables individuals and peoples to live a better life – and that requires perfect harmony with their moral, spiritual, rational, social and cultural aspirations. Therefore, world progress should now be seen mainly as a *cultural cohesion*, where economic improvement as well as the fulfillment of human desires are integrated. From the middle of the second millennium, the principal objective of many European countries was mainly confined to the progress of industrialization and the maximization of per-capita income, which entailed severe global and environmental problems that became a real threat to human as well as world existence. As a result, competitions, depression, and social unrest between one people and another or one group and another, has increased, and that has basically weakened our cultural bond. This weakening also led to international terrorism, social intolerance, communal violence, and economic upheavals, and so on, that are the crucial problems of the present world. It is not an easy task to tackle all these in this third millennium. Thus, the demand for cultural progress and cultural co-ordination is essential to minimize or eradicate these problems – and this means the need to honor, but also have a synthesis of, different cultures.<sup>3</sup>

### WHAT IS CULTURE?

Before discussing Indian culture and its global outlook, it is necessary to define culture. Generally, the term *culture* is a generic term that encompasses all kinds of accomplishments of a society/nation/world and, through culture, their progress or development can be measured. Culture seems to be the heart of the society/nation, where individual capabilities, talents and social potentialities are cultivated and promoted in a systematic manner. The term *cultura animi* has been present in Western thinking from the beginning of our scientific era.<sup>4</sup> Edward B. Taylor says culture is a ‘complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morality, laws, customs any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.’<sup>5</sup> A.L. Kroeber opines that culture is that which the human species

has and other social species lack.<sup>6</sup> As its lowest level, it is an intuitive awareness of individual identities that needs a commitment to their actualization. At the highest level, there is a consciousness of value implied in it in addition to their mutual cohesion. It is obvious that human accomplishments vary from one culture to another; however, they help enormously to dye human civilization that unhesitatingly accepts change and mutation in social milieu. In viewing the multifaceted dimensions of culture, it seems to me that culture is basically a conceptual and imaginative artefact of the individual and society that determines the evolution of human living and its ways of expressions. In fact, cultural relativism, pluralism, and universalism also appear in modern society, where it is almost clear to us that each and every culture is an autonomous whole with a hierarchical structure of values that is deeply rooted in it and that is beyond criticism. Culture as a cream of a particular society may claim to address all human beings.<sup>7</sup>

For many philosophers, culture is not an individual property or a subjective entity. Rather, it is a collective enterprise where all peoples of the globe have an equal claim to utilize its benefits. Some secular bodies ignore the moral values of a culture and base their interest merely on intellectual features, but moral values are essential to apprehending the real contribution of a culture by which we can judge the accomplishments of its peoples.<sup>8</sup>

Sometimes, the term civilization is considered synonymous of culture, but this is not true. There is no doubt that civilization is an inevitable part of culture, and they have keen affinities to each other. However, there is a sharp distinction. Civilization is basically entangled with industrial and technological artefacts and their progress, but culture has a much broader outlook that encompasses all types of progress/development of the individual as well as of a nation. Invaluable conditions of culture include: people living in certain geographical boundaries, having a minimum requisite for nationhood, and that nation having a political order for framing a state, where language, religion, art, ethnicity, racial history, and so on are to be considered.<sup>9</sup>

## **INDIAN CULTURE**

Indian culture is an instance of unity, integrity and configuration, where geographical and economic unity exists to such an extent that it naturally exhibits its cultural cohesion. In spite of its multifarious differences, there is a basic unity in thinking, feeling, living which waxes and wanes with changing political constellations, but never ceases. A.L. Basham maintains that “no land on earth has such a long cultural continuity as India.”<sup>10</sup> He has also produced some evidence for supporting his opinion that “Indians have carried their commerce and culture beyond her frontier .... But India's isolation has never been complete, and the effect of the mountain wall in developing her unique civilization has often been overrated.”<sup>11</sup> It is clear that, on several occasions, the forces of disintegration at the external and

internal levels have threatened to shatter its unity, but India's spirit of oneness never been broken. At present, despite the changing pattern of thought, India still maintains its harmonious and tolerable attitudes that undoubtedly are an astonishing example for peoples around the globe. Sometimes terrorism, regional dividing forces, separatism, religious violence, communal conflict, regional ethnicity and language challenge this integration, but India has handled these over all in very scientific and methodical ways. If we look in the inner aspects of all these problems, it will obvious that all these are extraneous elements that are quite antagonistic to the Indian mind.<sup>12</sup> In spite of all these, India represents a fascinating coalescence of cultures, embodied in distinct unified civilizations. It can be considered as a great confluence of cultural strands, a laboratory of racial mixing, with cross fertilization of religious, linguistic, and cultural bonds. Its cultural diversity produced a most tenacious pluralistic society that has been seldom found in the annals of mankind. In terms of cultural depth and integrity, it shows an intertwining thread of intercultural synthesis, in which individual values and social ethics are preserved as a composite culture in a systematic whole. Though the Indian constitution is the safeguard of justice and equality of all sections of its people, clash among minorities and majorities have emerged as an unpalatable truth of India. But the Indian Government (UPA) has taken strong measures to preserve its integrated character. In maintaining equality and justice among all sections of the people, Indian political leaders have given special attention to lift up the down trodden and backward peoples. In eliminating the minority-majority gap, the present government has formed various committees for economic, political, educational and health progress which have been praiseworthy initiatives. In economics, it has given special attention to the basic needs of all peoples, like food, clothing, accommodation and fuel, that help enormously to upgrade the life of its downtrodden peoples.<sup>13</sup> Here the opinion of Amartya Sen is noteworthy, as he stated that "Our identities cannot be defined independently of our traditions and past..... Our reading of the past and understanding of the present are interdependent."<sup>14</sup>

The cultural attainment of India can be roughly viewed in the context of language, literature, religion, spirituality, arts, dance, drama, philosophy, economics, and politics. There is no doubt that India is a culturally rich but economically poor country. It is clear that, before the beginning of Christian era, the culture of India had begun to spread systematically across the globe. Her religions and philosophies penetrated the minds of the people of Thailand, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Persia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, China, and Japan, and had a deep impact on the culture and civilization of several other countries of the world.<sup>15</sup>

If we discuss the philosophical outlook of India, then it is quite evident that Indian philosophy is deeply entangled with Indian culture. Her Philosophy, metaphysics and religious thought have a symbiotic relationship with one another. Her ancient sages and seers have provided

information through *shruti* (knowledge preserved and spread through an oral system) and *smriti* (remembrance).<sup>16</sup> Thereafter, Buddhist and Jain philosophy also developed as a separate branch of the Indian philosophical traditions. Their conception of non-violence (*ahimsa*) is undoubtedly global in application, and still has an importance to contemporary philosophy and culture.<sup>17</sup> The emergence of six philosophical systems, like Nyaya, Vaisesik, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta, reflect a justified philosophical system which is strongly argumentative and logical.<sup>18</sup> Here, philosophical traditions and schools differ considerably from one another in social, economical and political outlook, but they all share some common philosophical pursuits and are recognized as part of indigenous Indian culture.<sup>19</sup>

Indian philosophical acumen is basically rationalistic as well as humanistic, which is highly suitable to assimilation not expulsion, integrity not disharmony, unity not separation. Philosophically, Indian culture rejects mono-cultural regimentation or domination and reaffirms the value of pluralism and syncretistic thought. From the Vedic age, we have certain glimpses of this – reflecting a divine inspiration that helped to show its toleration and its non-violent character to all.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and Zoroastrianism are different religions but are nevertheless are coexisting parts of Indian culture.<sup>21</sup> Overall, Indian culture shows an openness, where tribal, rich, poor, elite, folk, religious, social, and cultural traditions are equally important and valuable – and which enlarge its beauty. In its cultural fold, Baghdad, Rome, Jerusalem, Afghanistan, Persia, Arabia, and Europe have intermixed from time immemorial and have fit together. Hence, the term Hindustani culture reflects the attitude of a national culture where Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, tribal peoples all have an equal status.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Jawaharlal Nehru, in his *Discovery of India*, makes the following remark concerning Indian cultural integration: “everywhere I found a cultural background which had exerted a powerful influence on their lives. This background was a mixture of popular philosophy, tradition, history, myth and legend and it was not possible to draw a line between any of these.”<sup>23</sup>

At present, there are tremendous crises in the preservation or restoration of cultural identities throughout the world. As a result, the promotion of cohesion and unity has been challenged. Indian cultural philosophy is undoubtedly a significant example of how to enrich a global cultural synthesis and preserve global humanism. Today, it has changed its shape slightly, and not only contributes to spirituality but emphasises social uplift as well the eradication of social problems. Its technological devices, industrial advances, and development of space research are important processes and, despite still being a Third World developing country, it is growing at a significant rate in all fields. In seeing India’s cultural cohesion and unity in diversity, the notion of global unity seems to follow. The reason is that, if a composite culture and harmonious nature is possible in India despite her diversity, then why is not the idea of global culture and

one humanity possible? India has shown the way how unity may be established in plurality. This idea is deeply rooted in Indian culture because her sages and saints have viewed the entire world as one family (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*).

### **THE POSSIBILITY OF ONE GLOBAL CULTURE**

It is obvious that the cultural policies of different nations are delineated in various ways, but there are some basic questions concerning the principal objectives of all cultural policies that are common to all.<sup>24</sup>

From the preceding discussion, a question that may arise in the mind of all is, is it possible to construct one international culture? The answer, I believe, is in the affirmative. We can construct one international culture like the preparation of garland where various flowers discharge their beauty in an integrated whole. Without any harm to the garland, the individual flowers can discharge their beauty and fragrance. In transcending their ego, all flowers of the same garland benefit the whole. Similarly, we can construct an international culture by accepting the beneficial aspects of numerous cultures; it needs an egalitarian attitude, honest endeavour, and a sacrificial humanism. All force, compulsion and pressure are to be eliminated from its fold. Hence, in constructing one international culture, we will nevertheless have to take care of each culture's specific identity. In preserving each's identity, we can construct a new culture that bears some common characteristics. Each and every culture possesses some rare values that are hidden treasures. We, as dispassionate thinkers of philosophy, have a responsibility as well as the duty to preserve them. Thus, cultural identity is one of the major demands of developing countries, which needs philosophical and reciprocal interaction and initiatives.

Cultural appreciation and assimilation are not new in the annals of mankind. In the past, we have seen that many races, groups, communities, nations and continents have exchanged and appreciated reasonable and significant portion of the cultural habits or customs or principles of another. These effects are seen in education, scientific techniques, arts, music, architecture, politics, and even the social habits of the people. Hence, the construction of one international culture is not an impossible task.

This does not mean we are quietly annihilating Asian culture, American culture, European culture, and so on. It is significant to note that one culture cannot just bear one identity; rather it bears numerous identities just as human being does. A male human being may possess numerous identities, as he may be a teacher in an educational institution, a parent in his family, a dignified community member, a good sports player, a poet, a musician, a noble religious personality, and so on. There is no necessary clash between one identity and another. If this is possible for one human being, why can it not be so for a culture? This is undoubtedly a serious philosophical question in the present world.



Cultural status is of special relevance today in a world that has changed substantially as we enter the new millennium, where economy seems to be a major factor but is not the sole element of culture and progress. Undoubtedly, the economy has a very important role in developing a nation or culture, but it is not the sole element. Culture encompasses economy as well as many other elements. Culture is basically a creative accomplishment and expression of an individual or a community or a country that exhibits a strong sense of human existence where reflective, imaginative and philosophical endeavour are integrated.

From the above discussion, it is apparent that, in the changing scenario of the present world, the Indian global, humanistic and fraternal attitude of cultural assimilation and unity is an invaluable example to all, as it shows how divergent communities and cultures may live together without hampering other identities. Here lies India's contribution to global humanity.

*Visva-Bharati University*  
*Santiniketan, West-Benga*  
*India*

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ioanna Kucuradi and Evandro Agazzi, *Philosophy and Cultural Development* (International Federation of Philosophical Societies, Philosophical Society of Turkey, Ankara, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Kucuradi and Agazzi, *Philosophy and Cultural Development*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Kucuradi and Agazzi, *Philosophy and Cultural Development*, pp. 10-13.

<sup>4</sup> Kucuradi and Agazzi, *Philosophy and Cultural Development*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Edward B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom* (London: Murry, 1871) 3rd edition, Vol. 2, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> *Anthropology: Race, Language, Culture, Psychology, Pre-history* (Oxford & Calcutta: IBH Publishing company/Harcourt, Brace & World, 1948), p. 253.

<sup>7</sup> Ismail al Faruqi, "Islam as Culture and Civilization", in *Islam and Contemporary Society*, ed. S. Azzam (London: Longman, 1982), pp-140-141.

<sup>8</sup> Ioanna Kucuradi and Evandro Agazzi, op. cit, p.14.

<sup>9</sup> S. Abid Husain, *The National Culture of India* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1978), pp. 3-5.

<sup>10</sup> A.L. Basham, *A Cultural History of India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1954), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> S. Abid Husain, *The National Culture of India*, p. 7.

- <sup>13</sup> S. Abid Husain, *The National Culture of India*, p. 16.
- <sup>14</sup> Amartya Sen, *On Interpreting India* (Calcutta: The Asiatic society, 1996), p. 38.
- <sup>15</sup> B.P. Singh, *India's Culture: The State, the Art and Beyond* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 37.
- <sup>16</sup> D.N. Jha, *Ancient India: An Introductory Outlook* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 10- 25.
- <sup>17</sup> Jha, *Ancient India*, p. 36.
- <sup>18</sup> B.P. Singh, *India's Culture*, pp. 31-33
- <sup>19</sup> A. L. Basham, *Studies in Indian History and Culture* (Calcutta: Sambodhi Pub. Pvt. Ltd., 1964), p. 58.
- <sup>20</sup> S. Abid Husain, *The National Culture of India*, p. 130.
- <sup>21</sup> Robert W. Stern, *Changing India* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 22-24.
- <sup>22</sup> S. Abid Husain, *The National Culture of India*, pp. 95-96.
- <sup>23</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 67-68.
- <sup>24</sup> Kucuradi and Agazzi, *Philosophy and Cultural Development*, p. 16.

## CHAPTER XX

# THE CULTURE OF ENMITY AGAINST TOLERANCE IN THE BALKANS

IVAN KALTCHEV

If we treat the Balkans as a panorama of civilizations, it will turn out to be amongst the richest regions – and perhaps the richest – on the planet. Here, one sees a variety of cultures, blooming since the very beginning of the time, from *illud temporum* until the present day. Every single one of these numerous, contradictory, variegated, wealthy cultures, often at war with one other, has left virulent traces, still existing as elements, forming the culture of the Balkans of the present day.

Regardless of the stage of development of a given culture, it emanates cultural models, broadly speaking, which we would characterize as coming from its center (metropolitan) and coming from its periphery (provincial).

Let us imagine the following: We look at the geographic area of the Balkans, we take a compass, and fix its point at the centre of the cultures blooming in the Balkans and describe the circles of their peripheries. Such a picture would provide a rich graphic. Common to all cultures, presented in such a scheme, would be the level of intensity of their tolerance of other cultures which may differ between the center and the periphery. I would like to stress two important points.

The center of a culture always coincides with the center of power, i.e., the material wealth. For such a reason, the center of any culture is authentic, original, expressive, stable, creative and self-confident. As a result of this, it becomes deeply and highly self-conscious of itself, and hence wiser and more tolerant of other centers. In contrast to the center, the periphery is forcedly authentic, it is neither original nor inventive, but rather obedient, unstable and non-creative. As a result of this, the periphery is never sure in its identity and therefore it is radical, intolerant, forceful and – in the long run – dull. Intersections with the peripheries of other cultures with the same behaviour lead to the creation of highly explosive points. In such a way, the peripheries of all Balkan countries have become absolutely intolerant, I would say, sometimes even savage. Moreover, since the periphery is strongly impeded by the center, it insists on compensation for this instability, trying to overcome the center.

When we drew the chart with the aid of a compass, we marked off the greater part of the cultures existing in the Balkans from *the Middle Ages* until today, including their centers and peripheries. Let us ask ourselves the following question: Which and how many centers of cultures have been in

the center of the region or closer to the center, and which and how many of them have been in the periphery of the region or close to the periphery?

The answer is that most of the centers of peripheries of various cultures, existing in the various regions, have been close to its periphery, whereas the cultural peripheries (the circles) most commonly cross each other in the center of the Region. Now, if we take into consideration the above-mentioned qualities and characteristics of the notion “cultural center” and “cultural periphery”, we can render an account for the characters, qualities, and causality of the total sum of cultural energies here and now.

And now, let's present the picture in more details. Without pretending to have profound historic knowledge, and only for the purpose of our investigation of the phenomenon, the subject of this study, let me say that here in the Balkans, the Illyrian, Thracian and Ancient Macedonian cultures could be considered as central cultures. On the other hand, the Hellenic, Old Bulgarian, Slavonic, Byzantine (Orthodox), the Roman (Catholic), Islamic, and European cultures could be considered as peripheral or semi-peripheral. From the so-established picture, it turns out that the central Balkan cultures are the oldest, and peripheries are the youngest, including today's up-to-date paradigm: Europe-Balkans, where the bitter truth that Europe is the center and we are the periphery cannot be ignored. However, this is not the most important thing. The most important is something else ensuing from the objective analysis of the picture: the partition and fragmentation of the Balkan cultural space, which turns out to be dialectical – sometimes like a whole, sometimes like the sum of irreconcilable elements. Therefore, considering every single cultural element, we could say that the region suffers from a cultural discontinuity.

If the fragmentation of the cultural space of the Balkans is added to all of this, some fragments never coincide with the boundaries of peoples and countries. Here, I mean that many peoples are separated from one another from the inside, in their environment, by a variety of cultures and religions. The catastrophic consequences from cultural discontinuities or forced overlapping cannot be gotten round; it is an inevitable and tragic fact that there is a multicultural periphery, with a provincial mentality and a dubious, i.e., controlled, erudition, because great literature and great science are written in the great foreign languages. All of this produces a certain hindering. All of this is an ideal circumstance for the appearance of enmity. Enmity turns to a cultural phenomenon *par excellence*!

The culture of enmity becomes something necessary, because it produces, supports and stimulates our pride. Pride, as a child of enmity, of course, falls down amongst comic, laughable phenomena, directly proportional to its inherent pathos.

So, our culture, which is both impeded and at the same time the impeding culture of enmity, converts itself into one of the most inviolable valuables passed over in silence; our stillness concerning it, is equal to our devotedness to it. The history of enmities in the Balkans exists thanks to

enmity as such, and if we are strictly honest with ourselves, that is to say towards our prejudice, for national-chauvinists from all Balkan countries and peoples the only valid formula is: "I hate, so I exist. Love and culture, which are spoken of, is a pure accident, quite an unexpected pause between two enmities."

Now, let's consider some of the enmity mechanisms, involved in the thoughts of people, that are part of the meaning of their lives.

I could call the first mechanism "the mechanism of equality (*égalité*)". Enmity always rules over a subject, which stays in a position lower than that of the object of enmity, whereas the superior subject stands, showing its enmity in contempt, in such a way that the old, authentic, animal enmity guarantees the equality between the enmity subject and the object of enmity; being at enmity with someone, we put him below our level. Envy is the lubricant of such a mechanism. Huge crowds of people in enmity give strong support and perish for entire ideological systems and misuses of religions, for one single purpose – to deflate the capacity charged with enmity.

The second mechanism of enmity is an ointment for the wounds of the secluded man, the deprived man as "zoon politikon"; I would call this "the mechanism of the crowd". Here, a man with enthusiasm and pride denies the "Self," to the account of the collectivity, legalized by a variety of prejudices. Such a person indiscriminately throws himself into various groups, always plotting against something, but never for something. Uniting their energy, the 'wet rags' – these former individuals – feel comfortable with the warmth of the crowd, as if they had returned to their maternal womb, and here one rises in the estimation of another. This is how collective satanization appeared, grew, and blew up itself and its enemy, for racial, religious, class, ethnic, and other reasons. Enmity is a paranoid feeling, and since paranoia is a disease, which includes the other in order to exist, if there is no enemy, it creates one. The same as with paranoia, upon the absence of the other (the opponent), the subject or the crowd includes itself as the object of enmity. The result is a perverse violation as a violation against and on itself – immense disagreements within the framework of one and the same society, to genocide.

The third mechanism of enmity is the way one is irretrievably obligated – the duty which enmity arouses is irrevocable. I could call such a mechanism "the mechanism of voluptuousness". He who, alone or in a crowd, has just once experienced the voluptuousness of the unlimited, wild enmity, because it has always been a manner for attaining the most sacred purposes – he who has experienced its inexhaustible orgiastic character – never denies these pleasures, borrowed from enmity.

In addition to the mechanisms, let us also note the target of enmity; in principle, the end or purpose is sacred. The more sacred it is, the more unpunished and wilder and savage it can be. The end purpose of enmity, in addition to its wildness, is an annihilation, destroying of its object, i.e. the object must totally disappear. To be not present, to be not existent, not to

have been existent. It should disappear not only from this world, but also from the conscience of the subject of enmity. History is replete with examples: from Jeanne D'Arc, to the destruction of entire religions, peoples, states civilizations, and so on.

Imbecile monomials in oligophrenic times become national heroes, saviors, inventors of mythologies, that is to say the authors of huge nets of prejudices, whereupon their adherents jostle like caught fish. The casual result of a battle could settle the winner of a war, only depending on who would be remembered as an executioner “for ever and never” and who as a hero.

For all that, to our great fortune, enmity cannot realize its supreme task: to destroy the world. Its almost perfect mechanisms of self-establishing its identity are not in position to institutionalize themselves to a degree that tolerance would become taboo; that a system of moral valuables could be established that fetishizes enmity as a superior moral quality. Enmity still is neither able fully to take possession of the past, nor reproduce it in future, according to its hellish purposes.

After 11 September 2001, the global village witnessed the beginning of an apocalyptic collision between two cultures; the culture of life and the culture of death. Such a collision will accelerate the globalization process because it is a new beginning of two already perfectly functioning and completed systems of satanization. But in the name of what? There is no serious answer to such a question. We witness a panicky lack of cultural model, which would name the colliding parties. Who is who and who is what in such a conflict? Terrorists are Muslims indeed, however many many Muslims are not terrorists. The absence of operative cultural models leads to pathetic names. The West calls the war the “War of Good against Evil”! This is a pleonasm, because war, from the very beginning has always been a fight of good against evil, and each of the parties has been the good side. The winner has been branding the evils until the next conflict between them. Terrorists themselves call the event “Jihad”! They are not less elementary than the West, because jihad does not exactly mean what they do. Both of the colliding cultures are fully helpless. They lack a cultural pattern to name what is happening and start reflecting on it. “He, who clearly looks at the present, knows what has happened in the past and what will happen in the future”, as Marcus Aurelius said. However, he did not tell us what to look at in the present. It seems to me that, should we want to catch a glimpse of the future, we should follow the constants of the world. Regardless of whether we take the regularity of the world or the leading causes, or a combination of both as its constants, hope is inevitable as a phenomenon of existence, that is to say a *sine qua non* of Man himself.

Hope grows directly proportional to despair. The characters of Chekhov convincingly prove it. However, the performance of hope is quite another thing.

The Balkans have fallen behind Europe in technological, economics, political and cultural aspects (due to enmity) for at least 50

years. If we free ourselves of our cultural stereotypes, ensuing from enmity, mythology, envy, laziness, bribery, bravado, boasting – if, in a word, we manage to think as well as we can sing – within the framework of the current century we could overtake the rest of Europe.

Over the last decades of the 20th century, the historical process for uniting Europe has developed. The isolation of certain states on the European continent, especially from its south-eastern part, is impeding the integrating processes which are under way at all levels in the spheres of politics, economics, science, and culture. These are, inevitably, sprouting in the entire Balkan community of peoples, in the shaping of a new, modern and European Balkans, which is undergoing the process of regional, Mediterranean, and European integration and co-operation.

The great scientific potential that the Balkan academies have at their disposal will be engaged to frame the substance of a new Balkan integration and linkage, revealing the following priorities, in particular:

*Regional cooperation* – The enhancement and intensification of regional cooperation in economics, science, technology, development of infrastructure, protection of the environment, arts, sports, health, tourism, for the creation of a new European Balkans. It is in our hands today to set the preconditions of living under the principles of humanity and, based on these, to kindle the creative potential of the Balkans.

*Scientific and technical integration* – Integration of environmental concerns, energy, transportation, and biotechnological and information technology in the Balkans is a prerequisite for a sustainable development of the region, based on intensifying joint research, establishing a network of regional research centers, sharing of scientific and technical information, and establishing regional scientific journals.

*Support to science* – The governments of the Balkan countries should enhance their support for scientific development, in defining the fundamental directions of the economic, social, and cultural priorities of their countries, and the reforms needed to meet the conditions and standards for integration into the European Union. Stronger EU financial support is needed for scientific development and for bringing together the scientific resources in the countries of the Balkans, and for integrating them into collaborative European and international scientific and research activities.

*Joint legislation* – All the Balkan countries have entered the new millennium with an acceptance of the principles of the rule of law. However, the constitutional standards and norms, and the social reality and application differ considerably. Starting out from the thesis that only by the rule of law can the clash of interests among people, social groups, nations and states be solved, we believe that the precondition for a peaceful and advanced Balkan region lies in the strict application of the principles of the rule of law as a starting-point within and, further, between the Balkan countries within the framework of the European Union and beyond. Consistency with the European legal system will also create equal minority rights in the Balkan countries.

*A new cultural idea* – The promotion of cultural integration in the Balkans and a new cultural dialogue, by leaving behind the nationalisms which have contributed to the partitions and aggressive and exclusive contamination of the Balkans; and by cherishing maximum tolerance, understanding and respect for the other, the neighbor, and humanity in general. This is not only a moral obligation, but also a lasting prerequisite for the development of cultural, scientific and political cooperation among peoples which, at the moment, is an indispensable need of the peoples of the Balkans, still highly burdened with mutual mistrust.

*Overcoming the historical baggage* – One of the crucial factors for stabilization in the Balkans is the need to create a climate for the affirmation of political collaboration, an entrance into the 21st century, and the rational surmounting of the baggage of the past. This will be based on critical historical analyses, the building of political responsibility, and the principles of a liberal democracy, free political discourse. It also requires an educational system which will be multicultural and beyond narrow ideological imperatives. Let us say “farewell” to today’s “balkanization”, and look at the Balkan peoples as an inseparable part of Europe.

Participants from the International Scientific Conference “The Balkans in the New Millennium” are convinced that future of the Balkans should be built upon the principles of peace instead of war, tolerance in living together with others, recognition of polymorphous views of the world and life, recognition of the other, and appreciation of differences in scientific and scholarly knowledge, values and culture, the power of reasoning, and the necessity of negotiation and dialogue.

*St. Clement of Ohrid University  
Sofia, Bulgaria*



## CHAPTER XXI

# GLOBALIZATION, CULTURE, AND ETHICS

*MUSA S. DIBADJ*

As Kant reminded us, when one sees that his action – in spite of looking apparently wise here and there – is, at the universal level, largely foolish, childish, wicked, and destructive, he cannot hide his dislike of it.<sup>1</sup>

In this short article, I will answer the following complex questions: In the current state of globalization, what destiny will different people's cultures face? Will cultures globally have the same identity that they have based on their special geography? Will cultures maintain their differences or finally turn into fundamentally harmonious elements for a globalized humanity? Will modern global ethics overcome differences of culture or will the cultural and geographical differences be replaced by homogeneity of ethics?

### I

It is obvious that, in the process of globalization, effects from one side and region and particular reactions from other sides, sink into and absorb each other. The necessities of globalization are completely observable. Roland Robertson correctly emphasizes that localism and locality have, simply, been universally institutionalized: "Locality is, to put it simply, globally institutionalized".<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein has a famous expression in describing the phenomenon of globalization: "Universalism through Particularism and particularism through universalism." It seems that general universalism from one side and specificity from the other side have appeared in the form of universal necessities accomplished with local specifications.

Governments throughout the world have encountered the phenomenon of globalization, and no individual government has been excluded from this. But researchers in Europe and Asia, in spite of the general weakness of governments towards globalisation, are trying to discover new elements of geographical boundaries and of natural determinations. These researchers have introduced the idea of new practical boundaries, by which their respective governments aim to strengthen cultural powers and identities, rehabilitate and discover new boundaries, and develop them in compatible environmental conditions.

The extent of the authority of states is not just internal, but crosses the boundaries among states – what is called the practice of globalization. Therefore, geographical boundaries will depend on cultural boundaries, and states' identities will have non-material and less concrete specifications. It is as if, at this time, globalization is searching for its natural boundaries

throughout the world, and determines its universal domain by sinking into physical and geographical qualities belonging to different nations and governments.

Globalized society is assumed to be based on existing political systems which have multi-lateral relationships. The position of small and local governments and even those that have, in practice, some autonomy beyond regionality, are defined generally in the worldwide context of production and consumption, international work-division, and sectors of investments which have no competitors.

In comparison with limited regional institutions of a political nature or of economic and cultural institutions whose work is of a long-standing, historical character, these worldwide institutions which have increasing power are going to appear in supplying commodities throughout the world. The globalization of culture is fast increasing, based on these global institutions. Now, most people like to know that what things other people have and what they like wear and read. They like to know what other people's houses or cottages are made from. For example, people may want to know what materials were used in the houses of people in the city of Sichuan in China, that, after the recent earthquakes, had the largest number of deaths in a developed country.

The interest of people throughout the world in knowing the different states or lifestyles and in enjoying the character of common well-being has paved the way for the universal delivery of culture. It is not merely the public or local cultures that say to us where and how to live. Now, human life has two kind of centres: first, the globalized, and second, the national – e.g., one's birthplace.

Ignoring either of these two worlds, under the excuse of adopting the new commodities of globalized life or, in contrast, focusing on traditional, ethnic, national, and regional values, leads to denying the original unity of humanity, and establishing false and artificial boundaries which cannot resist historical realities.

Universal communication and the global media put local communities under pressure, pushing them to accept production and consumption on a worldwide basis. Local and social institutions follow codes from international institutions, which impose a global character and, thus, an international will to power appears.

Traditional institutions gradually yield to institutions that are of a global character. Information is no longer the possession of special groups or institutions but must be universally accepted and measured by global criteria. Nation-states and governments are influenced by each other, in spite of the difficult challenge of retaining their historical identities and their own policies, programs and special circumstances.

Universal economics does not so much dominate public or local economics as familiarizes them with the globalization of the economy, and influences them to accept the extra-national economy, which is based on new concepts of mass production, consumption, and economic and

commercial exchange. Governments are obliged to yield a significant part of their authority to the increasing and worldwide legitimacy of market-based systems.

Governments which hold a part of their legitimacy through managing their internal economies are now – by the removal of regulations related to governmental control and the enacting of rules and regulations that support free flowing investment – exposed to large international corporations or decision-making bodies that affect both regional economies and the local market.

In fact, citizens of many countries have become citizens with global passports. They are now often more faithful to the global culture rooted in the needs, beliefs, behaviors, traditions, and customs from overseas, than what the limited authority of their governments can provide.

Globalism throughout the developing countries is very different from it in developed countries, such as those of Europe or the United States. The people of those countries are very concerned about past individual and collective ethics, observing the vanishing of historical events of great honour. Globalization contrariwise wants to complete modernization in a consistent way in different areas of the world.

Hence, faced with the danger of global uniformity, every community may try to improve itself through staying consistent with its traditional values. But the international culture is challenging public morality, displaying its power each day. In spite of the fact that powerful governments in particular – and the first of those who have the claim of universalism, such as the US – have become exposed to a new brand of treatment since September 11, 2001, the tendency toward globalization has expanded calmly. There are statesmen and political theoreticians who do not approve of the global self-participation of states, ignoring the world-wide range of opportunities, and having just a negative outlook on globalization. As we may admit, globalization is a cultural flow. Yet in order to have a political will reshaping its destiny to a more rational build up of human promises, moral views and cultural considerations need to have a global re-evaluation. There is no concept of justice or of other human virtues unless local and geographical understandings are counted.

It seems that every theory about the globalization of cultures should show multilateral and critical interpretations from present world views. To build up, balance, and strengthen international consistency on the one hand, and prevent weakness in governments and regional forces that may lead to complexity in conditions, on the other, the probability of new world-wide damage and of new appearances of poverty and discrimination in levels of society and inadequacy in regions, should not be ignored. In spite of its fundamental necessities, globalization is not a merely positive phenomenon. If our eyes do not see that “1000 years of tradition” is being destroyed, the opportunity for renewing cultures and traditions will be lost.

Here we emphasize that one should differentiate between the idea of globalization and a mere political frame of widespread homogeneity that

requires removing racial and ethnic discrimination and preferences in the interests of global capitalism.

A positive view of globalization requires expansion taking into account scientific homogeneities and technological methods for developing cities and promoting similar production along with economic, political and regional programs. It requires each country to play a role in it. What is dangerous for states is not a cosmopolitanism but a globalization with a growing homogeneity. The reason is that the outcome of transnational improvement in the globalization process so far is not clearly planned. The idea of globalization should not be regarded as the same as cosmopolitanism. Kant believes that a cosmopolitanism, bringing together all governments, is possible. The concept of cosmopolitanism is based on the combination of all the different states which appear on a world map, while globalization does not really recognize the principle of the nation-state. Globalization is realisable and it has occurred already, but cosmopolitanism, which is based on the ideas of *cosmos* and *politieis*, is a far different matter yet.

In comparison with cosmopolitanism, the idea of globalization, in principle as well as in ethics, is clustered around political practices of societies and states around the globe. Against globalization, the original concept of the nation-state has been the focus in the multiplication of countries in Europe from the 17<sup>th</sup> century up to the present time. As we may observe, the appearance of African and Asian governments, especially in the last 70 years, reflects the same principal concept. Now, in contrast with globalization, this original concept faces a general historical treatment equally seen in Asia and Europe as well as in Africa.

This discipline may stop human vital forces in spite of its balance principle, as its absence leads to the destruction of the human interest in having a collective life. Still, we are not fully out of danger, even if mankind does not adopt cosmopolitanism as the final stage of civilization; it is possible always to follow the laws of the jungle, which has its privileges too. It is still difficult for anyone to predict all the matters that may occur as a result of global discipline, governments' fatal situations, world-wide and regional security for big or important countries as well as huge internal and external corporations and funds together with national and international institutes and – the most important of all – the global outlook of production and consumption that is almost an independent process outside the political will of governments. For Asian superpowers like China, despite the many recent political and cultural changes, globalization is no longer considered as a threat. The European brand of modernism is not recognized as representative of the modern world. Asian scientists have found out that globalization has harmed European territories more than other communities. Therefore Asian territories, just as Europe, will be accompanied by new and critical determinations in the future. The determination of new human life on the earth is not considered as null – a negative which one can and should avoid.

The source of resistance in Asia against the ideology of globalization is more the result of a feeling that it may destroy a part of human, individual, or collective identity, rather than an understanding of historical globalization itself. The above-mentioned identity repeated the gambling-like experiences of losing and missing rather than being suitable, finding, and gaining. Although Asian nations and communities experience or at least have had a somewhat disordered development, they have many doubts about focused and universal programs. It is understandable that globalization will not be accepted by the countries and communities which have experienced the crisis of, or fear losing their national identity – such as the ones which are experiencing or are about to experience the global crisis. The major Asian players of the world's political theatre, such as China and India, which produce a large number of the commodities demanded by countries around the world, show more enthusiasm about globalization than the rest of the world's regions combined; that is, the countries which primarily just import and consume these products.

## II

In the twenty-first century, given international relations as they are and as they must be, what should be the definition of globalization? Is this globalization just a new type of cultural imperialism in international relations among nations and among nation-states and governments? Or, as in Hobbes' political theory, do we reach a 'natural' situation in global culture that there is no role for law, nor any power to enforce a law? Based on this presupposition, like every individual, every government is free and has the right to do everything that it wants, and there is no preventing this unrestrained action of government. This probably is unreal and far from being a valid idea, because the absence of a global super-state is not a reason for there being no international society and discipline. Governments will still have common ethical values and principles that would prevent them entering from wars. Common human and global values in different cultures, religions, races, languages and politics would save humanity to some extent. In spite of the general weakness of small and regional planned policies, we must not think that in the process of globalization, there are no common values, multilateral benefits, or common regulations.

One may object that there is no clear principle to determine the limits of government relations, based on international rules and values. The legal and ethical obligations of different states seemingly provide a justification for mutual and multilevel international relations. But in the present state of globalization, we do not yet have a framework for, or definition of, a common global ethics for governments. So, it seems that the notion of international ethics that has been replaced by the recent term "global ethics," is about the effects of the ethical actions of government at the international level. Ethical principles and defined values for ethics are reflected at the global level, based on the way that governments interact and

behave with each other, and with individuals – relatives, friends, competitors, and enemies. Since human beings live on one and the same earth, and human beings and states – despite their differences – are still one in nature, so individuals and states have to follow unique ethical principles. So, as it is good to discuss the effect of ethics on individuals and the different cultures of different nations, it is also necessary to discuss globalization ethics. We must say that, just as respecting the individual pride of each person is an ethical duty for every human, respecting states and accepting their actual sovereignty is an international ethical duty for all governments.

The sovereignty of all countries and governments is a right, and interfering in another country is ethically prohibited. Perhaps this is based on global ethics – that which we find in UN reports that use the familiar term “personality of states”; this means that governments, like individuals, are ethical entities. So the rules and principles of ethics must also rule over governments and human societies.

Fortunately, the right of self-determination is more an ethical right and less related to international rules. In the situation of globalization, this right cannot be ignored, and so the new ethics of globalization does not deny nations and nation-states the right to determine their own destinies. The right that says governments must not intervene in one another’s territory is based on the UN charter and other international agreements, and it is an ethical prohibition. In today’s critical situations, governments are called on to fight against terrorism – a term which applies to people who may be fighting for their own freedom. Looking only at some apparent similarities in actions and political trends and disregarding the depths of the problems tend to make human beings rather superficial.

Considerations that are based only on the protection of national interests and specific cultural values are not enough to justify governments ignoring global ethics and ethical values. The principles of global ethics are fundamental guidelines for governments in engaging in international politics. In the first step, states throughout the world must respect peace and try to build stability in the world. Any effort to make war justifiable, despite the fact that it is unavoidable in most situations, is rarely accepted by human spirituality and ethics. Wars take place when individuals and states become weak in relation to other nations and governments. Globalization is a gateway and an exit for governments and, indeed, every human person in the world. For strategy specialists, there is no event in history similar to contemporary globalization. So the question of globalization cannot be answered simply by reference to classic theories and known modern military and political theories; new theories that properly take account of globalization must be introduced.

No country or government can be, on the one hand, isolated from all of humanity, or, on the other, its leader. Moreover, everyone must have a critical view about the effects of the single-minded politics of globalization for national and regional benefits. Note that we cannot say that who – what

nation or government – would be the real winner of globalization. Some people believe that the ultimate winner of globalization is the United States; for many of the political strategists in that country this would be an ambiguous matter. Many other governments in the world – such as France (in Europe) or China, Malaysia and Indonesia (in Asia) – are concerned about the possibility that the culture and economic force of the world is in hands of Americans. It is important that we say that the global economy – in spite of its independence from governments – cannot work for any particular country's benefit. But if we look closely at globalization, we find that the political and economic system of the U.S. – in spite of being the leading economy in the world and having a powerful and first class military – is based on a new arrangement that reflects the multilevel relations of the global system.

*University of Teheran*  
*Tehran, Iran*

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Kant's *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective*, "One cannot but feel a certain disinclination when one observes their activity as carried out on the great stage of the world and finds it ultimately, despite the occasional semblance of wisdom to be seen in individual actions, all to be made up, by and large, of foolishness, childish vanity, and, often enough, even of childish wickedness and destructiveness." In *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace and History*, ed. Pauline Kleingeld (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 172.





## CHAPTER XXII

# GOING DEEPLY INTO THE GROUND OF CULTURE TO FIND A NEW WAY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHINESE AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

*HE XIRONG*

### INTRODUCTION

Despite a history of as long as a century, the comparative study of Chinese and western philosophies is now running into the claim that there is an incomparability between them. *Vis-à-vis* such a situation, we should not constrain ourselves to discussion on the issue of the so-called “legitimacy of Chinese philosophy.” Rather, we should rethink the modality and contents of it and launch a new round of comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophies. Instead of focusing on philosophical texts, the new round of comparative study should go deep into the different ways in which people engage themselves in philosophy, and to find how their types of philosophy were shaped from their cultural background. In this paper, I will firstly discuss the incomparability of texts by comparing the homogeneity and the heterogeneity of the two traditions. This incomparability was due to reasons such as difficulties of translation; this is the problem of what Thomas Kuhn called “incommensurability,” and the problems of different historical and cultural background, and so on. Then, I will address how to move from incomparability to comparability. One must go deep into different cultures, seek the different philosophical methods, and compare them as well. Finally, I will explain that this new way of comparison will not only reveal the special modality and features of Chinese philosophy but also provide an explanation of the common ground on which both Chinese and Western philosophies are based, and look forward to a renewal in philosophical ideas, so as to pave the way for the comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophies and also for the future development of Chinese philosophy as well.

### THE INCOMPARABILITY OF TEXT

Comparative philosophy is a discipline that examines and compares different systems of philosophy, and comparison can be conducted either among various subsystems within one tradition or among various traditions. The comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophy focuses on two completely heterogeneous traditions. Comparative philosophy is a young field, and there has not been any agreement yet with regard to the nature,

method and purpose of the comparison, or concerning the many problems involved in the comparison, so it is imperative to focus the discussion and the issues involved.

Chinese philosophy, in fact, has been built on and developed through comparative study ever since it was put under the name of "philosophy." Moreover, we may also note that all the countries and nations in today's world put forward the development of a national philosophy of their own, and thus a comparison with Western philosophy in general has been set forth necessarily. Even the European and American countries, the philosophical capitals, can find philosophical problems of their own in the comparison. Therefore, in the future, philosophy, whether in China or in Western countries, will be studied and developed using a comparative process. Or, in other words, all philosophies are comparative philosophy.

However, just as comparative philosophy is becoming well-known and popularly accepted, we encounter a great embarrassment. It is the fact some find Chinese and Western philosophy to be practically incomparable. How has one reached the conclusion of incomparability? Let us take a look at comparative study.

The comparison in the past, as we know, was nothing more than the identification and comparison of the homogeneity and the heterogeneity of the two philosophies. On the view of the comparison of homology, scholars used to regard the leading philosophy as a criterion, annotating, translating or rewriting their native cultural classics with the dominant philosophical terminology, rule and method. Specifically in China, Western philosophy was considered the standard mode, and Chinese philosophy was searched to find matches with it. So, in this way, we follow the notion and framework of Western philosophy in doing Chinese philosophy. Generally, this method has been used to construct Chinese philosophy for more than a century. Although this comparison cannot be said to be completely meaningless, it is very difficult, if considering an important method of study, to exactly understand the cultural background of these two philosophies. This comparative method has not only distorted and misunderstood Chinese history of philosophy, but also excluded some great thinkers from being part of the history of Chinese philosophy.

Then, how about the comparison of the "heterogeneity"?

Although the comparison of heterogeneity was always done along with the comparison of homology, comparing the heterogeneity has been rather concentrated only at the end of the last century. Comparing and studying the heterogeneity of Chinese and Western philosophies has made a breakthrough, first, in the theory of ontology. Ontology is the soul, or the core content, of Western classical philosophy, and pure philosophy or the first principle is that of a categorized system which is characterized as having absolute universal meaning and purpose, organized by a logical method. After examining the features of ontology, and again comparing it with Chinese philosophy, scholars found neither any pure conceptual field beyond sense, similar to ontology, in Chinese history of philosophy, nor any

method of thought that had been developed accordingly. For a long time, the Chinese translation of "Ontology" – Ben Ti Lun, the theory of substance – was not correct, because people used to derive its meaning from its name and interpret it as a theory which sought the origin of the world and the noumenon. On such an understanding, scholars believed that Western "ontology" was just a theory of "origin," discussing the material elements with which the world was formed. It was misunderstood, so almost no doubt was laid on the existence of "Ontology" in Chinese philosophy. Consequently, this led to a series of misunderstandings, such as the incorrect interpretation of the concepts of transcendence, truth, law, principle, metaphysics and so on. As a result, Chinese and Western scholars in dialogue usually quibbled over the understanding of the concept.<sup>1</sup> After realizing the particularity of Western ontology, with transcendent and logical features which were substantially different from the "Chinese understanding" of ontology, more and more scholars have given up this translated term of "Ben Ti Lun," replacing it by new terms such as "Shi Lun," "Cun Zai Lun," or "Sheng Cun Lun," and so on.

This is not just the retranslation of a term; it leads to a series of questions. Specifically, since there is no theoretical system of ontology in China as in the West, and since ontology itself is the core of Western philosophy, concepts which are derived from ontology – such as subject, object, reason, irrationalness, rationalism and empiricism – can apparently not be matched with Chinese philosophical concepts.

In this way, it is found that we have been comparing texts of Chinese and Western philosophies, while the texts are, in fact, the products of different ways of acting. If people act differently, the gap between the texts may be very wide, even incomparable.

The difference between languages is also a problem, for instance. When we compare Chinese and Western philosophies, we have to use translations, but it is very difficult to give an exact expression of the meaning of a term through translation in heterogeneous languages. This is the problem of what Kuhn called "incommensurability."

Another example is the problem of historical and cultural background. As we know, a philosophy is built on the basis of the distinctive historical and cultural background which can make it difficult to perceive the concepts of other traditions. Obviously, the way of judging this is also influenced by history and culture, and thus the problem will arise – how can we judge whether the concepts of other traditions are the same as our own? How is it possible to compare different philosophies?

Essentially, the key issue is not the above question but the problem of the heterogeneity of philosophical approaches. When we compare Chinese and Western philosophies, whether looking at homogeneity or heterogeneity, we usually focus on texts. However, we find that what Western texts describe is knowledge itself, and what is desired in Western philosophy is universal knowledge. Although we cannot say there is no epistemology in Chinese philosophy, Chinese philosophy is basically

concerned with value, ideology, the meaning of life, and so on. From these key words, we can conclude that the approach of Chinese philosophy is different from that of Western philosophy in which knowledge is the core. Or, in a word, we can say that desiring universal knowledge is not regarded as a goal in Chinese philosophy, and that Chinese philosophy focuses on the transformation of a person's existence so as to acclimate himself to, and endeavor to be one with, one's surroundings.

So, the question is: what is knowledge? Although the term "knowledge", in Western culture, has different meanings and usages in different contexts, the most usual and typical expression is to regard knowledge as faith or belief which is set up on an objective base and supported with sufficient evidence. It is different from personal opinion or subjective faith, which is lack of evidence. It is also different from illusion, guesswork, or baseless hypotheses.

However, the Western view of knowledge is not to be found in Chinese philosophy. Chinese philosophers hold the knowledge exists in the world and therefore the relation of human beings to knowledge is the interaction of the knower and the object. Acquiring knowledge is a process of self-reflection and a realization of the Tao (the way) by the way of his own transformation and apperception. This view of knowledge explains the internal relationship between knowledge and the existence of human beings. Therefore we can learn that, in China, people seek the cultivation of body and mind, and try to acquire the Tao from how they live. If it is true that Western philosophers study and acquire universal knowledge from the outside and transcendental world, Chinese philosophers, especially the more conservative scholars, spend more time seeking the Tao from the inside and living world, emphasizing the "upgrading" of personality and the "arrival" of a certain ideological level. After comparing Chinese philosophy with Western philosophy, no wonder some scholars think that Chinese philosophy is characterized by an ethical standard which emphasizes practice and the interpersonal relations. Even if it is called an ethical standard, however, we cannot find any argument in Chinese ethics which emphasises the rational categories, the criteria and the moral paradoxes found in Western ethics, while we can find terms focusing on the senses, such as fortitude, endurance and beneficence, which cannot be brought into the Western conceptional schema. It is a difference caused by the different orientations of the two philosophies.

Comparison based on heterogeneity leads scholars to find that Chinese and Western philosophies, as embodied in the texts, exhibit completely different approaches, whether in their terms or in their connotation. Western philosophy focuses on theory, using the method of logic and claiming a universal import. There are also different concepts in Chinese philosophy, which reflect one's own experience: the cultivation of one's body and mind, and the acquisition of the Tao as a goal in living.

Considering the apparent heterogeneity of the two traditions of philosophy, illustrated in their respective scope, character of philosophical

language, forms of expression, as well as their respective philosophical objectives, we have to face up to the problem of whether it is still possible to compare two philosophies, and, if so, how to change incomparability into comparability.<sup>2</sup>

### HOW TO COMPARE?

What can we do when faced with the incomparability of the two philosophies, then? Many scholars, especially those from schools of Western logical positivism, analytical philosophy, and so on, which were once in the mainstream of 20<sup>th</sup> century, have claimed to give up not only comparative study but even philosophy *per se*, because they allege that it will never be possible to reach complete agreement in the field of philosophy – and so they have called the current times the Post-Philosophy Age. Some Chinese scholars also accept this conclusion, more or less.

Actually, the issue of “Whether it is possible to compare philosophies or not” is basically a false one – the same as the problem of “the legitimacy of Chinese philosophy” – because comparative study is practically done all the time in both Chinese and Western philosophy, regardless of what one thinks about the matter. Of course, this does not mean that there are no defects in the comparative method. We have to solve the problem of how to compare; otherwise, the comparison is nothing more than judging “What belongs to Chinese philosophy and what belongs to Western philosophy”, and saying that these two philosophies cannot be brought together yet.

We find many Chinese and Western scholars actively searching for ways of changing incomparability into comparability, in order that the two philosophies can be inter-interpreted, brought together, and understood thoroughly. Thus we have the method of hermeneutics used by Professor Cheng Zhongying, the method of Culture Studies used by Professor Roger Ames, and the method of “case study” used by Professor Francois Jullien, as well as the other comparative methods – for example, “Commonness and Particularity”, “Explaining Chinese words in Chinese cultural context”, “Everyone can explain in his own way,” suggested by Chinese scholars. All these methods were proposed in an effort to build a stage, by way of comparison and interpretation, on which the two philosophical traditions could exchange mutually, and therefore their separation would not be insisted upon any more.<sup>3</sup>

Comparison by seeking commonness and distinguishing particularity makes us realize, when we engage in a comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophies, that we can neither regard Western philosophy as setting the general criterion, nor turn a blind eye to “The Other” and insist that everyone have the right to explain in his own way. But, how is comparison to take place? An innovation in method is rightly required for a renewed comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophies.

In order to achieve this innovation in method, we should first realize that the *real* objective of the comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophies is not seeking commonness or distinguishing particularity, but seeing their connections. Since we find a heterogeneity of Chinese and Western philosophies when seeking commonness and distinguishing particularity, we often think of one simple question: Is Western philosophy the only approach to philosophy? If the answer is in the affirmative, Chinese philosophy and other national philosophies, which differ in approach from Western philosophy, cannot be called philosophy. If the answer is in the negative, we have to demonstrate what philosophy is and why the philosophies outside of the West can also be called “philosophy.” In fact, current studies in comparative philosophy mostly focus on these issues – attempting to find a reasonable solution.

One possibility, we submit, is that we should avoid the confrontation of universalism and relativism, transcend comparison of the texts, and return to the origin of philosophy and endeavor to make the accordant interpretation of Chinese and Western philosophies. This is what we have called the merging of Chinese philosophy with Western philosophy. In fact, we look for this along with the comparison of Chinese and Western philosophies. The merging can be understood in various designations or approaches, such as Zhang Zhidong’s approaches of “Taking Chinese culture as substance and Western culture as the function of the substance“, Hu Shi’s approach of “Westernization”, Liang Shuming’s approach of bringing the Western way into the Chinese content, Mu Zongshan’s approach of metaphysical Connection,<sup>4</sup> Li Zehou’s approach of “Taking Chinese culture as the function based on the substance of the Western culture“, Lin Yusheng’s approach of “Innovative Transformation”, and so on. These attempts at connection have creatively offered us new opportunities to understand Chinese and Western philosophies. But if we take a comprehensive view of these methods of connection, we will find that most of them are still related to the interpretation of conceptional terms in pursuit of a mutual understanding. Thus, we still doubt that any of these provide a perfect way. As we read in *The Book of Changes: Appended Remarks, Part One*, “Connection” means “a sage can find the connection of matters after he has observed their changes in the world.” The literal meaning of ‘connection’ is ‘the state of being connected,’ and in the comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophies, it may indicate a place where we can observe the connection of two philosophies and then make a proper study of them. By the way of comparison, in other words, we can establish the accordant interpretation of Chinese and Western philosophies.<sup>5</sup>

How, then, can we see the connection between the two philosophies? The heterogeneity of Chinese and Western philosophies makes some feel that they are not comparable. If so, any connection also seems to be impossible. But if we recognize that the various approaches present in Chinese and Western philosophies are simply the performances

of Chinese and Western peoples engaging in philosophy, the activities themselves can have a homogeneity. We can, therefore, compare the different traditions in this way, which means focusing on the homogeneity and looking for the point where they diverge. This tells us that we can locate the origin of difference only if we go deep into the respective philosophical methods and compare them as well. We think, in this way, that incomparability can be changed into comparability. As Professor Yu Xuanmeng said,

when possible, we should be able to realize the importance of learning conceptual thinking when engaging in western philosophy, and, when engaging in traditional Chinese philosophy, that it is necessary to spend great effort in cultivating our moral character and developing our temperament. Engaging in conceptual thinking and cultivating one's moral character and developing one's temperament are both modes of one's existence. We can be engaged in philosophy either in this way or in that way. The exact connection of Chinese and western philosophies is the researcher's choice. Chinese and western philosophies are not connected in themselves, but human beings are connected.<sup>6</sup>

We should compare the methods philosophers use in engaging in philosophy instead of comparing the texts. Principally, we should recognise that philosophy in the form of text is the final stage of engaging in philosophy, and therefore different philosophical texts embody different modes of engaging in philosophy. Textual philosophy focuses on conceptual thinking which comes from the essential mode of existence and living of human beings, and the latter will guide us in philosophical study. At the same time, there are various possible modes of human beings' existence and activities, and the different ways of pursuing them may create different modes of philosophies. As we said above, Western philosophy has taken the line of rationalism since Plato, whereby the study of philosophy reflected a desire for universal knowledge, expressed through the comprehension of concepts and the adoption of logic. But Chinese traditional philosophy is not this kind of activity. We usually take Confucius' expression of "Love for Humanity" as a good example. In the *Analects*, we can find various explanations of "Love for Humanity" – for example, concerning the moral content, personality, the political character, and the ideological level of life as well – but none of them gives us a clear definition. After studying his work, we realize that Confucius tried to design a definition to contain all the living experience which has positive value. That is why we cannot construct a single abstract definition that will serve as a good guide for one's practical life. Therefore, significant cases should be continuously used as examples, or we are required to draw inferences about other cases from one instance – which has the same meaning as the so-called method of "taking an instance from one's side is the proper way to

acquire the Love for Humanity” (from *Harmony*, in the *Analects*), so as to find the way to understand and to practice “Love for Humanity.” This is the process of acquiring the Tao, too. Acquiring the Tao does not depend on conceptual comprehension, but it can be done by means of metaphor. Metaphor is not just a term, but possibly a story or an allegory.

The modes of engaging in philosophy are different, and this has a significant impact in studying the respective tendencies of Chinese and Western philosophies, their expression, their solutions to questions, and so on. Senior scholars, as we know, have drawn their own understanding of the particularities of Chinese and Western philosophies from comparative study, suggesting many valuable ideas and insights. For instance, Liang Shuming wrote in *Eastern & Western Cultures and their Philosophies*: “The fundamental spirit of Western culture shows that conation likes to go forward. The fundamental spirit of Chinese culture shows that conation always acts for itself, adjusting and balancing the inside and outside. The fundamental spirit in Indian culture shows that conation can turn round and go backward.” Zhang Junmai wrote in *The Academic Basis of National Renewal*: “If we compare academic achievements since Confucius and Mencius with the modern Western sciences, we find that the Chinese usually pay more attention to their life, morality, and the inner spiritual world, while Westerners emphasize nature, intelligence, and the external world. Thus, these different focuses make Chinese and Western cultures obviously different.” Fang Dongmei also indicated, in *Three Wisdoms in Philosophy*, that there are three different conceptions of wisdom – from the ancient Greek, the Chinese, and the modern European cultural traditions. The wisdom of the Greeks can be called ‘Rational Wisdom.’ European wisdom was regarded as a suitable method to settle disputes, so it developed a wisdom called Flexible Wisdom. The Chinese have come to know how the world changes and what happens in the world by means of their wonderful individualities, so their wisdom was called Balanced Wisdom. Greek ‘Rational Wisdom’ has developed into a theory-first culture, the core of which is to verify truth by theory. European ‘Flexible Wisdom’ has developed into a culture of emphasizing personal capabilities, the core of which is to exert personal intelligence into the imagination. Chinese ‘Balanced Wisdom’ has been developed into a culture of magnificent individuality, the core of which is to take the imagination back to the truth, etc. All of them are typically the fruits of scholarly study, laying the academic foundation for the description of the varied modalities of these different philosophies.

However, our interest is not only the result of such a comparison itself but also tracking the result backward to philosophical activities, comparing them, and looking at how various nations are engaged in philosophy. In this way, we have already changed our initial question. We will not ask the question “What is philosophy?,” referring to the definition only, but will ask instead “How has philosophy been established?” When we use this method, we should not rest on the so-called problem of validity.



We must start from facts, meaning that we should trust that Chinese and Western philosophies are both historically-existing modes of philosophies, or that there are various modes of philosophies available in the world, and so we have to fully investigate the cause of philosophy's becoming philosophy. The fact of the existence of various philosophies in the world can be verified not only by the ancient textual records which have been handed down over the ages, but also by people's performance in which they have regarded philosophy as the knowledge to learn and study, to experience and practice, and have made it develop continuously. To learn and study and to experience and practice are both modes of human beings' activity in which philosophy has been gradually developed. We have to realize, no matter what kind of philosophy we are talking about, that philosophy is no more than people's activity of reflecting on their own lives. So, different philosophies may show different modes of reflection. On the basis of the recognized fact that philosophy exists in both Chinese and Western cultures, we are required to be aware of the various modes of engaging in philosophy and the historical and cultural backgrounds from which they began. On the basis of the different modes displayed in the different structures of human beings' existence, we can explicate the causes of the different modes of Chinese and Western philosophies that have been developed, and give a proper explanation of the character of these philosophies. After we have learned about the structure of the mode of existence, we should also be able to describe the textual differences of Chinese and Western philosophies – for instance, explaining some key concepts in philosophy such as universality, principle, and essence, and giving a new elucidation to many descriptions about cultivating one's moral character and developing one's temperament in Chinese philosophy. Moreover, we should give a further explanation of the historical effect on human life of the different modes of the two philosophies, and of the advantages or disadvantages. Finally, we should say more on the trends or the directions of the development of philosophy, explaining that people can develop philosophy by adjusting their own way of life, and demonstrating that a well-developed philosophy can also be a good guide for the improvement of human beings' ways of life.

How, then, can we say that all of what they have done is "philosophy," since the methods of engaging in philosophy can be quite different? Certainly, it will depend on the understanding of "philosophy". We have to emphasize one issue, hereby. Although Chinese and Western thinkers are engaged in philosophy in different ways, a similarity can still be found if we study the significance of philosophy or the performance of "philosophical activity," which is usually quite distinct from other human activities. We have recognized that philosophy, as a branch of knowledge, should not be invented but derived from the structure of human beings' existence. It is the ultimate inquiry, made by human beings, about themselves and the objects that exist in this world. It is human beings' reflection on their own way of life. The structures of human beings'

existence are the same everywhere. This is called the relationship between human beings and the world, which has been expressed in different terms in different nations. For instance, Heidegger regarded “Being-in-the-world”, meaning the most essential status and relationship of human beings and the world, as the core of his theoretical system; Zhuang Zi used the terms of the relationship of “He and I” to explain either the interpersonal relationship or the relationship between human beings and the world. And other scholars invented terms such as “the Living World”, “Structure of Existence,” and so on. Therefore, philosophy becomes a branch of learning in which people can inquire and think over this structure. In other words, philosophy should explicate not only what we know about the ultimate cause, but also why the phenomena of life may appear so different in the same world, and we may even find differences in the appearances and the modes of the world’s existence. Briefly speaking, philosophy can enable us to know what it is as well as its cause. What we have to do in the comparative study of philosophy is to find a common structure from the various modes of existence, to describe the various possible modes of existence in a common structure, and, finally, to clarify the different philosophical modes by means of the different modes of existence.

We are going deep into the various modes in which Chinese and Western thinkers are engaged in philosophies, and are eagerly hunting for the methods of Chinese and Western philosophies from their origins, because such action can allow us to acquire a correct comprehension of the different modes of these two philosophies. It will also give an important theoretical and practical value to the connection of Chinese and Western philosophies in the contemporary world, as well as in philosophical innovation.

### **THE CONCEPTION OF PHILOSOPHICAL INNOVATION**

How can we carry out a philosophical innovation? If Chinese philosophy can be developed only with the development of Chinese and Western comparative study or, in other words, if philosophy in the future can only be comparative philosophy, we should note that comparative study is entering into a new phase. Chinese philosophical writings have relied mainly on the activity of Western philosophy for more than a century, and this reliance has been used as a guide for the development of Chinese philosophy for a very long time. But we have found, in the last ten years, that the history of philosophy written on this model did not conform to Chinese philosophy in its original form. And, along with the continuous study of Western philosophy, we recognized that we should not rely on it and that we should not do it anymore because Western philosophy was completely different from Chinese philosophy both in text and in the mode of engaging in philosophy. At the same time, we should have also noted that a similar problem appeared not only in China but also in other nations outside of the West – i.e., the problem of what criteria could be used to determine what

philosophy is. Like the recent discussion in Chinese educational circles on the problem of philosophical validity, other nations are also raising the problem whether they have their own original philosophies. Even in the West, we find that Western scholars are reflecting on their own tradition, criticizing and even rejecting the traditional mode of philosophy. Changing from linguistics to hermeneutics, from Deconstructionism to Relativism, they have coincidentally also taken the line of struggling against traditional Western philosophy. If we still rely on traditional Western philosophy absolutely, we have no excuse. Meanwhile we can also notice that, in the study of Chinese philosophy, contemporary Western philosophy has exploited values which have been helpful for philosophical innovation, and it is attempting to chart the proper direction for the development of philosophy. The French philosopher, Pierre Hadot (1922-2010) wrote that, in Ancient Greece, philosophy was initially a kind of activity, not a sort of static knowledge; a love for wisdom, but not wisdom itself; a living mode, but not a branch of knowledge studied in the academy; and a mode of developing one's spirit, meaning a substantial change and transformation of the individual's way of life. It was a special form of moral activity and meant that philosophy was a mode of being-in-world. It should be engaged in at every moment in pursuit of overall improvement in individual living. Such a view of philosophy has substantially changed since the Middle Ages. Philosophy has become a theoretical, purely abstract activity.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, such particularities as the ideological level ardently pursued in traditional Chinese philosophy, the method of emphasizing the cultivation of one's moral character and the development of one's temperament, and the activity of emphasizing that helping others is the same as helping oneself, etc., – all can embody the philosophical spirit better, and all are more loyal to philosophy in its origins. When Western scholars reflect upon their tradition, emphasizing that philosophy must be free from philosopher's mind and text and return to the living world, should not Chinese scholars, who have grown up in a Chinese culture and have been engaged in the study of Chinese philosophy, pay more attention to Chinese philosophy and engage in philosophical innovation on the basis of Chinese culture?

After having realized that Chinese philosophy should stay away from imitating the conceptions and structures of Western philosophy, we are faced with an intractable choice: either renovate the conception of philosophy so that Chinese and Western philosophies can both be interpreted properly, or give up the conception that the Chinese philosophy is philosophy and use other theoretical terms as a replacement. But, whenever we acknowledge that philosophy contains the most essential of all the inquiries, including the inquiry into the origin of thinking, whenever we acknowledge that philosophy is the soul of thinking, it is impossible to accept any conclusion that there is thinking but no philosophy in Chinese culture. Obviously, it should be left to us to revise and renovate the traditional conception of Western philosophy, which has also been the decision of modern Western philosophy for more than a hundred years. The

former comparisons were usually performed either on the texts, or on the conceptions of philosophy, or on the philosophers themselves. Although all have offered good reasons to learn various conceptions and modes of philosophy, we can also find that the comparability or incomparability of two philosophies is caused by the sources where the conceptions come from, and by the differences in their connotation in the various philosophical modes.

If we keep in mind “How do we do philosophy?”, we are also trying to find out the different modes in which Chinese and Western scholars are engaged in philosophy, we can be sure to catch the new appearance of Chinese and Western philosophies, and to explain why various modes of philosophies have been developed in East and West. Therefore, we are able to extricate ourselves from the former predicament, in which we have evaluated one philosophy using the criteria of other philosophies. Finally, not only Chinese philosophy but many other philosophies in the world should be embraced in order to achieve a proper account of the subject. Furthermore, we may have a chance to solve another key problem that comparative philosophy is facing. It is how we can find out our options in comparative study. If comparative philosophy is always limited to the comparison of narrow or described meanings, the discussion focuses all the time on “What is Chinese and what is the West?”, or “This belongs to China and that belongs to the West.” However, the goal and purpose of comparative study should be “What we should do?”. “To be” is the issue in the question of “What is Chinese and what is the West?”, while the real issue is about the “should,” in the question of “What we should do?”. How can we move from “to be” to “should”? This is the arduous task that comparative study is facing. In comparative philosophy, we have made a comparison of Chinese and Western philosophies, which have located the difference. Again in a new round of comparative study, we will give up the two traditional options - philosophy as universal or as special - and acknowledge that “the only possible way out forces us to re-think what philosophy itself is”.<sup>8</sup> So, we can transcend the comparison of the traditional conceptions of philosophy, focusing on text and rationality, and successfully trace back the differences to their origins in the ways of life of various nations and the modes of engaging in philosophy. Such a comparison is not only an innovation in comparative method but will stimulate new philosophical conceptions. We think, therefore, that philosophy can arouse people’s understanding of the significance of life after they have reflected their own existence. Consequently, the content of the Chinese tradition - such as self-reflection, cultivation of moral character, and so on - which could not be accepted by Western “philosophy” before, now should lead us to the edifice of philosophy. And meanwhile, comparative study itself, which may trigger the renovation of the conception of philosophy, will be regarded *as* philosophy. If we do a comparative study of Chinese and Western philosophies in this new way, we can find our own philosophical “academic lineage” and offer a method or a guide to establish contemporary

Chinese philosophy, which is imbued both with the spirit of the Chinese tradition and with keeping up with the times.

*Institute of Philosophy,  
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences  
Shanghai, China*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the American sinologist, Roger Ames, recalls his argument with Mu Zongshan on the question of the transcendent. Mu Zongshan pointed out that the Confucian “Heavenly Way” means either ‘transcendent’ or ‘being inward.’ We talk about transcendent because, from the view of Western philosophy, the soul of philosophy lies in the field of metaphysics, and metaphysics has the idea of the transcendent. In order to demonstrate that philosophy exists in China, therefore, we are required to find the idea of transcendent in it. However, we also talk about “Being inward”; this is one of the differences between Chinese and Western philosophies. According to its definition in West, transcendent comes from *trans* and *cendere* in Latin, meaning ‘to be greater, to surpass, or to pass beyond a certain limit.’ In the field of religion, ‘transcendent’ means to transcend all the finiteness in world – for example, God. In philosophy, to transcend means the principle of passing beyond the limit of experience. Thus, Kant said: “the principles the appliance of which are fully confined to the limits of possible experience are called ‘being inward’ and while the principles which are claimed to pass beyond the limits of experience are named ‘transcendent’.” (Kant: *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 296. reference to *English–Chinese Collated Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, p. 1009, People’s Press, 2001)

<sup>2</sup> This problem was issued and discussed by Ni Peiming in *The Territory of Comparative Philosophy, Science Monthly*, Vol. 6 (2006).

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Ni Peiming’s work in Note 2, which listed the methods of inter-interpretation, macro-judgment, explanations from six classics and understanding of six classics, and the comparative method by means of different angles and views such as the analytical, the hermeneutical, the historical and the textual, pointing out what problems they are facing. Also refer to several problems on method, discussed in my work, *The New Performance of Comparative Philosophy (Social Sciences, Vol. 5 [2004])*.

<sup>4</sup> Although Mou Zongshan wrote *Fourteen Lectures on the Connection between Chinese and Western Philosophies*, his view of Connection was based on studying Chinese philosophy using a Western method.

<sup>5</sup> Yu Xuanmeng wrote a series of articles regarding this issue, all discussing the comparative method as well as how to do ‘Connection.’ Refer to *Further Discussion on the Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Philosophies, Discussion on the Connection of Chinese and Western Philosophies, A Track to the Origin: the Analects of the Comparative Study*

*of Chinese and Western Philosophies, Two Different Modes of Metaphysics, An Attempt to Analyze the Philosophical Significance in the Mode of Existence* (Shanghai Cultural Art Press, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Yu Xuanmeng, *Further Discussion on the Comparative Study of Philosophy in the New Period*, *Social Sciences*, Vol. 10 (2003).

<sup>7</sup> P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, translated by Li Wenge, *World Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (2007).

<sup>8</sup> Yu Xuanmeng, *The Study of Ontology* (Shanghai People's Press, 1999), p. 122.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### **PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE: THE ROLE OF RELIGION?**

*EDWARD J. ALAM*

Fifty years ago, while developing what may be called his 'philosophy of culture,' Jacques Maritain stated:

What determines the unity of a culture is first and above all a common philosophical structure, a certain metaphysical and moral attitude, a common scale of values – in short, a common idea of the universe, of man and of life, of which the social, linguistic, and juridical structures are, so to speak, the embodiment.<sup>1</sup>

Such a formulation seems to suggest that culture has emerged from philosophy, not the other way around. To be sure, from ancient times until the present, philosophy and culture have been intertwined, but the challenge is to determine the precise cause/effect nature of this relation in each era and to point out its consequences. Though a daunting task, it is a crucial one, since the difference in approach makes all the difference when it comes to that which really matters for our world in the present moment: the cultivation of a new humanism.

Maritain, and many others like him in the last century, devoted their lives to the cultivation of this new humanism and consistently approached the study of culture in this context. Reflecting upon the way in which this new humanism could bring a new and needed unity to culture, he stated that in essence it "render[ed] man more truly human and [could] manifest his original greatness by enabling him to partake of everything in nature and in history capable of enriching him."<sup>2</sup> Not a few philosophers of the last century saw this new humanism emerging, as the only alternative, from the ashes of what may now be described as the in-humanism of the two world wars – wherein the old monster of man's inhumanity to man took 'new' and unimaginably horrific forms. Writing just a few years before the end of World War II, Maritain wrote, "In my mind the notion of the present trials endured by civilization [is] inseparable from that of a new humanism, which is in preparation in the present death struggle of the world, and which at the same time is preparing the renewal of civilization...."<sup>3</sup>

This renewal, as Maritain and many others realized, is not inevitable or necessary, but must be creatively sought after and freely chosen and discovered anew in each generation. "Culture," he writes, "is the expansion of the peculiarly human life, including not only whatever material development may be necessary and sufficient to enable us to lead

an upright life on this earth, but also and above all the moral development, the development of the speculative and practical activities (artistic and ethical) peculiarly worthy of being called a human development.”<sup>4</sup> Such moral development, of course, cannot be imposed from top-down structures or principles, but must be based on convictions that are born in freedom. A similar point was aptly put by Benedict XVI in his encyclical on Hope, when he wrote,

“[W]e must acknowledge that incremental progress is possible only in the material sphere. Here, amid our growing knowledge of the structure of matter and in the light of ever more advanced inventions, we clearly see continuous progress towards an ever greater mastery of nature. Yet in the field of ethical awareness and moral decision-making, there is no similar possibility of accumulation for the simple reason that man’s freedom is always new and he must always make his decisions anew. These decisions can never simply be made for us in advance by others—if that were the case, we would no longer be free. Freedom presupposes that in fundamental decisions, every person and every generation is a new beginning. Naturally, new generations can build on the knowledge and experience of those who went before, and they can draw upon the moral treasury of the whole of humanity. But they can also reject it, because it can never be self-evident in the same way as material inventions. The moral treasury of humanity is not readily at hand like tools that we use; it is present as an appeal to freedom and a possibility for it.”<sup>5</sup>

When we return, in the light of all this, to our original quote concerning the relation between philosophy and culture, we are better able to see, in fact, a fundamental commensurability with the philosophical approach to culture taken by Maritain; he does not claim that the philosophical structure determines culture *per se*, but that it determines the unity of culture. This approach distances itself from the one that sees culture as a mere by-product of a top-down philosophical enterprise which restrictively applies broad principles in a mechanistic and deterministic way, emphasizing universality, but neglecting subjectivity. Although Maritain speaks about a common philosophical structure, which necessarily entails a certain metaphysical and moral attitude, it is crucial to see that by ‘common’ he does not simply mean the same. Though he speaks about a common scale of values and a common idea of the universe, of man and of life, he precludes a universalistic, deterministic, interpretation of the word ‘common’ by noting that the embodying structures of this common idea, namely, the social, linguistic, and juridical constructions, are by nature diverse and subjective, and if they aren’t supple enough to change, they die. Thus, the common idea of the universe, of man, and of life, too, must not be static; it must be open and dynamic, if it is to remain alive and fruitful. In



this, he has certainly appropriated the Heideggerian emphasis on subjectivity, which played such a key role in the transition from modern to contemporary philosophy. It is well known that this emphasis on subjectivity enabled philosophers to begin appreciating the world's cultures as genuine philosophic sources, which, in turn, has brought us today to the threshold of what we may be able to speak about as a new philosophy for global times – a philosophy that is profoundly connected to a new humanism.

Now to speak of a new philosophy for global times is not to undermine what has been called the 'unity of philosophical experience' by important historians of philosophy, but to insist, rather, that genuine philosophy is always alive, growing and changing; growth presupposes continuity, just as seeds grow into roots and trees. Thus, in an attempt to generate new philosophical insights for global times it is important to focus momentarily upon this 'unity of philosophical experience' that constitutes the very history of philosophy; this will help to guarantee that the new insights will spring from the living tree of thought and will be able to provide not only fruit that looks delicious, but fruit that really is delicious, and nourishing at the same time.

In this context, then, I want to suggest that the whole history of Western philosophy from Thales to the present is one magnificent metaphysical drama wherein the most genuine human sages, and indeed the entire human race, are caught up in a fierce and ferocious intellectual battle that almost completely transcends them, even though they occupy center stage in the conflict.<sup>6</sup> These lofty intellectual hostilities are ardently associated with an ancient and bitter spiritual dispute over the nature of universals – a dispute that began, perhaps, long before the appearance of mankind. Glimpses of this struggle are seen only occasionally and only by the most attentive and astute philosophers. This sublime discord, to which all authentic intellectuals are drawn, is what defines metaphysics. Such metaphysical speculation, far from a pedantic ivory tower pondering, set in the historical context of a so-called myopic scholasticism, is at once the most basic and most exalted speculation possible – a reflection in which, to varying degrees, all people of all times, whether wittingly or not, are involved. For though this ancient feud took place before and above man, the essence of the dispute revolves around the very meaning and destiny of the universal "man." Thus, this metaphysical drama is the key to a proper understanding of history itself, for the question ends ultimately in demanding human persons to choose sides and to daily align themselves, as they "write" history, with either the violent and deceptive spiritual powers of iniquity and corruption, that are passing away, or with the kind and true sacred forces of goodness and beauty, that shall last forever. In a word, the dynamic discourse of universals is the most universal discourse of all.

After the advent of Nominalism and even after Cartesianism had attempted to radically reduce philosophy to mere epistemology, metaphysics stubbornly refused to give up its historical role of defining the

very essence of the philosophical enterprise. One part of this Cartesian reduction consisted in trying to remove the universal ideas from the mind of God, where Augustine, in his attempt to modify Plato's "exaggerated realism,"<sup>7</sup> had so masterfully placed them. Once Descartes had disassociated the universal ideas from the divine, his methodological decency compelled him to find the orphaned universal concepts a proper home. His devotion to this daring procedure finally came to an end when, with a masterful stroke of surgical precision, he delicately undertook to place the universal concepts into the very mind of man. But a surgical error had gone unnoticed during this grandiose epistemological experiment. And such an imprisonment could not last. The metaphysical debate emerged again and again in the most unlikely of places, much to the dismay of those who thought the controversy (associated as it was with theology at best and with religious superstition at worst) had disappeared forever. In the last century, for instance, when Willard Quine asked what mathematics was really all about, it quickly became evident that the three supplied answers, Logicism, Formalism, and Intuitionism, clearly corresponded to the traditional philosophical positions in regard to the question of universals, with Logicism corresponding to Realism, Formalism to Nominalism, and Intuitionism to Conceptualism.<sup>8</sup> In the words of Quine, "Classical mathematics . . . is up to its neck in commitments to an ontology of abstract entities. Thus it is that the great mediaeval controversy over universals has flared up anew in the modern philosophy of mathematics."<sup>9</sup> To his credit, Quine himself came down on the side of Logicism, thereby committing himself to a variety of realism. To be sure, neither modernity nor the arrival of post or late-modernity lessens the importance of the universals debate, in fact, they intensify it. Modern science and technology testify to both the significance of the debate and to the weighty consequence of coming down on the right side. In the case of modern science and technology, of course, there is no contention over which side is the right one. If universals did not really exist, how could we ever refer to laws, for instance, which cause all specific electromagnetic spheres or fields to act in certain expected ways? If modern technology did not presuppose the genuine existence of universals, would we ever have confidence to stake our lives on the reliability of our cars and airplanes?<sup>10</sup> And those who think that post-modernity's deconstructionism<sup>11</sup> has toppled the Western metaphysical tradition, have understood neither deconstructionism nor the universals quandary at the heart of the metaphysical tradition. The former is primarily, a response to, not simply a rejection of, the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, and thus counts as another contribution to metaphysics. Surely, both Husserl and Derrida strongly resisted certain systems of metaphysical programming, but only the superficial would claim that philosophers of such magnitude weren't engaged in metaphysics. John Paul II's description of phenomenology is helpful here, for he described it as ". . . first of all a style of thought, an intellectual relation with reality, whose essential and constitutive traits one hopes to gather, avoiding prejudices and

schematism.”<sup>12</sup> If this is an accurate characterization of phenomenology, who could imagine Derrida disagreeing with it,<sup>13</sup> and who could fail to see its important metaphysical implications? Besides, it is appropriate to call to mind here the famous statement of E. A. Burtt, in his monumental work, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, who wrote, in the early part of the last century, that “the only way to avoid becoming a metaphysician is to say nothing.”<sup>14</sup>

Suffice it to say, then, that for our present purposes, any emergent philosophy for global times must also entail a new metaphysics that takes a clear stand on the question of universals. And whereas I do not see how any lasting and viable metaphysics can ever unqualifiedly reject realism, I want to suggest that a new brand of philosophic realism emerges when we take seriously the possibility of cultures as philosophic sources. This new brand of philosophic realism implies the real existence of universals, but insists that no truly existing reality is entirely unitary, and that all realities and indeed all reality is constituted precisely through relation. Upon this approach, neither universal nor particular terms have any metaphysical or ontological meaning whatsoever except when defined in the context of an ‘immanent intrinsic complementarity of at least two personal beings constituting the Absolute’. This particular expression comes from the work of a contemporary Spanish metaphysician, Fernando Rielo, who while accounting for the real existence of both the universals of description and the universals of definition, also significantly shifts the vantage point of the traditional question concerning “whether” or “where” the universal exists.<sup>15</sup> While considering the goodness and beauty of a light purple flower, for instance, the question now is not so much about “whether” or “where” the descriptive universal “purple” exists, or “whether” or “where” the universals of substance, “flowerness” or “colorness” or “beauty” or “goodness” exist, it is much more about “how” such realities exist in the sense of being what they are and more than what they are simultaneously, since his very notion of being is not simply that being is being, as in Parmenides, but that being is more than being, a notion of being that he tries to capture with the expression “being +”. To say that no truly existing reality is entirely unitary, and that all realities and indeed all reality itself, all being, is constituted precisely through relation, is commensurate with the results of a series of conferences held in Indonesia last year that discussed the emergence of philosophy from the specific contributions of the cultures of Java. As stated on the website of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy,

Javanese culture has a distinctive notion called *Memayu Hayuning Bawono*. This notion has the phenomenological dimension that human consciousness is not a solipsistic entity but a disclosure. According to this cultural conception, human consciousness is not trapped within a microcosm (*bawono cilik*), but reaches toward the macrocosm (*bawono gede*). This brings new meaning to self

consciousness and its ethical implication for self-consciousness is not a substance but a relationship. This suggests a radical shift in our ethical paradigm. It is not only by a categorical imperative that we develop ourselves through fulfilling certain universal maxims, but we are continuously developing an ethic of cosmic solidarity.<sup>16</sup>

This rich philosophical insight emerging from Indonesian culture is commensurate with the results yielded by the work of Rielo as he redefines and purifies the language surrounding the problem of universals by applying his understanding of metaphysical language as the living transcendental definition. The first term he purifies is the term ‘universal’ itself. He rejects the notion of “universal,” when that notion is qualified by the term “abstract.” Abstraction – in spite of the claims made by Hegel, Husserl, Frege, and Russell to have introduced new and better usages of the both the term and the process – always consists, for Rielo, whether in Ancient, Medieval, or Modern philosophy, of “extracting from a plurality something which is common to it in order to form a supposedly universal entity by separating it from the singular instances.” Such a method is what Rielo calls a “squinting variety of metaphysical vision,” and can only lead to the production of a concept lacking syntactic, semantic, and metaphysical meaning.<sup>17</sup> A further mistake occurs, according to Rielo, when this empty concept is “raised to the absolute” to serve as a universal, necessary, axiomatic and absolute principle. Such an ill-formed procedure, rather than “augmenting a notion [in order to] discover its consistency, completeness, and decidability,” acts to reduce the supposedly abstract property, whatever it may happen to be – say “flowerness” or “color” or “purpleness” or “beauty” or “goodness” – in such a way as when separated from its singular instances, becomes a tautology so that “flowerness is flowerness,” and “color is color,” and “purpleness is purpleness,” and “beauty is beauty” and “goodness is goodness.” Needless to say, such statements are meaningless and can never help to realize the new humanism or ‘ethics of cosmic solidarity’ we desire. For Rielo, the “raising to the absolute” must confirm the singular (not the universal) character of relation. For this purpose, he introduces the term absolutivization rather than absolutization. Thus he absolutivizes all universal concepts in such a way that when we say, for instance, that the rose is beautiful, we are not saying that an abstract reality called “beauty” exists and that that particular rose participates in the abstract “beauty,” but rather that a “singular” absolute beauty exists, which is constituted by a binity, that is to say, by at least two transcendent entities in complementary relation; this means that the singular “beauty” of that particular rose is “in” the rose in virtue of the two transcendent entities that constitute and sustain its existence. In this way, the mystical beauty of the rose is a vestige of the transcendent-relational (or divine) beauty. Now when universal concepts such as “beauty” or “goodness” are predicated of a particular human being, we are not to claim, just as we did not claim in the example of the rose, that an abstract reality called “beauty” or “goodness”

exists. For instance, if we say that Joseph is “good,” this does not mean that there exists an abstract reality called “goodness,” in which Joseph participates. What exists rather, according to Rielo, is the singular absolute Goodness, constituted by at least two transcendent entities in relation. The singular goodness of Joseph is in Joseph, then, in virtue of the transcendent constitutive presence of the Absolute Goodness of the transcendent entities (or divine persons) in Joseph, who, in their relation with one another, constitute Joseph as mystical goodness of the ‘divine’ goodness. Now if we take the universal concept man or humanity and absolutivize it in the same way, something quite profound emerges. First, it necessitates the rejection of an abstract reality called “humanity”, in which each particular human participates, and claims, rather, that the singular “humanity,” of say, Joseph, is “in” Joseph in virtue of the divine constitutive presence of the Absolute “humanity,” of the ‘divine’ persons in Joseph, who, in their relation with one another, constitute Joseph as mystical humanity of the divine humanity.

A serious objection from certain philosophical circles is easily anticipated here, since talk of divine or transcendent persons entails religion and revelation, which is not, some may argue, properly philosophical. However, if we take seriously the possibility of philosophy emerging from cultures, and also see that at the heart of every genuine culture, there is a profound religious tradition that has provided insights into the transcendent and mystical dimensions of human interiority and consciousness, then we should, I believe, accept these insights as properly philosophical. In other words, and to put it more simply, we must accept, at the least, that in their various traditions of religious revelation, religious cultures possess many ideas about the nature of man, the universe, and life that are reasonable, and it would be unreasonable (un-philosophical) to simply dismiss them out of hand.

Returning then, to the way a new metaphysical approach to the problem of universals can provide us with a definition of man that is dynamic, mystical, and even ‘divine’, and one that complements an account of self consciousness as a relationship, rather than a substance, we are struck by the ethical implications of such a view in bringing about the new humanism. For those who would reject such a vision as idealistic and unattainable, I would suggest the way forward, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, by first pointing back to a period in history that in some ways provides a model for philosophers today, who see the value in eliciting philosophical insights from living religious cultures.

Beginning in the sixth century, and continuing well into the seventh, an explosion of philosophical insight occurred as a result of an extremely dynamic synthesis that can rightly be described as emerging from culture. Syriac-speaking Christians, heirs to Mesopotamian and Jewish culture, living primarily in the regions of what are today Syria and southeast Turkey, began to translate, and develop, ancient Greek thought and culture into Syriac. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the great Arab translators, under the patronage of the ‘Abassid Islamic dynasty, and in conjunction

with these Syriac-speaking Christians, who also knew Arabic and had begun to assimilate Arabic culture as well, began to translate this great and living heritage from Syriac into Arabic, thereby not only transmitting the ancient Greek wisdom, but substantially developing it. This latter stage, because of the geographical, political and economic realities at that time, also received the insights and wisdom of Persian, Indian, and (later during the Mongolian period) Chinese thought, culture and religion, making this period one of the most dynamic cultural and philosophical interchanges in history. The philosophical result was dynamic and long lasting, providing both the solid foundation and building materials for the further construction of what would come to be known as modern science and civilization, once texts were brought to Spain via northern Africa and translated into Latin in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Even a cursory examination of what may rightly be called Arabic philosophy (in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims all participated in developing), reveals that the fundamental impetus at the heart of this philosophical and cultural exchange was a religious one, overwhelmingly concerned with reconciling scientific insights with the similar versions of revelation contained in the Holy texts. These scientific insights were not merely the scientific achievements of Greek science transmitted to the West via Syriac and Arabic, in the precise form they were received, but, as stated above, were substantially developed by Oriental Christians, and then by Arab and Persian Muslims and Jews, aided to some extent, by insights from Indian and then later (in the Mongolian period) Chinese religious cultures. The crucial point here is that in the process of transmitting Greek science, those Jews, Christians, and Muslims concerned with reconciling science and revelation, actually moved the scientific and philosophical project forward; their concern to reconcile their religious truths with scientific truths did not hold science or philosophy back, but propelled it forward. With respect to science, the new achievements included

a far more advanced number theory and algebra, a new system of trigonometry, a medical corpus much greater than that available in the Greek world, and an entirely original theory of optics more powerful than anything known to the Greeks and that was not only to form the mathematical basis for the Renaissance art but also to inspire new directions in scientific practice.<sup>18</sup>

With respect to the philosophical achievements, there were notable advances in ontology and epistemology; questions about whether the world was eternal or created in time pushed the ontological project forward, whereas questions concerning the existence of necessary causes in nature stimulated epistemological discussion. And needless to say, at the heart of both the ontological and epistemological discussion, was the age old question of universals. The deliberations in this regard naturally took up the question concerning the universal ‘humanity’, and quite often in the context

a theological anthropology that laid particular stress upon the ‘mystical’ and ‘divine’ nature of the individual man in relation first to God and then to other personal beings, including angels and other human beings. It is not the time to explore the details of this medieval discussion, but again, the central point here is that progress, both scientific and philosophical, emerged as a result of open and dynamic interchange among religious cultures.

To return now, by way of conclusion, to the question of the cause/effect relation between philosophy and culture in the light of our reflections above, I suggest that since the unity of each individual person, like the unity of every individual thing, is constituted by being in relation to another ‘thing’ transcendent to it, then ultimately there is only one culture, the culture of man. But this one culture emerges naturally as many cultures springing from the rich diversity that each individual man is by nature. The unity and development of distinct cultures, as well as the deeper unity and development of the one ‘culture of man’ is not natural, however, in the sense of being automatic. They must be chosen and appropriated anew by each new generation if they are to endure. This process of development is precisely the role of philosophy in that the philosopher, reflecting upon both the diversity and unity of culture and cultures, which is found as a given in the world, identifies those common values and ideas that ground individual cultures and that complement, in their diversity, the one culture of humanity. In this way, a new humanism emerges wherein the individual person and peoples are simultaneously human and more than human – perhaps we should say divine: simultaneously one and many, changing and immutable. This is what Maritain, and many others like him in the last century, devoted their lives to the cultivation of, and why they approached the study of culture in the context of a new humanism that could “render man more truly human and [could] manifest his original greatness by enabling him to partake of everything in nature and in history capable of enriching him.”<sup>19</sup>

The philosopher, reflecting upon the unity and diversity of cultures, who can draw upon the treasures contained in the religious roots therein, is able to cultivate a balanced epistemology, wherein the objective, necessary, and universal dimensions of knowledge are properly complemented by the dimensions of subjectivity, the contingent, and the individual. Such an epistemology guards against the two extremes of moral and cultural relativism on the one hand, and against the scientific terrorism and fanaticism of moral, cultural, and religious absolutism on the other.

*Notre Dame University  
Louise, Lebanon*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Maritain, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, rev. ed., trans. Evans and Peter O’Reilly (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 69. This quote, and the

majority of the quotes from the writings of Maritain are taken from John A. Gueguen Jr.'s "Maritain's Philosophy of Culture: An Old Teacher Questions Himself About the Present Time." Gueguen's paper was originally presented to the American Maritain Association Conference on "Faith, Scholarship, and Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" at the University of Notre Dame on October 19, 2000. Gueguen's insights were of great help while developing the themes in this present paper.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 3. (my emphasis in italics)

<sup>3</sup> Maritain, *The Twilight of Civilization* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1943) p. viii.

<sup>4</sup> Maritain, *Religion and Culture*, in *Essays in Order*, ed. Christopher Dawson and T. F. Burns (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940).

<sup>5</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi* (2007), 24.

<sup>6</sup> This statement and the material that follows on pages 5-8, ending with footnote 14, appeared in a slightly different form in the *Metaphysics Proceedings* of 2003, Second World Conference (Rome: Fondazione Identi di Studi e di Ricerca, 2004) as a brief overture constituting a suitable setting in which I addressed the main themes of that conference; I have included it here as it is highly relevant for the theme of this paper as well.

<sup>7</sup> These are the terms that Frederick Copleston uses to describe Plato's position on the nature of universals. Plato claims, of course, that universals are real things that exist apart from any particular object and are outside of the human mind.

<sup>8</sup> See Ed. L. Miller's *Questions that Matter* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), pp.71f.

<sup>9</sup> Willard Van Orman Quine, "On What There Is," in *From a Logical Point of View: Nine Logico-Philosophical Essays*, second ed., rev. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 13f.

<sup>10</sup> See here the very fine article of Lawrence D. Goodall, "Of Universals, Angels, and Inklings," in the *International Catholic Review Communio* 29 (Fall 2002).

<sup>11</sup> The meaning of the term is much debated. Barbara Johnson's book, *The Critical Difference* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) is helpful in sorting out the plethora of meanings associated with the term.

<sup>12</sup> John Paul II goes on to say: "I would like to say it [phenomenology] is almost an attitude of intellectual charity toward man." This and the above comment (my emphasis in italics) were public statements of John Paul II when in March of 2003 he received a delegation from a World Phenomenology Institute based in the United States. See Zenit news: ZE03032407, March 24, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> With respect to the way in which the thought of Jacques Derrida can actually push the metaphysical project forward, see George F. McLean's keynote address, "Metaphysics and Culture: The Bridge to Religion," at the conference "Metaphysics for the Third Millennium." This conference was an official event of the Holy See's celebration of the Great Jubilee, which



was held in Rome, 2000. McLean asked whether “. . .the postmodern thought of Jacques Derrida, joined to the thought of Immanuel Levinas, [could] take us further as metaphysicians in the Judeo-Christian tradition?” In this regard, he referred to John Caputo’s very insightful book *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science* (New York: Harcourt, 1932), p. 227.

<sup>15</sup> This statement and the material that follows on pages 9-11, concluding with footnote 16, also appeared in a slightly different form in the *Metaphysics Proceedings* of 2003, Second World Conference, referred to above in footnote 6. Again, I have included it here in a revised form because of its relevance to my topic.

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.crvp.org/conf/2007/java.htm>. Accessed on June 28 2008.

<sup>17</sup> I must acknowledge the work of Father Robert Badillo here, who, at my request, so graciously translated into English portions of Rielo’s *Mis Meditaciones Desde el Modelo Genético*. I can give no page-number references as the English translation edition is still under preparation. These quotes, however, come from the section titled, *From Prior Question*.

<sup>18</sup> See Arun Bala’s *The Dialogue of Civilizations in the Birth of Modern Science* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2006), pp. 53-54.

<sup>19</sup> Maritain, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, p. 3.



## CHAPTER XXIV

# HOLISTIC POSTMODERNISM: A NEW PARADIGM FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE ONE AND THE MANY

WARAYUTH SRIWARAKUEL

### INTRODUCTION

The term “postmodern” is widely used in the world today, even in developing countries like Thailand. The *spectre* of the postmodern is haunting not only Europe but also almost every part of the world. This *spectre* has manifested itself in various forms in areas as diverse as art, architecture, literature, music, politics, the communications media, education, theology, history, and philosophy. It may even be seen as the “unhappy family member” of intellectual movements. For some people, postmodernism means a means of escape from the heritage of modern European epistemology and domination. To others, it refers to an attempt to undermine the achievements of Western civilization by a group of left-wing intellectuals. To yet others it means just the insignificant blatherings of a collection of obscurantist writers. All these reactions are misguided. As Cahoone puts it,

Certainly the term “postmodern,” like any slogan widely used, has been attached to so many different kinds of intellectual, social, and artistic phenomena that it can be subjected to easy ridicule as hopelessly ambiguous or empty. This shows only that it is a mistake to seek a single, essential meaning applicable to all the term’s instances. As one of the inspirers of postmodernism would say, the members of the postmodern clan resemble each other in the overlapping way that family members do; two members may share the same eye color, one of these may have the same ears as a third, the third may have the same hair color as a fourth, and so on. More important than discovering an essential commonality is recognizing that there are some important new developments in the world that deserve examination, that “postmodern” labels some of them, and that there are some very important works, raising deep questions, that are likewise labeled.<sup>1</sup>

Still, when many philosophers use the term “postmodernism,” they have in mind the “poststructuralist” movement, popular in France in the 1960s. They usually understand that:

. . . this movement denies the possibility of ‘realist’ knowledge, objective knowledge of real world... “univocal” (single or primary) meaning of words and texts, the unity of the human self, even the very notion of truth, as well as the cogency of the distinctions between rational inquiry and political action, literal and metaphorical meaning, and science and art. Simply put, they regard it as rejecting most of the fundamental intellectual pillars of modern Western civilization. They may further associate this rejection with political movements like multiculturalism, feminism, and the critique of Eurocentrism, which regard the rejected notions as the ideology of a privileged sexual, ethnic, and economic group, and aim to subvert their privilege in favour of the disenfranchised.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the different usages of “postmodern,” Cahoone points out, we may find some common characteristics such as (1) “a recognition of the pluralism and indeterminacy in the world” that modern thought refused to acknowledge as it pursued simplicity, completeness, and certainty; (2) “a new focus on representations or images... or cultural signs as playing a dominant position in social life”; and (3) “an acceptance of play and fictionalization in cultural fields that earlier sought a realist truth.”<sup>3</sup> Cahoone summarizes what postmodernism means in his own model. I will contrast his model with that of Klemm, before I discuss the three models of postmodernism from my own understanding.

### **CAHOONE’S UNDERSTANDING OF POSTMODERNISM**

Cahoone holds that postmodernism focuses on five prominent themes: “presence or presentation (versus representation and construction), origin (versus phenomena), unity (versus plurality), transcendence of norms (versus their immanence), and constitutive otherness.”<sup>4</sup>

“Presence” refers to

the quality of immediate experience and to the objects immediately ‘presented.’ What is... immediately given in experience has traditionally been contrasted... with representation... and construction. ... For example, ... sensation or sense data have been considered as more reliable... than mental contents subsequently represented and modified by language and thought. ... Postmodernism questions... this distinction. ... Derrida denies that there is such a thing as “perception,” which is an immediate, transparent reception of the given. ... “There is nothing outside the text.” This need not mean that there is no real external world, but that we only encounter real referents through texts, representations, and mediation. We can never say what is independent of all saying.<sup>5</sup>

“Origin” refers to

“the source of whatever is under consideration.” [A return to “origin”] ... is often considered the aim of rational inquiry. Inquiry into origins is an attempt to go behind or beyond phenomena in order to reach their ultimate foundation. For modern schools of thought about the self [such as psycho-analysis, phenomenology, and existentialism]..., the attempt to discover the origin of the self is the road to authenticity. Postmodernism denies the possibility of returning to, recapturing, or even representing the origin, source, or any deeper reality behind phenomena, and casts doubt on or even denies its existence. In a sense, postmodernism is intentionally superficial, not through eschewing rigorous analysis, but by regarding the surface of things, the phenomena, as not requiring a reference to anything deeper or more fundamental. Nietzsche’s claim that the ancient Greeks were superficial “out of profundity” could be a postmodern slogan. The saying, “Every author is a dead author,” is an example of the denial of origin, because it denies that the meaning of a text can be “authoritatively” revealed through reference to authorial intentions. An author’s intentions are no more relevant to understanding the text than any other set of considerations; they are not the “origin” of the text and so have no ‘privilege’ over other factors.<sup>6</sup>

Postmodernism tries to show that what others have regarded as a “unity” is plural. All things, both words and entities, are constituted by relations to other elements.

Everything is constituted by relations to other things; hence, nothing is simple. ... Since such relations are inevitably plural, the individual in question is plural as well. The human self is not a simple unity, hierarchically composed, solid, self-controlled; rather it is a multiplicity of forces or elements. It would be more true to say that I have *selves*, than a *self*.<sup>7</sup>

The denial of the “transcendence” of norms is crucial to postmodernism. Norms such as truth, goodness, beauty, rationality, are not regarded as absolute or independent of the processes they serve to govern or judge. [On the contrary], they are products of and immanent in those processes. For example, where many people might use the idea of justice to judge a social order, postmodernism regards that idea as itself the product of the social relations that it serves to judge: that is, the idea of justice was created at a certain time and place to serve certain interests, and it was dependent on a certain intellectual and social context.<sup>8</sup>

Cahoone later says,

It is in effect the rejection of idealism, and of any dualism which asserts that some things (e.g. norms) are independent of nature or semiosis (sign-production) or experience or social interests. The concept “good” and the act of calling something good are not independent of things we want to call “good.” This leads postmodernists to respond to the normative claims of others by displaying the processes of thought, writing, negotiation, and power which produced those very normative claims. It does not mean that postmodernists fail to make their own normative claims, but that they unleash a form of critical analysis which makes all normative claims problematic, including their own.<sup>9</sup>

Lastly, postmodernism typically offers an analysis of phenomena through “constitutive otherness.” Postmodernists try

to use the idea of “constitutive otherness” in analyzing any cultural entity.” They say that all cultural units [such as words, meanings, ideas, systems of thought, human beings, and social organizations] are maintained in their apparent unity only through an active process of opposition, exclusion and hierarchization. ... [While the center] is privileged or favoured, the other is devalued in some way.<sup>10</sup>

As Cahoone puts it,

in examining social systems characterized by class or ethnic division, postmodernists will discover that the privileged groups must actively produce and maintain their position by representing or picturing themselves – in thought, in literature, in law, in art – as not having the properties ascribed to the under-privileged groups, and must represent those groups as lacking the properties of the privileged groups...Postmodernists, especially in literary studies, turn their attention away from the well-known, openly announced themes in a text toward the seldom mentioned, the virtually absent, the implicitly or explicitly devalued. For presence is constituted by absence, the real is constituted by appearance, the ideal by the mundane. This applies not only to the stated message or theme of a text, but to its style as well.<sup>11</sup>

In summary, Cahoone tries to describe postmodernism according to five prominent themes. Four themes are objects of its criticism, and one constitutes its positive method.

### KLEMM'S UNDERSTANDING OF POSTMODERNISM

Klemm depicts postmodernism through a contrastive method. He uses four elements in his contrast: center of the paradigm, world picture, system of thought, and self-world relation. First, Klemm points out that the premodern, the modern, and the postmodern have different centers to their paradigms. The center of the premodern paradigm is the *manifestation of the sacred*, the center of modern paradigm is *rational self-assertion*, and the center of the postmodern is the *linguistic event of dialogue*. Klemm says,

The life of conversation structures the postmodern paradigm. Whereas the premodern appearance of the sacred presents an objective reality to which the subject belongs, and the self-assertion of the modern paradigm presents a neutralized subject, whose projects transform the world, the event of dialogue in language cannot be located on the "objective" or "subjective" side of a subject-object model. Language is the middle and medium of the event of dialogue between a self and another.<sup>12</sup>

Second, Klemm points out that the picture of the world is different among the premodern, the modern, and the postmodern. The premodern picture of the world is that of the sacred cosmos, the modern picture of the world is that of infinite universe, whereas the postmodern picture of the world is neither the image of the sacred cosmos nor the loss of that image. Klemm says that the postmodern world picture:

. . . is rather the image that there is no image of the whole of things. We imagine that we have no image of the universe in which we can see ourselves as intimately belonging or from which we see ourselves as ultimately excluded. If "Cartesian anxiety" is related to the loss of world in the modern period, the postmodern mode of existence is marked by acceptance of the erasure of the literal world picture. The imagelessness, and hence anonymity, of the world itself becomes a powerful symbol of the whole. For the postmodern, the whole is not represented as an image to vision or sight, but is disclosed in language or word. Indeed, the postmodern thinkers hold it as axiomatic that only through language do we have anything like a world.<sup>13</sup>

Third, Klemm points out that a system of thought is different among the three categories. The premodern holds a system of myth and ritual, whereas the modern and the postmodern hold epistemology and hermeneutics as their view of the world respectively. Klemm agrees with Richard Rorty who analyzes the postmodern system of thought as "hermeneutical and edifying" rather than "epistemological and systematic." Klemm says,

For the postmodernist, epistemological theories of mental representation cannot hope ultimately to distinguish true from false pictures of objective reality. “Objective” reality is always already interpreted through linguistic, hence social, preconceptions. Heidegger formulated this postmodern insight as follows: everything that we understand, in word, text, gesture, or action, is approached through anticipations (or preunderstanding). These anticipations direct our questions to the other. They make understanding of the other possible. They situate understanding within the horizon of anticipations that are historically effective here and now. Heidegger calls this phenomenon the hermeneutic circle. Because of it, all understanding is potentially and essentially a dialogue rather than a monological mirroring of reality.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, Klemm points out different views on self-world relation. The premodern self-world relation is of immediate openness to the sacred, whereas the modern self-world relation is of the subject-object split. The postmodern self-world relation is neither openness to the world, nor the separation of self and world. Klemm goes on to say,

The postmodern thinker...focuses now on the content of symbolic understanding and now on the results of critical reflection. The back and forth movement between participation in meaning and objectifying critique can sometimes suggest new, “postcritical” interpretations. By virtue of being able to recall the direct meaning in light of the critical view, the postmodernist can mediate the symbolic consciousness through the critical. Ricoeur calls this relation the “second naiveté.”<sup>15</sup>

In order to see Klemm’s analysis clearly we may put his contrast in the following schema:

	<b>Premodern</b>	<b>Modern</b>	<b>Postmodern</b>
<b>1. Center of the Paradigm</b>	The Sacred	Rational Self	Dialogue
<b>2. World Picture</b>	Sacred Cosmos	Infinite Universe	Imagelessness
<b>3. System of Thought</b>	Myth/Ritual	Epistemology	Hermeneutics
<b>4. Self-World Relation</b>	Openness to the Sacred	Subject-Object Split	Dasein

At first glance, we may observe that Cahoon’s understanding of postmodernism sounds like a “left-wing Heideggerianism” whereas Klemm’s sounds like a “right-wing Heideggerianism.” However, both



thinkers have one thing in common. They both see postmodernism as reflecting an intersubjective linguistic turn.

### DIFFERENT MODELS OF POSTMODERNISM

In our daily lives, when we are not satisfied with the status quo, we look for solutions and choose the best one. Life is problem-solving. Life is making choices. Suppose we are not happy with the situation in, let us say, the “Current Jerusalem.” We have at least three choices: to return to find happiness in the “Old Jerusalem,” to strive ahead to find happiness in a utopian “New Jerusalem,” or to try to adjust ourselves and live with the “Current Jerusalem.”

When some people are dissatisfied with the current situation, they wish to return to the past. These people may hold that postmodernism, for them, means a romantic return to an ideal society in the past. Thus it is not surprising that the theologian Bernard Iddings Bell used the term “postmodern” in 1939 to mean the recognition of the failure of secular modernism and a return to religion. Some people may think that it is impossible to return to past ideals, both in principle and in practice. That is mistaken. In fact, we can return to some past ideals through our thought and imagination, and we can put them into practice in our present life through reenactment. Confucius is a good example of a scholar who yearned to return to the past. What is surprising is that what is considered as “postmodern” in one society may be “premodern” in the other. As David Hall puts it,

In defense of my somewhat exotic thesis I want to call attention to the evidence for thinking that Confucianism and philosophical Taoism share something like the problematic of postmodernism insofar as it is shaped by the desire to find a means of thinking difference. In its strongest and most paradoxical form my argument amounts to the claim that classical China is in a very real sense *postmodern*.<sup>16</sup>

Whereas some people yearn for a romantic return to the past, others look ahead to the future. These people think that we cannot step back and find happiness in the past. We need instead to find a new model. It may be argued that it is impossible to find happiness in the future because the future is only potential and uncertain. This is also mistaken. Even though the future is uncertain and potential, it can influence our present actual life in terms of established goals. When we set our goals, no matter whether they are short, medium, or long term, they will, more or less, influence our life in one way or another. Thus, looking forward to finding happiness with the new model is always possible and accessible. As David Bohm puts it,

Our entire world order has, in fact, been dissolving away for well over a century. This dissolution has tended further to erode all our basic values on which the stability of the world order must depend. Hence, we are now confronted with a world-wide breakdown which is self-evident not only at the political level but also in smaller groups and in the consciousness of the individual... I suggest that if we are to survive in a meaningful way in the face of this disintegration of the overall world order, a truly creative movement to a new kind of wholeness is needed, a movement that must ultimately give rise to a new order, in the consciousness of both the individual and society. This order will have to be as different from the modern order as was the modern from the medieval order. We cannot go back to a premodern order. A postmodern world must come into being before the modern world destroys itself so thoroughly that little can be done for a long time to come.<sup>17</sup>

It is suggested by many psychologists and philosophers that we should live our lives in the moment, for yesterday is just like a dream and tomorrow may never come. Only today is real and belongs to us; therefore, we should understand the present world and learn how to adjust ourselves in order to live with it. When John Dewey talks about education, he says that education is life, not preparation for life. It is true that John Dewey was a giant in philosophy and education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Charles Hartshorne wrote that “The most influential philosopher in this country is probably still John Dewey”<sup>18</sup> – but there is a weakness in this definition of education. His definition is just partly correct. His definition would be true only if life had only one dimension, namely, the present dimension. But since life has three dimensions, namely, past, present, and future, the definition of education should also include three dimensions. Education is not just life (at present), but also preparation for life (in the future) and retreat for life (in the past). Dewey uses ‘either...or’ logic, and does not recognize its limits.

Turning to the first two models, we will find that both of them are also based on ‘either...or’ logic. Postmodernism as a *return to the past* follows the following argument.

Either the present or the past.  
Not the present.

---

Therefore, the past.

Postmodernism as a *striving to the future* holds the following argument.

Either the present or the future.  
Not the present.

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Therefore, the future.

We can see that neither model leaves space for the present because both employ ‘either...or’ logic and do not recognize its limits. Psychologists and philosophers who encourage people to *live only in the present*, also follow this ‘either...or’ logic. Their position includes the following arguments.

Either the present or the past.  
Not the past.

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Therefore, the present.

And in addition:

Either the present or the future.  
Not the future.

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Therefore, the present.

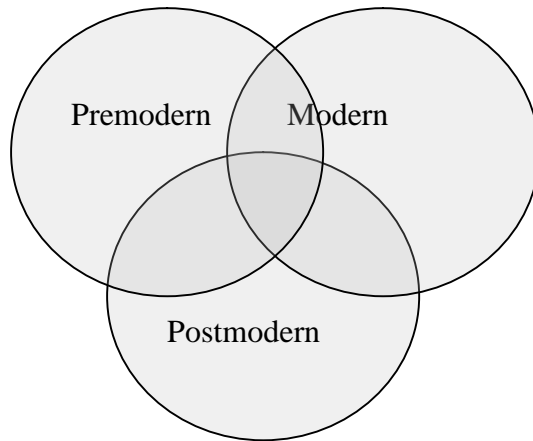
If philosophy has the only one function, namely, to understand the world, then philosophy is as poor as Marx used to claim. In fact, we should not only try to understand and adjust ourselves to the present world, but also try to evaluate and change it for the better. To do so, we need to recognize the limits of the ‘either...or’ logic, otherwise we cannot avoid “throwing the baby away with the bath-water.” Thus in order to solve the problem, especially the problem of the one and the many, I would like to propose a third model which transcends the limits of ‘either...or’ logic. This logic may be called “both...and” logic, which can integrate the present, the past, and the future together. This integration does not include all things from the three dimensions of life, but it takes only some from each dimension after deep examination, evaluation and reflection. As David Ray Griffin says,

A new worldview does seem to be emerging in our time. This worldview can be called postmodern, in that it preserves many modern beliefs, values, and practices but places them in a larger framework, in which many premodern truths and values can be recovered.<sup>19</sup>

Hans Küng is clear concerning the values from modernism and postmodernism as follows:

The specific values of industrial modernity – diligence, rationality, order, thoroughness, punctuality, sobriety, achievement, efficiency – are not just to be done away with but to be reinterpreted in a new constellation and combined with the new values of postmodernity: with imagination, sensitivity, emotion, warmth, tenderness, humanity.<sup>20</sup>

The third model also includes premodern values such as humbleness, honesty, openness, respect for the Supreme One, and respect for nature. The model may be demonstrated using Venn diagrams as follows:



### THE ONE AND THE MANY: A DEFEATED CLASSIC PROBLEM

The problem of the one and the many is as old as philosophy itself. Philosophers have long struggled to address this problem. But any attempt to do so with ‘either...or’ logic will always fail. It seems to me that only a “both... and” logic and a “neither... nor” logic can solve this problem – in other words, a logic of non-attachment. With this kind of logic, we may solve the problem through the following model.

- 1A
- 2 Bs
- 3 Cs
- 4 Ds

1A, 2Bs, and 3Cs are at the ontological level whereas 4Ds are at the epistemological level. 1A means that there is only one authenticity. The ultimate reality is the One, and we are all *from the One*. People may call the One different names, but in fact, it is the same One.

2Bs refer to two truths: (1) To be is to be *from others*, and (2) To be is to be *related to others*. First, we cannot have existence without others. In other words, others are always prior to our existence. Without our parents, how could we be born and have existence? Without our grandparents, how could our parents be born and have their existence? Alterity always

precedes our existence. This is the truth that no one can argue against. What I mean by “others” includes not only human beings but also nature and the One. Second, once we have our own existence, we exist among others. No matter whether we like it or not, as soon as we come into existence, we are always related to others. All actual entities are relational beings. Human beings are no exception. This is another truth that no one can argue against. Therefore, a human being has two choices: to be authentic or to be inauthentic. A person is authentic if and only if she or he recognizes the primacy of others and appreciates the relations with others.

3Cs refer to three qualities: *competency*, *character* and *care*. All people are given certain potentialities. All have a duty to actualize those given potentialities. We become authentic if and only if we actualize our potentialities *for the sake of others*. Competency is arrived at through skills, whereas character and care can be arrived at through virtues and love respectively.

4Ds refer to four ways of learning: *audit*, *dialogue*, *dialectic* and *doing*. Audit is the first step of learning. Babies take approximately one year to learn to listen. We learn to listen before we learn how to speak. As soon as we learn how to speak, we learn how to use dialogue. After we acquire language, we learn how to think. We can feel without language, but we cannot think without language. Throughout the history of Western philosophy, we have learned at least three meanings of dialectic – from Socrates, Kant, and Hegel, respectively. Dialectic from Socrates deals with questioning and answering. Questioning is very important for self-knowledge and all kinds of inquiry. For Kant, the dialectic implies that both of two opposite statements may be equally true. I think that this kind of dialectic is not something to be avoided, but something to be recognized and respected. When there is no way to judge the truth value of the opposite propositions or beliefs, we should respect the belief that is opposite to our own. For Hegel, the dialectic implies the synthesis between the thesis and the anti-thesis. In our life, we sometimes need to learn how to synthesize between the two opposites as proposed by Hegel. Sometimes we need to recognize the opposites as complementary as proposed by Taoism. Sometimes we need to go beyond or transcend the two opposites as proposed by Buddhism. After we learn how to think, we should learn how to put things into practice. We are what we do. We cannot survive without doing things. All four kinds of learning should lead our lives to authenticity. We become authentic if and only if we learn to recognize the primacy of the others and appreciate the relations with the others.

## CONCLUSION

Holistic postmodernism seems to be more appropriate and more realistic in this age because it is based on both the “both...and” logic and the logic of detachment. On the one hand, with the “both...and” logic, we can solve the problem of the one and the many through either synthesis or

complementarity. With the “both... and” logic, we can see one in many and many in one. On the other hand, with the logic of detachment we can use any kind of logic to solve problems in life. For example, if a waiter at the restaurant asks, “Tea or coffee, sir?” We may say “tea,” if we would like to have tea. We may say “coffee,” if we would like to have coffee. This reflects Aristotelian logic. We may say “half tea and half coffee in the same cup” This answer corresponds to Hegelian logic. We may say, “both tea and coffee in two different cups” if we would like to have both of them in two different cups. This corresponds to the Taoist logic. Or we may say, “neither” if we do not want to drink either. The Buddhist logic of detachment is flexible and applicable to all situations.

It is obvious that people in different cultures live in the same world. In this sense we may say that many is in One. Then how can we find the one in the many? As I note above, one is authenticity. If we would like to be authentic, we must recognize the primacy of others and appreciate the relations with others. In other words, to be authentic is to be grateful to others. In the Eastern civilizations, the virtue of gratitude has been both talked about and lived. In the Western civilizations, it has been lived rather than talked about. From the history of philosophy we learn that what Plato did should be emphasized as much as what he wrote. Socrates spoke a lot about the four cardinal virtues, but he also thoroughly practiced the other four important virtues. He talks about wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, while he observes self-knowledge, integrity, humbleness, and gratitude. All the four virtues practiced by Socrates are still very important in the global age. We need to have self-knowledge because “An unexamined life is not worth living.” We need to have integrity because it is the foundation of all other virtues. If we do not deceive ourselves, then we will not deceive others. If we do not deceive others, then we will have respect for others. We need to be humble because all our knowledge is essentially perspectival in character. Last but not least, we need to have gratitude because we are always indebted to and dependent upon the other in one way or another.

*Assumption University  
Bangkok, Thailand*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence E. Cahoon, ed., *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, pp. 1-2

<sup>3</sup> *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, p. 3..

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence E. Cahoon, “What Postmodernism Means,” in K. Narayana Chandran, *Texts and Their Worlds II* (New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2005), p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> “What Postmodernism Means,” p. 117

- <sup>6</sup> “What Postmodernism Means,” p. 118.
- <sup>7</sup> “What Postmodernism Means,” p. 118.
- <sup>8</sup> “What Postmodernism Means,” pp. 118-119.
- <sup>9</sup> “What Postmodernism Means,” p. 119.
- <sup>10</sup> “What Postmodernism Means,” p. 119.
- <sup>11</sup> “What Postmodernism Means,” pp. 119-120.
- <sup>12</sup> David E. Klemm, ed., *Hermeneutical Inquiry, Volume I: The Interpretation of Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), p. 22.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Interpretation of Texts*, p. 22.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Interpretation of Texts*, pp. 22-23.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Interpretation of Texts*, p. 23.
- <sup>16</sup> David Hall, “Modern China and the Postmodern West” in Lawrence E. Cahoon, ed., *From Modernism to Postmodernism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 701.
- <sup>17</sup> David Bohm, “Postmodern Science and a Postmodern World” in Charles Jencks, ed., *The Post-Modern Reader* (London: Academy Editions, 1992), p. 384.
- <sup>18</sup> Charles Hartshorne, *Reality as Social Process* (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1971), p. 182.
- <sup>19</sup> David Ray Griffin, “Creativity and Postmodern Religion” in Charles Jencks, ed., *The Post-Modern Reader* (London: Academy Editions, 1992), p. 378.
- <sup>20</sup> Hans Küng, “Why We Need a Global Ethic” in Charles Jencks, ed., *The Post-Modern Reader* (London: Academy Editions, 1992), p. 413.





## CHAPTER XXV

# EMPLOTMENT AND CULTURATION: A DISCOURSE OF EMERGENT PHILOSOPHIES

CRISTAL HUANG

### PRELUDE

In Paul Ricoeur's book, *Time and Narrative*, he says that his project is actually to deal with the possibility of having "narrated time."<sup>1</sup> The term "narrative" is derived, of course, from the idea of narrating something. Ricoeur does not use the way of definition to explain the term narrative. He uses his discourse to say from where a narrative comes. It can be the key to the creativity of having a new order for an existing text. Moreover, according to Ricoeur, a "text" is a kind of discourse that is fixed by writing.<sup>2</sup> A narrative brings out the existence of the subject in interpreting, and an intercultural narrative may help us to announce our desire of showing the connection between us and others in the world. Narrative is the key, and whenever we want to re-write a text from our own culture for another's culture, we need to adopt the attitude of narrating. Every time we narrate differences, we have the opportunity of understanding others in a new way. We also see that, when we produce a narrative, we need to focus more on the question of time. Narrated time is a good starting point for each speaker to understand difference. We may achieve this by another approach, using Martin Heidegger's notion of "*Befindlichkeit*;"<sup>3</sup> here we will rephrase this term in the question: "How are you?" to "How are we?" Studying the process of writing in narrative can bring out the relation of having "us" in mind for all possible dialogue. In the present paper, I want to work on how to link ontology with hermeneutics at the level of concrete and daily action-narrative and writing. New possibilities of original discourse will arise from the moment we deconstruct writings outside discourses. In order to enter the structure of a text, we need to apply Semiology and Hermeneutics. The ontological approach in philosophical hermeneutics provides us with a hint about combining the Being of writing with the action of narrative. We suggest using "time" as the beginning of this bridging process. When we narrate "time" into a different text, we will get "narrated time." It is the bridge between formal, cultural Being in a formal world and a new cultural Being in the new context of inter-culturalization. We can use the notion of narrated time as a way to engage in intercultural writing.

Almost every kind of culture has its own way to interpret philosophically the cosmos, the earth, and the universe. Where can we stand when we observe this history? We may say that, by the human activities of understanding and interpreting, we are able to write the history of

philosophy. This paper will focus on the method of establishing narrated time. We believe that, by following Ricoeur's theory on texts, we may deconstruct a piece of writing by narrating. And then we will have a chance to face the discourse inside of the text. We can then focus on applying Semiology into the process of narrating writing. We signify the signified by different cultures in order to get to the deep level signifier. By signifying, we start our journey of narrating. The relation between narrating and time is found in our action of signifying cultural differences. Intercultural philosophy is a result of our journey on the way to knowing how to contextualize our cultural text within another's text. We suggest that we can achieve this by keeping an attitude of cherishing togetherness. Togetherness brings to human beings the chance of narrating the past. Then, we can move forward on the journey of inter-cultural writing. Our writing comes from our narrative—a kind of narrative for others. The idea of narrated time, as already mentioned, can be a useful approach to intercultural writing.

### NARRATIVE AND EMPLOTMENT

As stated above, Ricoeur describes a direction that a narrative comes from. From Aristotle's *Poetics*, Ricoeur extracts the model of emplotment (*muthos*), the object of imitation (*mimesis*),<sup>4</sup> and proposes to extend it to every composition that he calls narrative.<sup>5</sup> In order to shed more light on his meaning of narrative here, let us use an idea from structuralism. In *The Savage Mind*, Claude Lévi-Strauss uses the term *bricolage*; this term signifies the toolbox of a *bricoleur*,<sup>6</sup> that is to say, of a handyman. Lévi-Strauss suggests that when we want to repair something, we should *imitate* a *bricoleur*. The *bricoleur* uses whatever he needs in his toolbox; his only aim here is to repair the object. We may link or add two different things together. The new door of having creativity is to narrate the object by means of a possible new presentation. By contrast, another way of attempting to create is to make an item by following a blueprint. The *bricoleur's* box is full of possibilities. But a thing that is re-constituted as a blueprint is only a copy. Now we will combine Structural Anthropology and Hermeneutics. If Ricoeur defines text as a discourse fixed by writing, what will it look like if we combine a narrative reading with a theory of text? If the idea of text means to fix some discourse by writing, then by using a structural way of narrating, we may obtain a new context from units involving the relation between several groups of units. From mythologizing, we may continue Hermeneutics by narrating the units. The subjective context will come to be clear after he or she uses his or her own narrative on a text. The process of contextualization turns out to be the process of narrating differences. From a text, we may get a discourse that is fixed by writing. And the term writing means a kind of being which opens the act of writing.

By writing (or being-in-written), we contextualize any written sign as a being which is in the text. In the inner fold<sup>7</sup> of the process of writing, and between the subject in signifying and the object in being signified, there

is another new area which we may call “the narrative relation.” By focusing on this relation, both subject and object acquire some creativity after having a dialogue. The term dialogue can only lead to renewal when people open the process of writing in narrative. The openness of this process exists when the subject signifies the whole content in the narrative. In other words, we believe that through the mode of writing in narrative, we reopen the process of signifying into creativity. So writing in narrative means a way to reorganize the structure by the activity of *bricolage*. As structuralism suggests, *bricolage* means to add concrete items to the *bricoleur’s* tool box. The box is not the same as the tool box of an engineer. The art of *bricolage* is employing multiple methods of adding or reconstructing, using concrete items that the *bricoleur* has already collected. The adding and the reconstructing will provide multiple meanings on the new structure of our narrative. Writing in narrative means to use meanings that we already have on hand. So we need to use two major philosophical theories here: the hermeneutical approach of narrative, and the structuralist approach as re-reading the text of the object by narrative. In the next section, we will describe how we can manifest the narrative by a way of narrated time. Martin Heidegger’s concept of *logos*<sup>8</sup> shows us that discourse means to manifest the “about what” of something. To operate this “about what” we shall need the signified and signifier<sup>9</sup> of the discourse. *Bricolage* means narrating the unit in a way that is meaningful.

### THE EXPERIENCE OF NARRATED TIME

In the first volume of *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur interprets Augustine’s and Aristotle’s ideas about poetics.<sup>10</sup> In his third volume, he concludes his project with the name of Narrated Time. What does it mean to narrate time? In the second volume of *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur says that there are semiotic constraints on narrativity.<sup>11</sup> If time can be narrated, we must consider providing the situation that the subject who is writing is currently facing. When we face an object in narrating, we face the writing outside the discourse. Can we use this for intercultural philosophizing in our contemporary world under global perspectives?

First, let us clarify one situation that the activity of signifying can give a present meaning about something. It will bring out a new cultural perspective after we narrate a discourse under the method of the signified signifier. The narrative needs the gesture of signifying in order to establish the meaning of the object, and provide a new meaning of the narrative. Once he or she finishes the establishment of signifying, the whole process of writing in narrative closes for a moment. It will reopen when we approach another part of the writing. We may use an example to describe the situation. When we change one small item of food on our plate, the whole dish may be different immediately. The narrative needs the signifying to locate meaning. Ricoeur describes how we may search for deep structures whose manifestation would be the concrete narrative configurations on the

surface of the narrative.<sup>12</sup> Here it is not a matter of having a general piece of writing carried out under conditions of a general character; it is a re-writing within a context. We define the narrative of a discourse inside a text by pointing out what it is about.<sup>13</sup>

But how can we really know that this “about what” will bring us to an understanding of the intercultural writing? Only by signifying in different time about the same discourse does the narrative get the chance of transforming. Then anyone who signifies time into narrative may obtain a narrated time about the discourse. And then he or she may or will get the chance of creating a piece of intercultural writing. The intercultural writing comes from the moment we possess our own narrated time. Only when the subject faces the time in the text, can he or she become close to the inner discourse. He or she may use a historical narrative to achieve this step. It is the inter-cultural writing that maintains the intercultural discourse. By re-narrating the historical Being in time in this intercultural situation, we are dealing with the narrated time in writing. The moment exists right between the writing and re-writing. This is when intercultural writing begins.

#### **PRESENT NARRATIVE AND THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF PLOTS**

Jacques Derrida uses the term *différance*<sup>14</sup> in his book *Margins of Philosophy*<sup>15</sup> to describe a silent sign—an “a”—that cannot be heard, but may be pointed out by being seen. The “a” does not exist in *différence*, but with Derrida’s creative act, we can now talk about it. The *différance* has two different meanings: the action of deferring, and of differing. The first poses what is presently signified, the second points to the signifier as possible. Narrative also has the character of not being able to be heard, but being able to be seen. After Derrida’s writing, the meaning of the term in French philosophy changes; at one level of interpretation, this strikes us as correct. The “a” has a narrated timing from the moment that Derrida puts it into philosophy. We may use the gesture of signifying possible meaning as the beginning, so long as we proceed with the process of writing in narrative, every trace about the writing is able to be deconstructed. The deconstruction in signifying will be also able to allow new signifying about the object. There is only one view of the object in front of the subject, but with the process of writing in narrative, the subject may take a thousand circles around this object. By circling the object in narrative, we are using the process to obtain differences. And then creation comes at the moment when we may say that, by narrating the moment of the existence of the “a” in Derrida’s philosophy, the “a” earns a position in time, this “a” being neither aural nor visual, or being both aural and visual, or being either the one or the other “moment to moment in time,” i.e., “from time to time”. This means, only when this “a” is narrated by its readers, whoever and whatever, does it secure a legal and legitimate “signifiership”, signifying the

“timely Being/beings”, the “timely culturations” in history, and in face of any new times and cultures.

So time is narrated when we remove the different in writing. In intercultural writing, we remove the difference in different cultural texts. For example, as I write, it is the Chinese season when we are going to have the Dragon Boat Festival. This is totally different from what we find in Western cultures. But by facing the narrated time in Chinese society—both ancient society and contemporary society – we obtain a core of the discourse about this festival. It is a story about a sad and loyal poet and a romantic love story that continues beyond the limits of this life. Every cultured individual may understand the context, if we put the time of the festival into the narration.

### **THE EMPLOTMENT OF CULTURE AS A WAY TO EMERGING PHILOSOPHIES**

In order to have an intercultural philosophy, we need to consider the idea of interpreting different cultural texts. The text is a discourse in a fixed writing. When we find ourselves in different cultures, we may simply re-write in narrative. Moreover, we can deconstruct our own cultural texts by following the narrative of others. And we will also get new texts in the future if we deal with narrated time and the problem of Being, historical and inter-cultural, with others. We carefully observe the different cultural text, and then we deconstruct the writing into a new writing by narrated time and Being at the same time. Narrative is a way of proceeding to have different cultures in signifying. And the final step of having the narrative is to focus the situation on different time in intercultural dialogues. What we mean here about narrated time is that, by following the manifestation of the Being of intercultural writing, we narrate again the new text on time. The narrated time means the time in different cultures in being narrated. Deconstruction in signifying means removing the surface structure of signs, but it also means walking towards new possibilities of differing. By combining a theory of text and the *bricolage* of narrative, a successful cultural formation is actually always a transformation. Each philosophy may provide a way of crossing over from own historical timing towards the new possibilities in intercultural dialogue. The *bricoleur* never refuses other items; he or she only narrates them unto the wholeness. Narrated time establishes Being together with others.

We believe that when philosophers wish to think “philosophy” by crossing over into new cultural horizons, they may experience a philosophical reformation instead of being fixed in their own philosophical educational history. In order to have the fusion of hermeneutic horizons on philosophical creation, we need to encounter different cultural re-/formations. Such an encounter always already takes to humanistic extensions and heuristic-hermeneutic re-/culturations. By using the situation to be narrated in time, we will get a narrated time. Derrida uses the

Written Being / the Being Written<sup>16</sup> as the dual modes of the relation between “written” and “being”. Now we will use, by analogy, the dual terms: narrated time / “the Being of time” being narrated. I suggest the “narrated time” be counted as an entrance to intercultural philosophizing both by signifying and by *bricolage*.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

We can follow Gilles Deleuze’s famous response to the question, “What is philosophy?”<sup>17</sup> It is the creation of concepts when we make sense of the/our highly culturally-bound life-world. By providing a narrative about time in order to get narrated time into our discourse, we will also generate philosophical concepts. When philosophers are busy learning the history of philosophy from the beginning of their philosophical education, can we really have the possibility of an intercultural dialogue among different cultures?

My proposal is to adopt a new way, by using narrative as the process of intercultural writing. If our culture is given to us by birth or biological and social existence, narrated time leads us to face the different times in different cultures. By using a narrative on time, we may have a chance of understanding different cultures. It means that we are able to form and reform our understanding via re-writing other cultural stories, myths, and ways of dealing with cultures and values. Only when we have a strong commitment to rewrite a piece of intercultural writing, will the result, perhaps, be able to bridge different cultures. To rewrite means to obtain and to grasp the different cultural time in another cultural context. The process of establishing narrated time in intercultural writing gives us the possibility of inter-cultural dialogues.

Deleuze is only one example here. He re-narrated a classical question, bringing it into the contemporary world: “What is philosophy?” My answer here is that, by narrating the time in text, we locate the discourse and avoid the writing. And by narrating the discourse of others into our current and present philosophical context, we will get a new narrated time, and at the same time, a new discourse. The inter-cultural text takes/is taking place right from this very moment onward.

*Soochow University  
Taipei, Taiwan*

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. III (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Writing* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and

Edward Robinson (New York: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 31, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage* (Paris: PUF, 1962), pp. 26-47.

<sup>7</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Folds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 3-13.

<sup>8</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>9</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), pp. 54, 75, 116; Ferdinand de Saussure, *Writing in General Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 174, 235.

<sup>10</sup> Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, pp. 5-51.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol II, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56. Here the logos and the discourse are relevant in Heidegger.

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 3-27.

<sup>15</sup> Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*.

<sup>16</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 18-26.

<sup>17</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Verso, 1994), p. 3.





## CHAPTER XXVI

# TRUTH AS EQUALITY IN A WORLD CULTURED BY DIFFERENCE

*OGBO UGWUANYI*

This paper sets out to establish that dialogue defines truth in a world of divergent cultures and worldviews. It argues that culture has an enormous influence on truth, for which truth through monologue has inherent tendencies that limit intellectual relations, and discusses how philosophy has served to promote this trend with its hegemony in different world cultures. The effect of this is the quest for difference by other world cultures from cultural philosophies that attempt to impose reason and logic on their cultural achievement. The paper looks at the effect of this unending quest for difference and the conflict of values emanating from it.

Thus, this paper provides a strong critique of Western philosophy: its alienating character by which it makes man a slave unto reason; its dualistic character by which it distances man from nature; its tendency to create a world of opposites of good and bad, true and false, positive and negative, etc, which lead to mental structures that promote conflict in our world. This paper also contends that truths realized in such a world are inherently deficient. It recommends dialogue as the basis for truth. Truth in a multi-cultural world would then not be the correspondence to, coherence with, or the pragmatic relation to reality, but the ability to defy difference in order to promote the equality of difference.

## FOUNDATIONS OF CULTURE

Culture is rooted in man's attempt to meet the biological and psychic features of his being in relation to the environmental conditions of human existence. According to biology, all living things possess seven characteristics. These living characteristics, which apply also to man, are: respiration, movement, nutrition, reproduction, irritability, growth, and excretion. Although these biological features are common in all human beings, the mode and manner of manifesting them differ from one place to another. The human response to these needs often depends on the social and environmental conditions of existence. This is very clear with such features as nutrition, movement, irritability, and excretion, which are the characteristics that man fulfills with the cooperation of the environment or what we might call cooperative agents. While man can exercise other functions, such as respiration and reproduction, unaided by the environment or without the presence of a mediating agent, he cannot exercise those such as nutrition, movement, irritability, and excretion, without the support of or

mediation by the environment. A quick illustration in this regard is movement. Man cannot move without such supportive agents as land, sea, or air. Another instance is nutrition. Man cannot feed without nature.

But the efficiency of these cooperative agents and the role they play differ from one place to another. Movement for a person living in a riverine area is essentially by boat or canoe, just as movement for a man living in the desert is by horse. It should therefore be expected that the man living in a riverine area would value a canoe or boat more than a horse, just as the man living in the desert would value a horse more than he values a canoe or boat. In the same vein, a Fulani nomad who lives all his life in the bush and defends himself with a stick, would value a stick more than the man who lives in a city and protects himself with a gun. By the same contrast, the British woman who wears jeans or trousers to protect herself against the cold weather of Britain has enough reasons to for attaching more value to jeans than the African woman who lives in the heat of the African sun and wears a wrapper all throughout her life. All these are examples of how we respond to the same need in various ways, depending on the environment. They are the environmental foundations of human culture.

The second natural foundation of human culture arises from the psychic nature of man. Man is a social being (*ens socialis*). He is born into society and lives and grows there. Aristotle exhibited this view when he defined man as a political animal who necessarily lives in a state, and argued that he who does not live in society or does not need society must be a god or a beast. As a political animal, man needs language to communicate with other human beings. Now, given that man is a social and political animal who needs language to operate in society, the question is which language does he choose? Which language should man speak and why? The answer to this depends on the environment of the individual. A child who grows up in an *Igbo* world is first able to interpret the world through the medium of the *Igbo* language and culture. In the same vein, a child who grows up in an Akan unit of Ghana would interpret the world through the Akan language. Even with non-verbal language this position will obtain. The child who grows up in a family of people who are mute would easily understand sign language before he understands spoken language. In the same way, a child who is raised in a community of touts and rogues will have a stronger predisposition to rough words and language than one who is raised in a civilized community. All these demonstrate the contribution of nature and environment in the shaping and making of human thought. They define how, in the opinion of Bernard Fonlon, “we think in a definite language” and why “this language substitutes ideas in our minds so much so that it becomes the warp and woof of our mental life”; this reflects the psychic foundations of human culture.<sup>1</sup>

Two issues arise from this: first, the human response to the challenge of his existence often grows through a society. Culture often transforms into a world-view or a communal philosophy and becomes a historical bond. Second, given the different circumstances under which man

exists and achieves a culture, culture often translates to a principle of identity and difference, becoming a community lens. The farmer in an African village who lives and works with a hoe often grows up seeing the hoe as a weapon of strength. Again, the Fulani nomad in Northern Nigeria, who lives all his life using a stick, soon begins to build his identity in terms of the stick. Some of his cultural life begins to rotate around the stick, so that it assumes an important place in his culture. In the Fulani culture of Nigeria, for instance, part of the marriage rite is to whip a man into a frenzy with a stick, testing his ability to endure pain, after which he is given his bride. Similarly, in many agricultural tribes of Nigeria, it is part of the marriage rite to present yams to the bride's family, a sign of a man's capability to feed his bride. All these demonstrate culture as a principle of identity and difference, and how this difference finds its origin in the environment.

#### **IDENTITY AND CULTURE: DIFFERENCE OF CULTURE AND CULTURE OF DIFFERENCE.**

When a man is asked "Who are you?," many of his answers come from within the purview of culture. To the question "Who are you?" or "Who am I?," the following answers would usually follow: "I am a Nigerian," "I am an *Igbo* man." "I am from Mbu town." Further attempts to explain these usually come from the cultural provisions of these units. To define myself as a Nigerian means locating myself within a modern nation-state. The implications of this answer are that I am from a certain country in West Africa, south of the Sahara, a former British colony, with two major religions of Christianity and Islam, a heavily-populated country of black men and women. It will also be expected that I eat a certain type of food -- e.g., rice, yam, garri; that I am familiar with certain types of fruits -- groundnut, paw-paw, mango, and so on.

If I were to go further in defining myself with my ethnic identity in Nigeria by saying that I am an *Igbo* man, the expectations would be sharper and clearer. It would be expected that I speak the *Igbo* language, that I have a republican outlook to life, that I eat *tuwo* or *akpu* (pounded cassava), that I am familiar with the *ofo* symbol of justice, that I am familiar with kola nut rituals and prayers, and other cultural items that are part of the *Igbo* world-view. If I narrow my identity further to my town, there would also be some other items of individuation and identity. It will be expected that I am familiar with peculiar divinities, masquerades, and dances, etc. All of these define culture as a tool for difference, as that which represents the achievement of man in his interaction with nature and the environment.

It is, however, in this function -- that is, culture as a weapon of a world-view and as a principle of difference -- that culture creates some problems that distort and disorganize human society. This is because, here, culture often creates differences that make members of the community to see one another in terms of difference only. Although all culture arises from

the same biological and psychic roots and foundations, and all culture serves to meet the same need in different ways, culture often serves the principle of difference as a result of which human beings often grow to see themselves as different. The result is that an element of tension or discord arises from cultural practices, leading to a culture of difference -- where defending a culture and emphasizing difference becomes a way of life. This tension is much more so when a social group believes that its cultural values are more relevant than those of another group. If a British woman concludes that putting on a pant suit gives her a higher place among men and shows that she is "liberated", there is no reason why she would not begin to look down on any culture that forbids this practice for women elsewhere.

Ali Mazrui, in his important work *The African Condition* (1979), enumerates seven functions of culture that highlights the problem we are addressing. According to Mazrui, culture "provides a world view," "provides a standard of evaluation"; "conditions motivation", is "a medium of communication", is "the basis for stratification", is "the agent that determines the production pattern of a people" and is "the defining identity of a people." A close study of these functions generally shows that they reflect culture as the basis of the identity of a people. By providing the world-view of a people, culture defines the world for a people in certain way. What this means is that for as many cultures as there are, we will many find an equal number of world-views. Similarly, by providing for motivation, culture empowers people to act in a certain direction. It sets goals and rewards the agents. As a medium of communication, it is the basis of a spiritual union between two or more people. Hence, when people of the same cultural affiliation cling to a position tenaciously, it is because there is a spiritual union found in the culture at the level of understanding or interpreting issues. Again, the production pattern of a people comes from the resources of their tools and the training emanating from their culture. Culture, again, as a weapon for this, is an agent of identity creation, since the tools themselves only come within the available resources of the environment. All these attest to the strength of culture as a framework or as a basis for difference and identity. Apart from the universal definition of man as a rational animal, every attempt at conceptualizing man comes within the framework of culture. Similarly, every other value we attach to the phenomenon of life comes within the purview of culture. This is precisely why culture is a strong item of difference.

### **PHILOSOPHY AS A CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT**

Identity or the conscious quest for difference is not achieved in a vacuum. Identity is largely a product of culture which is re-enforced and redefined by reason. Identity creates the self which is the object of esteem. When this is achieved, further growth and development can only be in the direction of the desired esteem. Identity provides a measure of development, and

development is a measure of cultural growth. But cultural growth itself is an outcome of rational growth.

The growth of any society is squarely a result of the extension of reason and logic in favour of the culture of that society. This is the case with philosophy, the highest rational achievement of any race or people. I shall establish this point by looking at Western philosophy, which is widely regarded as *philosophy qua philosophy*.

But Western philosophy, in all its major traditions, schools of thought, periods, and so on, has operated as nothing other than a cultural achievement of Europe. The result is that, to maintain this identity, it has nearly cut itself off from any rational dialogue with other world cultures. This is evident from the fact that there are hardly any major figures in this discipline except those who are members of Western cultures. G.W.F. Hegel made this the center of his own philosophy; he identified reason purely and finally with Europe, summarized in German idealism. But the African thinker Sedar Senghor, by way of protest against this particular culture that has pervaded the world with a strong and enduring cloak of universality, questioned why *reason is Greek and Greek is reason*. The strongest evidence of this is that no non-European or Western culture has strongly acculturated this philosophy and the world-view that gave birth to it, just as this philosophy has not opened itself up to tolerate non-European achievements in promoting its cause. Thus, while the Egyptians are sometimes acclaimed as the founders of Western philosophy, they have not, until recently, been mentioned as the originators of philosophy apparently because they do not share the culture of the people that have developed this philosophy. As a result of this, there is hardly any emphasis on the African contribution to philosophy in any of the major histories of philosophy. Even William Amo, a worthy contemporary of Kant, born in Ghana in West Africa, Professor at the universities of Halle and Jena, and who wrote important philosophical works in the area of epistemology, hardly finds a mention in the major works of history of Western philosophy. The implication of this is that philosophy itself is seen and appreciated as a legacy of the Western world, for which others must remain listeners. At a more serious level, this intellectual achievement is often used as a weapon of imperialism to subjugate, interrogate and misrepresent non-Western cultures of thought. One only needs to read and digest Hegel's *Philosophy of History* to appreciate this position and to clearly understand the fact that, despite its claim to universality, philosophy in Western culture is nothing more than the love of wisdom of the Western culture and tradition – particularly given its overriding ambition to institute and further difference from other perspectives.

A second problem with philosophy in the Western tradition, that shows it as the philosophy of just one culture and so of limited bearing on other sections of humanity, is its separationist tendency. From Socrates to Sartre, philosophy in the Western tradition promises man a proper understanding of reality. To do this, it provides the tool of logic and rational

criticism. With metaphysics as its root, philosophy in the Western tradition is the unending search for a truth that thrives in contradictions. A.J. Ayer provides a stimulating characterization of philosophy in this regard by defining the philosopher as an “intellectual troublemaker”. From this inherent controversial quality, philosophy creates a world of opposites that ignores nature and, as it were, tries to invent another kind of human being.

A third problem of Western philosophy is that it makes man a slave to reason. Philosophy in the Western tradition seeks to advance reason unrestrictedly. It is simply the love of wisdom, seeking or wishing no limit on this love. A philosopher, as Nietzsche defined him, is “a man who never ceases to experience, see, hear, expect, hope, and dream extraordinary things.”<sup>2</sup> Borrowing from this important description, then, the philosopher is a man whose achievements can be measured only by the limitless potentiality of his intellectual reflections that stretch to eternity. In seeking to achieve this end and develop reason unrestrictedly, this pattern of philosophizing often makes wisdom an end unto itself, discounting the relevance of any other wisdom gained or achieved. This is where its relevance is brought into doubt, for it is strongly doubtful whether any mental venture that enslaves man *is* worth it in the first place. If knowledge and wisdom are desirable, it is because of what they should be or can contribute to the growth of man and human welfare, and not because they are ends in themselves. These and other deficiencies outlined above explain the poverty of Western philosophy as the ultimate pathway to the realization of humanity.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO WESTERN PHILOSOPHY**

An important response to the shortcomings of philosophy in the Western tradition has been the effort to develop other traditions of philosophy that do not harbour the same potentials for failure. These cultural philosophies include oriental philosophy and African philosophy. Oriental philosophy expounds some form of metaphysical monism that unites nature with man. In its major schools of thought -- Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism -- oriental philosophy seeks to make man participate in or attain reality, and not just know reality. God and nature are all one, only separated by layers of being which can be overcome or broken through by religious disposition to these truths. In Buddhist thought, “Good and evil are not unchanging entities; indeed, good contains within it evil, and evil contains within it good.”<sup>3</sup>

The offer of an alternative world philosophy has also come from the African viewpoint. This is what has been known in recent philosophical circles as African philosophy, Africana philosophy, or African-American philosophy. This dimension of philosophy, which arose as a response to the intellectual denigration of the African, seeks to establish reason as a reliable element in African thought and culture. Clearly cultural from its inception, African philosophy is a systematic documentation of the thought and

wisdom of African peoples, with the view to presenting the items in them that defend and therefore define the African person, and thereby authenticate rationality within the African difference. African philosophy stands as an intellectual reply or antithesis to Western philosophy, rendered in the thesis of such imperialist scholars as Levy-Bruhl who held that African thought pattern is pre-scientific and pre-logical. African philosophy has four major schools of thought: ethno-philosophy, national-ideological philosophy, critical current of thought, and philosophical sagacity – all of which are built from and around the African experience, and generally emphasize a defense of truth in favour of the African.

African philosophy has arisen as a way of negating colonialism, which, through Eurocentric education, “shattered the “mirror” in order to render the African mind black and prepare or condition it for the absorption of an alien system of education and the foreign values contained in it.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, it comes out of a desire to reverse the “de-education, miseducation, de-culturization, and de-spiritualization of the African people,<sup>5</sup> which the advocates of this philosophy believe stands at the root of Western philosophy.

But alternative cultural philosophies do not seem to serve as adequate answers to the desire for an alternative world philosophy. This becomes clear when we consider the limited concerns of these philosophies. These philosophies often address one or two cultural concerns of a people without application to others. While oriental philosophy, for instance, focuses on the religio-psychological aspect of man, ignoring thereby other aspects, African philosophy only narrows its mission to asserting, defending or defining the logic of African rationality. The limited concerns of these philosophies thus make them weak as a response to the poverty of philosophy. Consequently, these philosophies have not achieved a strong attention. While African universities are overpopulated with books, ideas, and theories derived from Western and Eastern philosophies and scholarship, there is hardly any serious attention to African philosophy in Western universities. I see no particular reason as the cause of this other than contempt for African philosophy as a narrow cultural discourse that does not deserve the interest of mankind at a larger level. But this is again due to the inherent imperialism or what the Buddhist philosopher Daisaku Ikeda calls “excessive attachment to difference”<sup>6</sup> and the *separationist* and alienating tendencies of philosophy emanating from the Western tradition. This position is validated by the fact that the philosophy in the Western tradition has denied its Egyptian-African heritage -- which goes to show all the more the imperialist character of Western philosophy and its creation of a culture of denial and difference.

### **TRUTH AS DIALOGUE IN A CULTURE OF DIFFERENCE**

Have alternatives to the Western tradition of philosophy served effective responses to the failure of Western philosophy? My answer is no. To begin

with, Western philosophy has served as the fertilizer that provided for the birth, growth, and development of modernity. As a result of this, it becomes very difficult to negate or displace Western philosophy since, by implication, this demands negating the ideals of Western philosophy. This is the point addressed by the Beninese philosopher Paulin Hountondji in his work, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*.<sup>7</sup> For Hountondji, there might be no achievable special mission for alternative world philosophies like African philosophy because Africa, unlike the West, has not made a strong contribution to modernity wherein the relevance of her philosophy could be explored. Thus, it is only by entering the universal world of discourse that the African can make a significant contribution to achieve his desired intention. For this reason, African philosophy can be defined only within the history of philosophy as African, and not essentially as a corpus of wisdom with enough rational justification on its own to be explored and critiqued. In the same vein, oriental philosophy remains a sectional philosophy read more or less for a cultural familiarity with the Eastern perspective than anything else. It has yet to achieve the kind of global attention which it needs to serve as a worthy alternative to Western philosophy. Although it shares an ancient history with Western philosophy (Buddha and Lao-Tzu, for example, being ancient heirs to wisdom), the truth is that it has not extended its wisdom significantly across cultural, disciplinary and geographical boundaries as Western philosophy has done. For this reason, it remains an unreliable alternative to Western philosophy.

Beyond these reasons, however, there is another important item that undercuts oriental and African philosophies as alternative world philosophies. These alternative philosophies often display an inherent tendency to conflict and controversy, which was a major problem identified in Western philosophy. The effect of this is that the unrelenting effort to assert difference undermines their uniqueness as an alternative world philosophy, as they are doomed to suffer the same fate of Western philosophy.

It is in the light of the foregoing that divine truth asserts itself as a reliable alternative to establish a coherent and rational world. Truth illuminated by divine truth transcends continental, racial, and rational divides. Here, human reason is humbled by seeing its limits, and it is invited to evaluate itself in the light of a more certain truth beyond its comprehension. Here, the arrogance and self-acclaimed authority of philosophy is brought to a point where it sees that it must yield to the greater, inner logic of dependence and, thereby, recognises the limits of what it can be and do for man.

The reason for this is not far-fetched. Man's highest intellectual achievement is philosophy, yet philosophy has not enabled man to achieve the primary goal of self-definition. A rational culture that defines being and wisdom exhibits a defective world of difference; philosophy has not provided man with the final answer to the innermost longings of his being. It is still a world where there is a search for difference and where diversity



stands at the root of wisdom. But faith as the foundation of reason has an alternative advantage. Here, truth can be tested and trusted by means of a common denominator: divine truth.

Truth at this level has an important advantage that overrides the differences engineered and promoted by philosophy. It is truth achieved at the level of trust. Faith is a trust. *Trust is an inner virtue that defines a lack. It is a waiting.* To have faith in someone is to express a desire in his ability to provide for, and respond to, a lack. But this desire must come with some humility, which is the foundation of wisdom. Faith is not just an item of trust or confidence. It is an invitation to waiting. This quality of faith is essentially what philosophy in the Western tradition has lacked all the while but now stands to gain. Wisdom founded and nurtured by faith has the potential to achieve a more humble world and, by so doing, to create an environment for a more tolerant and human world. This is the kind of value that can be achieved when truth is nurtured on dialogue: dialogue within the human community, and dialogue between man and God.

*University of Abuja  
Abuja, Nigeria*

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Fonlon, "The Language Problem in Cameroon: A Historical Perspective," in D.R. Smock and K. Bents-Enchill (eds.), *The Search for National Integration in Africa* (New York: Macmillan, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Daisaku Ikeda, *Peace through Dialogue: A Time to Talk* (Japan: Soka Gakkai, 2000), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> D.K. Koka, "History and Education in Decolonising the Mind," in A.P.J. Roux and P.H. Coetzee (eds.), *Beyond the Question of African Philosophy, a collection of papers presented at international colloquia*, University of South Africa, 1995, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Koka, "History and Education in Decolonising the Mind," p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Ikeda, *Peace through Dialogue*, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Paulin Hountodji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (London: Hutchinson, 1983). See also Ali Mazrui, *The African Condition: A Political Diagnosis* (London: Heinemann, 1979) and C.S. Momoh, *The Substance of African Philosophy* (Auchi: African Philosophy Project, 1989).



## CHAPTER XXVII

# FACING THE GLOBAL CRISIS: THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN CHALLENGING ECONOMIC POWERS\*

*SILJA GRAUPE*

### INTRODUCTION

When attending the opening ceremony of the XXII World Congress in Philosophy at Seoul National University, I was struck by the welcoming words of Peter Kemp, President of the Congress:

To rethink philosophy today is to apply our philosophical capacities to the current situation of humanity. One often forgets that the economical, technological and military powers do not possess the monopoly of power in the world. Philosophical argumentation and reflection constitute a power through the word that is capable of challenging the other powers, exposing the lies and the illusions and proposing a better world as the habitation of humanity. In this sense true philosophy is cosmopolitan, it is a fight to create a world citizenship and make a new world order.<sup>1</sup>

When Kemp spoke these words, the world stood at the brink of an economic crisis almost unprecedented in scope and scale. Financial turmoil was about to emerge from the United States and make itself felt in almost every corner of our planet, causing stock markets to crash and banks to go bankrupt so as to leave many without a job, a home, savings or a pension. But even before the crisis hit, many people surely anticipated the potential damage that such economic powers, of which Peter Kemp spoke, could inflict upon the world. I suggest that the root cause of such anxiety lies in an immense lack of understanding; we do not yet truly know the economic powers we currently face. This is especially so because the scientific, economic knowledge, into which many people formerly put their trust, comes to increasingly lose its explanatory power. A *New York Times* article recently stated that the recent crisis exposed severe flaws in how present day economics sees an ever more complicated world. It turns out that, as long as we remain bound to the latter's simplistic methodological framework, we are going to remain unable to deal with the inherent dynamics of today's interdependent global markets. Given this, Kemp was surely right in demanding philosophy to apply its capacities to the current economic situation. We need to nurture the latter's reflective power so that it can challenge economic powers by first and foremost revealing their true nature. Though it seems clear to me

that philosophy cannot be said to be in the possession of any ready-made answers, I am confident that the world's philosophers can work together so as to advise humanity on finding the answers and solutions needed for dealing with today's economic problems. Above all, philosophy is to use, by means of intense intercultural and interreligious dialogue, its whole transformative potential so as to oppose the present day's most common (i.e., mainly Western capitalist) modes of economic thought. For this, it has to combine the power of its various schools and traditions so that they together can render possible new insights into the mostly forgotten presuppositions and background assumptions of economics, as well as to break through the limitations those presuppositions and assumptions set to our human creative understanding.

The challenge here does not simply lie in abandoning mainstream economics as if we could easily do away with it. Rather, we are to critically engage it so as to overcome its most pervasive modes of thought from without and especially from deeply within. Philosophy is to explore the *thinking* of economics so as to better understand the pervasive, albeit often implicit, influence it has in shaping how we have come to see the world and ourselves, especially in the West. More specifically, philosophy is to assist humanity in (a) encountering the implicit, yet very powerful modes of limitation that economics creates with respect to our own self-understanding, and in (b) developing the mental skills needed to break through these modes of limitation. It is to unleash a power of innovation, not for controlling the world in yet better or more efficient ways, but for exploring new paths of *self*-transformation. During the World Congress of Philosophy in Seoul, much progress was made in taking up these challenges. Being an economist, I was astonished at how many presentations and round table discussions and conversations proved enormously helpful in clarifying my understanding of my own subject, even when they did not explicitly deal with economic issues. This paper is an attempt to indirectly pay tribute to the events of the World Congress by reflecting upon the dynamic and multi-faceted nature of economic powers in their light. More specifically, this paper seeks to gradually deepen the understanding of these powers by exploring their objectives and their subjective nature in order to better elucidate the experiential, creative and dynamic nature of these powers. In the conclusion, I point to some cognitive barriers of modern individualism currently preventing us from fully appropriating this latter dynamic nature. Thus, I turn attention to one further philosophical task Peter Kemp mentioned: the task of critically exposing those hidden lies and illusions about our human nature that stifle the kind of creativity necessary to propose a better model of the world – a vision of the world as a genuine human habitation.

## MAINSTREAM ECONOMICS

During the World Congress, I noticed how many presentations, especially those dealing with the philosophy of economics directly, remained involuntarily bound to the objectivist metaphysics that has been the hallmark of Western mainstream economics for more than a century.<sup>2</sup> I am speaking of an objectivist metaphysics, here, insofar as this mainstream mostly views the economy as an aggregation of absolute facts *only*, existing independently from all mental states (feelings, wishes, desires) etc. of humans.<sup>3</sup> In its attempts to develop into a ‘real science,’ from the nineteenth century onward, economics mainly sought to conceptualize the world from the perspective of a purely objective, detached observer and attempted to fully emulate the methods of the natural sciences or, more precisely speaking, those of mechanics.<sup>4</sup> Above all, it applied mathematical and statistical methods, which had shown such magnificent results in the natural sciences, to the social world in general and to the economy specifically. Because economists generally assume “that the phenomena of economic life are governed according to strict laws, like those of nature,”<sup>5</sup> they are convinced that “we have to research the laws of social cooperation as physicists research the laws of mechanics.”<sup>6</sup> As a result, economists generally perceive the economy as mere outer reality, which works according to quasi-mechanical laws independent from any subjective perceptions. Once we buy into this conception, we come to view the economy as nothing but an aggregation of things and events firmly standing over and against us, consisting solely of entities such as markets, institutions, and goods, which are interrelated according to fixed principles and totally unconnected to our inner subjectivity. We think of the economy as the physical or material world only and, consequently, of economic powers as inexorable and ineluctable forces which no human ideals or aspirations can possibly alter. These powers seem to be thrust upon us by an anonymous source – the invisible hand of the market place, to use Adam Smith’s famous expression – while our own human creativity is viewed as being essentially reactive. Borrowing a deistic metaphor from classical economics, it seems as if economic powers could essentially be attributed to a “Great Mechanic,” who guides and controls economic events from the outside without being influenced by them in turn.<sup>7</sup> Thus is the economy likened to a machine as in the following metaphor used by Adam Smith:

The wheels of the watch are all admirably adjusted to the end for which it was made, the pointing of the hour. All their various motions conspire in the nicest manner to produce this effect. If they were endowed with a desire and intention to produce it, they could not do it better. Yet we never ascribe any such desire or intention to them, but to the watch-maker, and we know that they are put into motion by a spring, which intends the effect is produces as little as they do.<sup>8</sup>

Such a conception of economic powers denies the existence of any distinctively human powers within the economy. It effectively reduces human beings to simple “molecules” or “atoms” of the economic system.<sup>9</sup> Even in the face of a severe crisis, we appear to be condemned to passively watch the market run its course and to trust in its self-healing powers. There remains little else to do than to simply believe it will effectively guide us to the best possible state of affairs.<sup>10</sup>

My point here is that belief in God as the sole creator of economic powers, a belief which the early liberal economists held, is still widespread today. Moreover, economic policy often holds implicitly the idea of the economy being ultimately governed by outside forces utterly beyond human control, that is to say, by pure and wholly anonymous mechanisms of the market.<sup>11</sup> It seems that many politicians, especially in the West, and particularly those who lean towards the liberal tradition, still believe that “mankind is not free to choose. . . Things economic and social move by their own momentum and the ensuing situations compel individuals and groups to behave in certain ways.”<sup>12</sup> This does not mean that such momentum necessarily victimizes everyone. Rather, some people might be successful at letting it work in their favor. In the same way that humankind learned to utilize physical forces for its own advantages, it might also try to do so in the case of economic powers. However, from an objectivist perspective, we can never imagine ourselves as acting to truly change the character of such powers. It is true that we might attempt to command them, but only by obeying them.<sup>13</sup>

### **THE DOMINANCE OF OBJECTIVIST METAPHYSICS IN ECONOMICS**

The problem I am primarily concerned with is not whether the broader public in general, or even the majority of economists in particular, openly subscribe to objectivist metaphysics. It is, rather, that we allow such metaphysics to tacitly frame our most common modes of economic thought. Flying ‘below the radar’ of our attention, it is extremely powerful, not only within economics departments and business schools all over the world, but also within political economy and, even more importantly, within the modes of our daily reasoning.

Consider, for example, the fact that most mathematical and statistical data, upon which we tend to base our factual knowledge about the economy, are gathered by means of models and theories that still remain firmly rooted in the paradigm of a one-dimensional causally-ordered world, though we do not usually recognize this. Consequently, a large number of our management and policy tools still remain under the sway of the very same paradigm, insofar as they uncritically utilize such knowledge, mistakenly believing it to accurately reflect the whole of reality. In uncritically utilizing these tools for our daily purposes, we invariably distance ourselves from the consequences of our own economic activity. We

deny being responsible for economic choices, and incorrectly think of these choices as already determined by mechanical market forces, as if by blind fate. We consider ourselves to simply be responding to brute economic facts, thereby not responsible for the often disastrous consequences such responses may have on our fellow human beings.

Unfortunately, such behavior is abundant. A well known example is when corporate managers point to 'material constraints' of global markets to justify the lay-off of thousands of workers, assuming that such 'constraints' are simply the results of the inevitable functioning of deterministic market forces. We may also think of governments which try to convince us to accept the necessity of lowering social and environmental standards for the purpose of national survival in global competitive markets. But even in our day to day lives, we feel more and more bound to conform to the so-called inevitable consequences of the 'objective' values of economic goods, money, shares and derivatives. And have we, at least from time to time, not put our trust credulously in the 'hard facts' presented by economic charts, figures and calculations offered to us by the media, politicians and bankers? Rarely, it seems, do we openly question the metaphysical basis upon which such facts are continually conceived and produced. It seems that many of us have silently shared the economist's dream of an economy made up of absolute facts and driven by powers beyond our reach. In many ways, it appears to be much easier to build our lives upon that dream, rather than trying to actively see through its illusionary foundation and work creatively to change that foundation. Thus, there is surely a need for philosophical dialogue in order to explore more deeply the metaphysical basis upon which present day objective economic arguments rest.

The challenge here is not simply to find a better model or formula to predict and control things economic, as some scholars proposed during the World Congress. The real challenge is for philosophers and economists to work together in order to better understand the essence of the economic powers at play. The problem with a purely objectivist understanding of economic powers lies, among others, in urging us to obtain something like a 'God's Eye frame of references.' Such a frame does not only affect our view of the economy, but also our own modes of self-understanding. This frame aids in creating a highly contradictory self-understanding, for we see ourselves as outside spectators ultimately sitting in judgment over things economic as well as over other economic agents, and deem ourselves capable of predicting and governing their behavior. However, as outside spectators, we continually distance ourselves from affecting the way things actually work. This is partially explained by Nishitani Keiji, a modern Japanese philosopher, who argues that if one sees not only human beings, but all 'things' in terms of being mechanically manipulable and pliable, then there is necessarily an absence of any face-to-face resistance. That means the subject finds no material object outside of himself, no being in itself, no being that resists him, or to which he could attach himself. Moreover, this

subject lacks any real relation to another, no sense of the other thou. Everything is in the third person, is an 'it' that may even cease being an it when it is reduced to force or energy. We are dealing with a frame of reference here, which grants the isolated I an extraordinary and absolute power with no power outside this I to offer resistance. In a world in which everything is reduced to force and energy, everything is fundamentally arranged so as to be freely managed; and everything can be arbitrarily manipulated. In a certain sense, what we have here is the standpoint of a subject who has reached the peak of his development.<sup>14</sup> Once we entirely exploit everything around based upon the premise of mere functionality, we are equally endangered to reduce our own self to nothing but a function as well. We ourselves begin to feel victimized by the anonymous forces of the market economy; forces over which we do not sit in judgment any longer, but which are inflicted upon us. Nishitani states:

In the same gesture [in which the subject achieves his peak – S.G.] subjectivity loses any meaning and the person is dehumanized. When there is no longer any thou offering resistance to the I, to the point where any thou simply vanishes – so, to, vanishes the position of the 'I.' The I is now just the force that governs the forces of the world. The sovereignty of humankind is nothing more than the force which leads the world of forces. It becomes a mechanical force guiding mechanical processes. If everything is transformed into an 'it' and things exist merely for control and manipulation, then subjectivity itself slips away from us, who have fallen into the state of being mere mechanics. Under the influence of technology, the self-consciousness of the subject runs the danger of collapsing by and by.<sup>15</sup>

It is obvious that these two forms of self-understanding, self-attachment and self-estrangement,<sup>16</sup> are not merely incompatible, they are also incommensurable, and cause deep division within one's personality.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, they are intimately entwined because they emanate as the two extremes of the very same objectivist worldview. In this situation, philosophy is to explore yet other modes of self-understanding by fundamentally altering this worldview itself. It is to make us aware of the fact that even though an objectivist metaphysics does in fact generate powerful modes of self-understanding, especially in Western peoples; it prevents other modes of self-understanding, that is to say, subjectivist modes, which can release subjective powers. These powers can affect the economy.

### **THE SUBJECTIVIST TURN**

In many ways, it seems to me that the 'subjectivist turn', which was topical in many presentations and discussions during the World Congress, can help



to overcome the theoretical bottleneck of the objectivist metaphysics of economics. The task is to carefully apply important insights of such a turn specifically to economics, rather than simply encountering it as a general development in philosophy. We must carefully consider why subjectivist economic powers, if recognized by economists at all, have so far been overwhelmingly framed in terms of mere egoistic self-interest – an interest epitomized, above all, by the fictitious figure of *homo oeconomicus*.<sup>18</sup>

As explained above, most economic experts until recently have firmly believed global markets to work according to some fixed, predetermined principles. In order to predict future developments and best utilize them, they sought to better understand those principles by means of ever more complicated models and statistical methods. But it never appeared to occur to them that the search for such principles could turn out to be illusory as such. However, this precisely seems to be the lesson that we ought to have learned from the recent financial turmoil. There are economic situations – possibly more than we are yet willing to admit – in which our search for any causal rules underlying change is simply of no avail, not because we will still lack the right means for understanding such rules, but because the economic development does not follow any causal or mechanical pattern at all. Why is this so? Both in scientific and everyday discourse, we often overlook that every mechanistic account of the economic world has to presuppose the givenness of some data. More generally speaking, any principle of causality necessarily presupposes some conservational principle, which is no more than a special case of the more sweeping postulate of the identity of things in time: within the flow of change, there has to remain something unchanging, something that remains identical with itself, unaffected by the course of events itself. Change remains, so to speak, *a priori* confined to change by invariance. In the case of stock markets, for example, most economic models have simply assumed that share prices, in one miraculous way or the other, change against the stable background of some ‘true value’, say that of real corporations. Such assumptions, albeit only implicitly, remain firmly rooted in the larger framework of a substance theory of value.<sup>19</sup> There is, however, no compelling reason to believe that such a framework is accurate. This is because there are no constant data that we could safely consider as remaining unaffected by economic interrelationships *a priori*. As the ancient philosophical saying goes, *everything* is in constant flux; “there are no such things as given data in the historical world. ‘Given’ here means formed.”<sup>20</sup> Mainstream economics goes fundamentally wrong in trying to emulate classical physics, because it thereby ignores the fact that hardly any invariants simply exist ‘out there’ in the economy as they do in nature. Facts of the economy are, rather, constantly shaped and remodeled, including those whose uniformity economic models take for granted.

Since a strict uniformity is nowhere to be observed at first hand in the phenomena with which the investigator is occupied, it has to be

found by laborious interpretation of the phenomena and a diligent abstraction .... In this work of *interpretation and expurgation* the investigation proceeds on a conviction of the orderliness of natural sequence.<sup>21</sup>

As human beings, we are free to create the foundations upon which objective economic powers can reign or, more importantly, are equally free to offset those conditions. Prior to any mechanical functioning of the economy, we are at work as creative agents, our subjective powers being capable of reshaping or even entirely altering the economy's objective appearance. Entrepreneurs, for example, often act so as to change the fundamental data of the economic system by inventing new products and processes. Thus, they transform the whole future course of economic events in ways impossible to predict in principle by means of any objective conceptualizations.<sup>22</sup>

In a similar manner, even our most common subjective decisions often powerfully offset any conservation principle and, as such, negate the possibility of objective powers to reign over us in the first place. It is plainly wrong to believe that we are simply condemned to obey and, at best, utilize objective economic powers. To the contrary, as human beings, we are also able to rebel against their exclusive authority, as it were, from their foundations 'below.' Our creative potential can in fact substantially alter the course of the economy, not so much from the position of a distant observer but by shaping it in truly new and unforeseeable ways from within. Once we do so, the economy becomes characterized to some measure by indeterminacy, which is impossible to determine within an objectivist framework. This is to say that knowing the future in all its details becomes utterly impossible, because it is not bound to emerge from the present in any predictable way. Creative individual activity severs any rigid connection between the present and the future because of its capability of truly changing a future situation inferred from the present. 'True change' here means that change does not occur against the background of pre-given laws, but includes a variance of those laws themselves. It thus lacks any kind of mechanical accuracy as tacitly presupposed by economic objectivism.<sup>23</sup>

### **THE POSSIBLE DANGERS OF SUBJECTIVISM**

Unfortunately, today we are prone to conceive such true change in negative terms only. This is because it appears to be driven by subjective economic powers defined merely in terms of both insatiable greed and a ruthless reckoning for one's personal advantage. At least such a conception still serves as the point of reference for many economists of the subjective tradition who do not seriously investigate the infinitely varied activities of subjects, but simply take as the "first principle of economics that every agent is actuated only by self-interest."<sup>24</sup> Thus, economics remains stuck in the preconception of norms and laws imposing invariants upon the

economic system. The difference here is that such invariants are not located in the external world, as is the case in objectivism, but within individual consciousness. “Invariants are not to be seriously found ‘out there’; in a real sense they are ‘in here’. ... Our very livelihoods, in the broadest possible sense, are predicated upon invariants whose existence cannot be proven but whose instrumentality renders our actions coherent.”<sup>25</sup> In buying into this conception, we become susceptible to conceiving both ourselves and our fellow human beings in terms of a mere ‘mechanics of self-interest’, wherein we see ourselves as ‘pleasure machines’, who mechanically work towards nothing but our own betterment.<sup>26</sup> Simply put, the danger of such a conception is that subjective economic powers are invariably considered to be determined by certain inner traits, above all by egoistic feelings and desires, that happen to befall us, but which we do not control in turn. Economic forces, in a rather strange fashion, thus appear to be at work deeply within us. They seem to hold sway over all acts of our consciousness, as if the voice of some lawgiver was speaking within us. Put differently, we come to believe that there exists “something below the barrier of consciousness, upon which it depends, that we do not govern and that is in as much foreign to us as is the outer nature.”<sup>27</sup>

While egoism and solipsism are indeed realities that cannot be denied, my main point is that these are not inevitable, and thus should not be considered as indubitable first principles in economic theory. This is surely what has occurred, not only in methodological individualism but also in those powerful images of individual freedom that are common to the West, say, those associated with modern consumerism. Again, I am not denying that egoism plays a leading role in modern market economies; there is ample evidence to suggest that it does. Nor am I saying that methodological individualism does not describe an important trait of our individual nature as we live and work in modern economies; in fact, it does – but it mistakenly conflates it with the whole of our human nature. According to the operative assumptions in such a method, there is nothing people can do about behaving in solely egoistic ways. They might be free to choose between goods in the world according to their presumably inborn desires, but they remain utterly unfree when it comes to changing those desires themselves. They do not have “the choice, when it comes down to it, over the rules by which they make their choices.”<sup>28</sup> Those rules are seen as being fixed *a priori* by our invariant and inborn nature. They are the basis upon which humans act, but which cannot be acted upon in turn.

I consider such a narrow perspective problematic for many reasons, the least of which is its theoretical irrelevance in the economic sphere. Indeed, in the political sphere it erodes confidence in people’s power to change themselves so as to make the world a better place. And this holds true not only for advocates of free market capitalism but also for proponents of state intervention. This is because both groups usually agree, albeit tacitly, with the assumption that people cannot overcome their self-imposed limitations and narrow perspectives by means of their own creativity. While

proponents of state intervention do not usually share the capitalist conviction that such an ‘overcoming’ is normatively undesirable, they nevertheless share the conviction that it is, in any case, impossible. They seek rather simply to keep the disastrous consequences of individualism in check by means of ever more complicated systems of incentives, stimuli and punishments. What they thereby attempt to do is to

alter some of the terms of the equations each man makes when he is calculating his most profitable course of action. But this need not affect the mainspring of the system, which is that men do calculate their most profitable course and do employ labor, skill and resources as that calculation dictated. ... The state may, so to speak, move the hurdles in advantage of some kinds of competitors, or may change the handicaps, without discouraging racing.<sup>29</sup>

### **THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY**

In the present situation, when politicians search for new and more efficient control of financial markets, I wonder whether philosophers should be questioning if such a search is illusory as such. Might we not eventually come to the conclusion that subjective economic powers can never be fully controlled by either market or legal forces because human beings will always find ways to manipulate the rules of the game for their own personal advantage? Can we, more generally put, ever be successful in wisely utilizing egoism to create order? In Germany, there is compelling evidence that this is not far from happening. This is because commercial egoism is threatening to determine what the law is supposed to mean in the first place. The interests of big business, for example, are today often seen as facts that are not to be controlled anymore by law, but rather form the law:

The law should grasp and normativize that which in commerce, technology and science corresponds to our human sense of right. But this is rarely the case. Looking at decisions regarding fraud in commerce, we have to concede that the state of the law’s decisions corresponds only to the views of the commercial class. Literally. It is said that only that can be subjected to legal norms which does not endanger the ‘functioning of business.’ We could cite a pile of similar formulations. The law is hardly a gadfly. . . We must admit that technology and commerce actually determine the law, and not vice versa.<sup>30</sup>

The saying of the ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, seems to apply here: “The more rules and regulations, the more robbers and thieves.”<sup>31</sup> Moreover,

reliance upon the application of law, far from being a means of realizing human dignity, is fundamentally dehumanizing, impoverishing as it does, the possibilities of mutual accommodation, and compromising our particular responsibility to define what would be appropriate conduct.<sup>32</sup>

This is not to suggest that we should forsake, all at once, our efforts to establish a better legal framework for global markets. But it seems to me that philosophy is nevertheless able to critically investigate the fundamental limitations of such efforts, limitations of which especially we in the West might not have yet fully grown aware of.<sup>33</sup> At least, it should bring awareness to the fact that we need to perfect the law; a task that cannot be achieved simply by mechanical replication, restricting humans to the passive reaction to outside stimuli as if they were constructed like unconscious automatons. It is to unleash the powers that can bring about such perfection, eventually allowing us to more fruitfully deal with the distress of egoism, rather than simply to seek ever better and more refined control. What we need to discover here is, above all, a transformative potential, enabling us to creatively change our individualistic attitudes; this may not be achieved by moral appeals to the individual alone.

During the World Congress I noticed how often philosophers spoke about the need to develop a more reflective consciousness, but without considering if, and if so, how, individuals might or could bring about such a change. More specifically, it seems that we all too often and easily overburden ourselves by demanding transformation to occur simply from within our own interiority. While many moral appeals of our present times do indeed avoid falling into the major trap of methodological individualism – namely, that of confining individuality to only certain traits of human nature – they might still remain crippled in its other important premise, namely, the fiction of an isolated person. This is to say that they still implicitly consider each person as the sole creator of his or her own personality – a personality that only subsequently enters into relationships – rather than a personality that is created by relationships. As result, the assumption – false in my judgment – is that the ability to generate change can and should first take place solely within our individual nature, prior to affecting any proper change in the world around us.

One insight gained from the World Congress was that both Western and non-Western philosophies offer still different understandings of our subjectivity; understandings that truly break through the confines of methodological individualism and a subjective freedom all too narrowly defined in egoistic or solipsistic terms. Whether we discuss ‘new challenging directions in philosophy,’ ‘the deep rationality of religions,’ or ‘the future tasks of philosophy in East Asia’ – to name but a few titles of certain sub-conferences at the World Congress – we explored alternative modes of subjectivity that are surely of great relevance for economics, though we might not always have explicitly acknowledged this. I am

speaking of alternative modes here insofar as they essentially go ‘beyond’ both the conception of a pre-ordered objective world order and the conception of a fixed individual nature so as to make us aware of the vast richness of our lived experience, of our living in community. Especially in the light of the world’s religious traditions, as they were insightfully presented by many scholars during the World Congress, it became clear that simply ‘fighting’ individual subjectivity, as if to enchain it in an ever more tightened system of incentives, rules and punishments, is not the only road open to humanity. The more promising path, rather, is to further deepen such subjectivity, so as to explore right below or beneath it, a yet hidden field of lived human encounter, opening up as the true locus of human’s creative power. In what follows, I will try to shed some light on this by turning to Japanese and Chinese philosophy.

### JAPANESE AND CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

In his seminal book on ethics (*rinrigaku*), the Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro fundamentally challenges the liberal assumption of the modern solipsistic ego having grown completely independent from social relationships. He also denies that the former can exist prior to the latter, involuntarily eliciting it through its individualistic activities.<sup>34</sup> For Watsuji, exactly the reverse is the case: society is not established by the accidental contact of previously isolated individuals. Rather, harmonious interaction serves as the tacit foundation of all individual action, including even the most egotistical and distrustful. He writes:

Incidentally. . . all human relations involve trust to some extent. It is not correct ... that the Gesellschaft-oriented relationship is originally based on distrust. It is certain that it lacks the trust relationship peculiar to Gemeinschaft. But a trust relationship peculiar to Gesellschaft exists. Otherwise, no business relationship could arise. Therefore, we are allowed to insist that, in any human relationship whatsoever, *makoto* [intimacy, truthfulness – SG] takes place in accordance with them. ... It is always at some place and on some occasion in the complex and inexhaustible interconnections of acts that truthfulness does not occur. ... However countless these places and occasions may be, *they cannot arise except that truthfulness takes place at bottom.*<sup>35</sup>

Until quite recently, many of us might have assumed that we could safely ground our individual economic activity upon hard economic facts, that is, upon the objective value of money. However, as I have argued above, today’s crisis finally reveals that this belief is illusory. When trading in money, we neither simply put our faith in pieces of paper, nor even in authorities such as central banks. Rather, we put our faith in others, in a delicately woven net of interrelationships with people we do not even

personally know. Prior to any specific economic transaction, mostly below the radar of our attention, there exists the two necessarily manifold cultures of truth and trust; these are ways of 'human encountering' that we take for granted prior to going about our daily business of earning or spending money, shopping for the necessities of life, and saving for our retirement or the future of our children. More generally said, ego's grasping, be it in the form of individual desires or of rational choice, tacitly presupposes nondualistic experiences of interconnectedness. When I go to a supermarket in Germany and buy groceries from nearby fields, coffee from Kenya, a CD-player from Japan, and a shirt made in China, I inevitably find myself connected to myriads of people as well as to the natural surroundings of even the most remote corner of the world. Without necessarily being aware of it, my choices are influenced by their lives and existence, while my choices invariably influence them in turn. Even if I were to relentlessly strive for individual profit only, in doing so I would still tacitly presuppose that I can put my trust in others, as well as that others can put their trust in me. It is this power of trust that we are to count as being the most fundamental in our economic lives. If we intentionally, or unintentionally, kill that power, we would not only sacrifice the richness of communal life, but also the self-actualizing potential of the modern individual, including that which we in the West all too hastily conflate with inborn human nature. Metaphorically speaking we could say:

Just as a fist can only form out of the natural basis of an open hand, the grasping of ego can only assert itself out of non-ego, out of nongrasping awareness. Without this neutral nongrasping ground to arise from and return to, ego's activity could not occur.<sup>36</sup>

To rephrase it: it is nothing but an illusion to think of ourselves as existing in isolation from others. The betweenness of person and person, as the Japanese psychiatrist Kimura Bin once put it, does not simply signify a relationship between two individuals, existing first in isolation and then subsequently in relationship to one another. The betweenness of person and person is, rather, the locus functioning as the source from out of which both others and I arise.<sup>37</sup> Right below the subjective powers of egoism there is hiding an even richer economic power: that of our original spontaneity to live within a nexus of experiential interrelationships. It is, as I have just termed it, the power of trust or, more generally speaking, that of a practical wisdom allowing us to spontaneously interact with the whole of things and our fellow human beings. Only out of the tacit relatedness to our fellow human beings can all the potential to enrich, change and intensify the self-actualizing potential of individuals arise. This holds true even in modern market societies.

The problem with modern individualism, in both its practical and theoretical variants, is not simply that it seeks to free people from their relatedness to others, but that it totally blinds people to discovering their

very own communal sources, insisting upon the fact that no one can become aware of anything beyond the narrow confines of his or her individual subjectivity. Taking the 'I' as indubitable fact, an impermeable barrier to consciousness, it can at best make us aware of the fact that we are tacitly governed by certain primordial relationships. But it seems we can never explicitly account for such domination; its effects remain utterly unintentional. For example Friedrich von Hayek, a Nobel Laureate in economics widely known for his defence of classical liberalism and free market capitalism, openly claims that modern individualism does in fact presuppose rigid rules of communal behaviour – rules which every market participant regardless of culture, tradition, or religion is to blindly accept. We learn, says Hayek, such rules "from each other ... by example and imitation (or 'by analogy'), although neither those who set the examples nor those who learn from them may be consciously aware of the existence of the rules which they nevertheless strictly observe."<sup>38</sup>

Buying into this conception, we cannot possibly make entirely fruitful the original spontaneity of each human encounter so as to allow it to mutually transform our personalities. We cannot come to each new situation with openness to the other – a readiness to be transformed. Neither are we willing to work together with others so as to actively shape the rules according to which we all are to live. Rather, we expect both ourselves and others to forever remain imprisoned in a solipsistic mode of awareness, silently building our lives on a common fund of experience that we all accept as nothing but blind fate.<sup>39</sup> We allow our personality to be passively shaped by the power of customs, rules and regulations dictated to us by the modes of daily living in capitalist societies. We take the laws of action as being "independent of the human will, they are primarily ontological facts rigidly restricting man's power to act. . . [A]ny doubt of their suitability is supererogatory and vain. They are what they are and take care of themselves."<sup>40</sup> We accept, in a word, "the necessity... of the individual submitting itself to the anonymous and seemingly irrational forces of society."<sup>41</sup>

Once more, economic powers are conceived here as something given to humanity; something which we are shaped and created by, but cannot shape or create in turn. And again, to repeat once more, in order to counter such overtly static and passive conceptions of economic powers, we must fortify the world's rich philosophical insights. What is needed here is an entirely new understanding of ourselves as unique economic agents – a uniqueness that is different from the notion of an autonomous individuality that only attends the isolation of the soul from other souls and from the outer world of things and events. According to the Chinese tradition, for example, such uniqueness is to be framed in irreducibly social terms, expressed in terms of one's ever changing roles for, and one's finely-nuanced relationships to, community.<sup>42</sup>



A presupposition of Daoist cosmology is that we are not passive participants in our experience. The energy of transformation lies within the world itself as an integral characteristic of the events that constitute it. There is no appeal to some external efficient cause: no Creator God or primordial determinative principle. In the absence of any preordained design associated with such an external cause, this energy of transformation is evidenced in the mutual accommodation and co-creativity that is expressed in the relations that obtain among things.<sup>43</sup>

Here it becomes obvious that we should no longer presuppose the living world of human interrelatedness as something merely given.<sup>43</sup> The point here is to discontinue the tradition of blindly acting according to fixed customs and habits, since this only amplifies the danger of a “mechanization of the Self, and the death of the species. We must be creative, from hour to hour.”<sup>44</sup>

Mere causal necessity does not deny our soul; it must be a kind of necessity, which penetrates into the depth of our personal Self, as “historical past.” It must be a necessity, which moves us from the depth of our soul. That which confronts us in intuition as historical past from the standpoint of acting intuition, denies our Self, from the depth of our life. This is what is truly given to us. That, which is given to our personal Self in acting-intuition, is neither material, nor does it merely deny us; it must be something that penetrates us demonically. It is something that spurns us with abstract logic, and deceives us under the mask of truth. In opposition to this absolute past, pressing our personal Self in its depth, we ourselves take the standpoint of the absolute future. We are acting-reflecting, and thoroughly forming. We are thoroughly creative, as forming factors of the creative world which forms itself.”<sup>45</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Let me conclude by urging philosophers around the world, each in his or her own language, culture and tradition, to clearly expose, along similar lines, the lies and illusions that reduce the varied and rich powers of our common economic life to nothing but mere causal necessity. Let us, in Kemp’s own words, fight to create a world citizenship and a new world by resisting any economic ideology that explicitly and implicitly demands such a limitation. Philosophers should seek to be free to develop a wider awareness of the deepest economic forces so as to unleash the creative potentials of our practical wisdom. Let us actively encounter the dynamic economic powers that are truly ours: the powers arising out of our being immanent and embedded within a ceaseless and dynamic process of social, cultural and natural changes; a power that we can, and in fact do, continually mold and

create while allowing ourselves to be molded and created by them in turn. By means of sustained dialogue between the world's cultures and religions, philosophers are to further understand how such powers neither simply substitute for the objective and subjective economic powers nor simply resist them. In grounding them, rather, they unlock the potential to truly alter the conditions upon which they are received.

*Alanus University*  
*Alfter, Germany*

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Kemp, as quoted from the program of the XXII World Congress of Philosophy, Seoul, Korea, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term *mainstream economics* here in order to refer to economics as it is usually taught in prominent – and even in not so prominent – universities around the world. It is, in this sense, closely associated with neoclassical economics and other schools that conform to the mainstream language of mathematical models.

<sup>3</sup> Among the proponents of capitalism, Ayn Rand has worked out such a metaphysics explicitly. Cp. Ayn Rand, *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (New York: Signet, 1967). Here, however, I am rather concerned with its implicit forms. For a more detailed analysis, see my *The Bashi of Economics: An Intercultural Analysis of the Process of Economics* (Heustenstamm: Ontos, 2005), especially pp. 36-81.

<sup>4</sup> An excellent summary of this development can be found in Philip Mirowski. *More Heat than Light: Economics as Social Physics, Physics as Nature's Economics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Carl Menger, *Grundsätze der Volkswirtschaftslehre* (Wien, 1871), p. viii

<sup>6</sup> Ludwig von Mises, *Nationalökonomie: Theorie des Handelns und Wirtschaftens* (Genf, 1940), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Within the liberal tradition, deistic explanations of economic powers play an important role. See, for example, the often quoted passage from C.F. Bastiat: "I would like to show the harmony of the divine laws ruling human society. . . I believe that he who created the material order of the cosmos has not denied his attention to the social world order. I believe that he combined the free force and set it in harmonic movement, like the lifeless molecules.... I believe that nothing is more necessary to the gradual and peaceful development of mankind than that we do not cross these tendencies and don't disturb their free motion." C.F. Bastiat, *Harmonies Economiques* (Paris, 1855), citation in German in John Maynard Keynes, *Das Ende des Laissez-faire* (München, 1926), p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (New York:

Prometheus Books, 2000), p. 126.

<sup>9</sup> Paul A. Samuelson, "Maximum Principles in Analytical Economics." In *The Collected Scientific Papers of Paul A. Samuelson*, ed. R.C. Merton, Vol. III (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1972), pp. 2-17.

<sup>10</sup> See the following quotation from Adam Smith: "God himself is the immediate administrator and director. If he ["man"-SG] is deeply impressed with the habitual and thorough conviction that this benevolent and all-wise Being can admit into the system of his government no partial evil which is not necessary for the universal good, he must consider all the misfortunes which may befall himself, his friends, his society, or his country, as necessary for the prosperity of the universe, and, therefore, as what he ought not only submit to with resignation, but as what he himself, if he had known all the connections and dependencies of things, ought sincerely and devoutly to have wished for." Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. 346.

<sup>11</sup> The omnipresent use of mechanical metaphors in economics is brilliantly analyzed in K.-H. Brodbeck, *Die fragwürdigen Grundlagen der Ökonomie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1976), p. 129.

<sup>13</sup> Leon Walras, *Elements of Pure Economics* (New York: Kelly, 1969), p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> K. Nishitani, "Modernisierung und Tradition in Japan," in *Japan und der Westen*, ed/ K. Wehrhahn-Mees, Vol. 1 (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1986), p. 194.

<sup>15</sup> Nishitani, "Modernisierung und Tradition in Japan," pp. 194-95.

<sup>16</sup> Masao Abe, "The Problem of Self-Centeredness as the Root-source of Human Suffering," *Japanese Religions*, Vol. 15 (1989), p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, "Individual and Social Morality in Japan and the United States: Rival Conceptions of the Self," *Philosophy East & West*, Vol. 40 (1990), pp. 489-497.

<sup>18</sup> Here, I am referring to subjective and behavioral economics in general and, more specifically, to the methodological individualism underlying them.

<sup>19</sup> Philip Mirowski, *More Heat than Light* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), chapter 4.

<sup>20</sup> Kitarō Nishida, *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, tr. Robert Schinzinger (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1958), p. 184.

<sup>21</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *The Place of Science in Modern Civilization* (New York: Viking, 1969), p. 162. Emphasis added.

<sup>22</sup> Frank H. Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit* (Mineola: Dover Publications 2006), pp. 13-21.

<sup>23</sup> Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*, pp. 313-17.

<sup>24</sup> Francis Y. Edgeworth, *Mathematical Psychics. An Essay on the*

*Application of Mathematics to the Moral Science* (London: Kegan Paul, 1881), p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Mirowski, *More Heat than Light*, p. 138.

<sup>26</sup> Edgeworth, *Mathematical Psychics*, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich von Wieser, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (Tübingen: Mohr 1929), p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> M. Baumann, *Der Markt der Tugend: Recht und Moral in der liberalen Gesellschaft: Eine soziologische Untersuchung*. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), p. 325.

<sup>29</sup> C.B. MacPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 58.

<sup>30</sup> A. Baruzzi, *Freiheit, Recht und Gemeinwohl, Grundfragen einer Rechtsphilosophie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), pp. 205-206.

<sup>31</sup> Lao Tsu, *Tao Te Ching*, chapter 57.

<sup>32</sup> David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture* (New York: SUNY Press, 1998), p. 284.

<sup>33</sup> Graupe. *The Basho of Economics*, pp. 246-251.

<sup>34</sup> This, however, is precisely the credo of liberalism.

<sup>35</sup> Tetsuro Watsuji, *Watsuji Tetsuro's Rinrigaku, Ethics in Japan*, tr. S. Yamamoto and R.E. Carter (New York: SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 276 and 281. Emphasis added.

<sup>36</sup> Ken Wilber quoted in Joan Stambaugh, *The Formless Self* (New York: SUNY 1999), p. 93.

<sup>37</sup> Bin Kimura, *Zwischen Mensch und Mensch: Strukturen japanischer Subjektivität* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Friedrich A. Hayek, *Recht, Gesetzgebung und Freiheit: Regeln und Ordnung* (München: Verlag Moderne Industrie, 1980), pp. 35-36.

<sup>39</sup> Ludwig von Mises, *The Ultimate Foundation of Economic Science* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2006).

<sup>40</sup> Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action. A Treatise on Economics* (London: Hodge, 1949), pp. 755-46.

<sup>41</sup> Friedrich A. Hayek. *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980), p. 24.

<sup>42</sup> Hall and Ames, *Thinking from the Han*, p. 25.

<sup>43</sup> Nishida. *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, p. 176.

<sup>44</sup> Nishida. *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, p. 208.

<sup>45</sup> Nishida. *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, p. 223.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

# RELIGION, SCIENCE, AND THE CULTURE OF CREDULITY

*JĀNIS OZOLINS*

### INTRODUCTION

A deep malaise seems to exist in Western culture which seems to be characterised not by a robust and practical rationality — a legacy of the Enlightenment, but by a deep suspicion of rationality and a rejection of a metaphysics which claims that the world is intelligible. Post-modernity, of course, has already rejected the possibility of truth being uncovered through the use of reason and opens up a conceptual space which allows thought to proceed unhindered by particular ways of thinking and unburdened by objective theoretical structures; its open-endedness makes relativism difficult, if not impossible, to avoid.<sup>1</sup> It is not, however, Post-modernity upon which we will focus in this paper, but upon that which led to it. Whatever the historical roots of the situation, not only do we no longer live in a post-Christian culture in the West, but also a post-scientific culture. In one sense, this can be seen as simply another way of saying that we live in a post-modern world and, to some extent, that is true: we would not be claiming that we live in a post-religious and post-scientific world, were it not for the fact that we live in a post-modern world. It seems to me, however, that in one sense at least, the situation is not the result of postmodernity. Rather it is the liberalism that lies at the very foundations of Western culture.

By exalting autonomous choice and the primacy of the individual in all aspects of life, the condition has been provided for the descent into credulity and superstition. If every opinion is equally valued, irrespective of whether or not it is based on evidence or rational justification and if there is no means of establishing independent criteria for assessing an opinion, then whether something has been established according to rigorous scientific method or whether it is asserted on the basis of subjective feelings does not matter. The modern Western world, despite its technological triumphs in many areas appears to be in a state of decline. Though much has been written about the state of Europe and European civilisation, this is not restricted to Europe, but at least includes its offshoots in America and Australia. The authority of both science and religion has been replaced by the manipulation of the population by the media and by advertising. In the former case, the media in their unashamed quest for bigger headlines and what will sell newspapers, magazines and advertising space, are completely unscrupulous, in many instances playing the role of a kind of lynch mob

whose main role is to inflame the populace to react in increasingly hysterical ways. In the latter case, advertising sees its main task as persuasion and the creation of need and desire in people to consume the products that they promote. Persuasion is based on emotive appeals to vanity, to the need to feel superior, to insecurity, to sexuality: it is never on an objective assessment of the merits of the product.<sup>2</sup> Reason is ignored. There are, therefore, numerous examples of the growth in credulity.

By credulity I mean a kind of uncritical acceptance of opinions on the basis of their popularity without any critical assessment of them. Once the idea that the aim of intellectual activity in both the humanities and of the sciences is a critical and reasoned reflection on the nature of our experiences of both the inner and outer world in order to separate fact from fiction is abandoned, credulity is all that is left. Of course, there are still scholars and scientists who are critical realists about what they are doing, and so have not abandoned the proposition that what they are seeking is the truth, but this is not a view that is popular among the general population. Neither is it a popular view among philosophers who, under the influence of post-modernity and the linguistic turn of the twentieth century, have abandoned the rigours of metaphysical certainties for the comfort of relativism.

The thesis that Western civilisation suffers from a growth in credulity is supported by a number of analyses of Western Institutions that see them in crisis.<sup>3</sup> Marguerite Peeters, for example, argues that there are clear signs that the West has begun to break down with distrust between government and citizen, a lack of faith in the institutions of society and a loss of democracy. Increasingly, government is by the media, who whip up public opinion so that governments defy opinion polls at their peril. Justice, for example, is no longer a matter for the courts, to be determined through the sifting of evidence, but is increasingly determined by uncritical, hysterical opinions expressed in newspapers. The use of power, unvarnished and unapologetic, to impose a particular view is increasingly a feature of not just government, but also of corporations, banks and other instrumentalities which once provided a service to the public.

Peeters contends that traditional conceptions of society and the relationships between social institutions based on the Judaeo-Christian conception of the human person, the universality of human values and the responsibility that human beings have for the earth, have been replaced by a global governance paradigm which is highly ideologised, rejects traditional values and denounces modern industrial civilization. It seeks to replace these with new global values based on equality, sustainability and participatory democracy. Although few would object to these values, the problem is that the global governance movement seeks to impose a particular view of these principles on society.<sup>4</sup> Whether Peeters is right or not in her analysis or just indulging in polemic, she at least alerts us to the malaise from which Western democracies seem to be suffering, that is, a lack of faith in their own institutions as well as in the power of reason. The recent debate about the new European Constitution wherein no mention is

made of Europe's roots in Christianity is a further indication of a shift to a post-modern relativism.

The pathological lack of faith by Western civilisation in its own institutions has serious consequences. Western civilisation, according to Huntington, no longer believes in itself and this means that there is not only no longer a belief in any universal truth or institution but also a conviction that it is immoral to hold any such belief.<sup>5</sup> There is in such attitudes a rejection, in effect, of the intelligibility of the world and so a rejection of the view that there is any hope of finding truth. The universe is unintelligible and so there are no standards for judging anything, since all viewpoints adopt a particular standpoint which ought not be accorded any privilege over another viewpoint. The consequence of this view leads to the adoption of some form of emotivism. Hume's view that reason is the slave of passion<sup>6</sup> is vindicated: feelings and emotions both determine and justify action. Reason's role is merely to enable the realisation of our desires and passions. As the role of reason diminishes, credulity increases.

### **SCIENCE AND CREDULITY**

Science is venerated in modern society because of the technological advances that have made life easier, safer and healthier, but it is also the case that by and large the general population lacks any ability to understand anything that scientists may have to say. The numbers of science literate people in the population has been falling in many countries, and has probably never been particularly high. Understanding of even basic mathematics, for example, a key tool in science, is notably lacking in the general population and is falling.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, given the rapid advances that science has made in a great many different areas, from astronomy to zoology, and the increasing fragmentation of science into more and more specialisations, it is impossible for anyone to be scientifically literate in the sense of being able to grasp what is occurring in the vanguard of scientific research. This means that the claims made by scientists cannot be assessed by the general public, who must rely on what they are told by experts. This is a serious issue, because there are a significant number of scientific questions with not only ethical implications but also economic and social implications that require assessment and judicious decision-making. Decreasing scientific literacy and numeracy renders this increasingly difficult. When this problem is joined to the prevailing view that any individual opinion is considered to be on an equal footing with a rigorously tested and developed scientific theory, very serious problems arise. In particular, in medical science, where the prevailing ethos is to provide evidential support for claims that are made about the efficacy of treatments, difficulties arise when alternative medicines and natural remedies are sought without adequate testing of the efficacy of the treatments being prescribed. Credulity plays a considerable part in the acceptance, without any critical assessment, of the treatments offered by an increasingly broad range of

alternatives to Western medicine. An important element in this is a failure to recognise any difference between conventional medical treatment and unconventional treatment in the form of alternative therapies. This is not to suggest that alternative therapies might not have efficacy in the treatment of illness, but to contend that it needs to be subject to critical scrutiny in the same way other medical and health treatments are. Alternative medicines and therapies are big business and have moved increasingly into mainstream health care, indicating their increasing acceptance in the community. It is not at all clear, however, what the grounds for their acceptance are.<sup>8</sup> Arguably, therefore, the general public has blurred the distinctions between evidence based medical treatments and those which are not so based and hence accept alternatives in an uncritical and credulous manner.<sup>9</sup>

The problem of a lack of scientific literacy and numeracy is further exacerbated by the lack of clarity with which scientific problems are presented. For example, we are warned that we have to do something about climate change and global warming. It is not at all clear what is meant by climate change. Every day, for example, since it is different from the last, produces a different climate. Just as Heraclitus says, one cannot dip one's toe in the same river twice. As the water flows, the river changes, as the day goes on, the climate is changing, the temperature rises and falls, the wind blows or stops blowing and the humidity rises and falls. Meteorologists are likely to have a clear understanding of what they mean by climate change, certainly they will have a more sophisticated grasp of the term and its nuances, but this will not be so for the general public. A second example is provided by the extravagant claims made by medical scientists about the untold benefits that therapeutic cloning will bring, if only they are allowed to continue their research on stem cells derived from human embryos or from nonhuman-human hybrids. Leaving aside the very real ethical issues involved in the destruction of human beings, the creation of nonhuman-human hybrids and embryoids, the lack of success in this area of research raises considerable doubt about its claims, yet both governments and the general public seem to be prepared to believe that cures are just around the corner. The lack of a critical ability to judge between what is pseudo-science and what is science means that no distinction is drawn between what is supported by evidence and what is merely speculation.

In the social sciences, where a plethora of research methods prevail and problems may be explored using either quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods, the ability to make a critical, rational appraisal of knowledge claims is also much diminished.<sup>10</sup> Quantitative methods, heavily based on statistics, claim that their conclusions are objective, can be generalised to whole populations and so are superior to qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are based on examinations of individuals' lives and experiences, using interviews, personal experiences, case studies, observations and texts and claim that what is obtained is a more textured understanding of the lived situations in which human beings have their being. While it is accepted that qualitative methods do not claim to draw



generalisable conclusions of the same kind as may be drawn from quantitative methods, nevertheless, the insights gained from the examination of a particular state of affairs may be applicable in other similar situations. Mixed methods attempt a middle way, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The problem here is that public decision-making may be based on too slight an awareness of the limits of the research methods and so draw unsupported conclusions.<sup>11</sup> The social sciences have been criticised for failing to provide an adequate science of human nature, but whether these criticisms are fair or not, pronouncements are made as if there was no possible doubt about them. Worse still, few members of the general public are sufficiently aware of the distinctions between the methods of the social sciences or have any ability to assess research conclusions<sup>12</sup> reached using these methods and so naively accept pronouncements from social scientists with remarkable equanimity.

### **IS AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH REALLY INCONVENIENT?**

The lack of critical ability to be able to assess evidence and to make judgements is illustrated by the generally uncritical response to the issue of global warming. Here the question is not usually one in which the boundaries between science and pseudo-science are blurred, but rather a question of how evidence is weighed and interpreted. The lack of critical ability and a tendency towards credulity leads to an unreflective acceptance of global warming and hysteria about how best to handle altered climate conditions.<sup>13</sup> Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, purports to show the imminent danger that the earth faces from global warming and human activity. Although the evidence presented in the film seems to be overwhelming, closer scrutiny shows that some evidence has been selectively chosen and some elements only express half truths.<sup>14</sup> A critical analysis of the program exposes inaccuracies and interpretations of data that are presented as the only possible interpretations. The point here is not that, because there are falsehoods in Gore's presentation, human beings should not pay attention to possible environmental dangers, but that because of the falsehoods, human beings might miss out on how to best respond to such dangers. Popular unsupported myth may make both scientists and the intelligent laypeople blind to different interpretations of the data.<sup>15</sup>

Science itself suffers from a failure on the part of some of its practitioners to take seriously its central principles. That is, some practitioners have no qualms about falsifying results or exaggerating what their research shows. The truth can be inconvenient. The conviction that bad science will be exposed through others repeating experiments has not been always vindicated. Sometimes it can be years before fraud is discovered and, of course, there is no way of telling how much fraud has not been discovered, given the sheer weight of scientific publication.<sup>16</sup> Numerous examples abound of fraud in science and once exposed, these undermine confidence in the pronouncements of science. Worse still, however, the lack

of a critical faculty to distinguish between science and pseudo-science and the further general disregard for the importance of evidence allows even the most half-baked ideas to flourish, since they are not subject to any standards of evidence nor to the dictates of normative theory construction.

### **SCIENCE AND RELIGION**

Drees suggests that many believers don't take science seriously. Others, such as New Age believers, accept science uncritically.<sup>17</sup> He says that he regrets such attitudes and argues that religion needs to take science seriously and adjust religious beliefs to accommodate the new discoveries of science.<sup>18</sup> This is all very well, since it assumes, contrary to Aquinas, that in any clash between science and religion, it is religion which ought to give way. This is simplistic, since whether science or religion gives way will depend on what is at stake. The Galileo controversy, often depicted as a paradigmatic clash between science and religion, was in fact a clash between different views about scientific paradigms. Likewise, the clash between Darwin and the Bishop of Oxford was not simply a clash between an obdurate religious faith and a progressive and plausible scientific theory. The evidence for Darwin's theory simply had not been gathered.<sup>19</sup> Popular culture clearly has accepted a particular view of what occurred and so there is a false picture of a clash between religion and science. It is not always clear cut when religion ought to give way to science. It is possible to draw up examples, such as the claim by fundamentalists that the universe and the earth was created 4000 years ago and the evidence for this is the Bible, a claim that scientists would repudiate as false. Science on the other hand, claims that the earth is at least 6 billion years old and that it formed out of the condensations of gases many billions of years after the Big Bang. Deciding who to believe is not simple, since particular ways of seeing the world take hold and, as Quine says, a total theory of the world does not fall on the basis of one inconvenient falsification of what is held to be true.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, we want to be able to dismiss crackpot theories. For this, a critical reflective capacity is indispensable. Credulity, however, is not restricted to science.

### **RELIGION AND CREDULITY**

Religion and what particular religions actually teach are often unknown to many people. Here there is plenty of room for credulity, with the most credulous perhaps being those who uncritically accept religious beliefs. This is a danger for any religion, giving rise to dangerous fanatics and religious cranks. Richard Dawkins takes aim at many of these in his most recent book, *The God Delusion*.<sup>21</sup> The problem is that though some of his criticisms are well aimed, his argument is virtually non-existent and his lack of any deep understanding or knowledge about religion is disappointing. We shall return to this below.

Unfortunately, the vacuum produced by a lack of religious knowledge and the ability to reason has seen a rise in superstition, prejudice and fear. This is perhaps best exemplified in the rise of interest in so-called New Age religions and a spirituality divorced from any connection to religion. It is plain that the religious is confused with the psychic and spirituality with belief in the efficacy of crystals, for example, to heal our troubled souls — hence a ‘new age spirituality’ that seems to identify spirituality with some form of animism. In a world that has become divorced from religion, the search for meaning has taken a turn towards belief in astrology, in Tarot cards and a higher consciousness that is not God, but a kind of realisation of full human potential. God, if God exists at all, is not the personal God of the Abrahamic faiths. New Age religion, if it can be called that, comes in many different forms and is not easily categorised, though all versions seem to have in common the idea of some kind of universal power that pervades everything and of which everything is a part. This can be God, but equally, can be the Universe or Nature itself. One objection to ‘New Age’ religion is that it is essentially self-centred and limits its horizon to the individual. Thus, healing crystals are used to heal the individual; meditation to release the individual from his or her careworn conscious states so that inner healing can occur; and divination to foretell the future of the individual.

Not everything about New Age religion is to be rejected, for it may lead people closer to God. There is nothing wrong with using meditation, for example, to calm one’s mind and to re-energise oneself. Equally, it is not wrong to listen to New Age music and burn incense because this has a calming effect on a person after a long day at work. A New Age appreciation of the oneness of nature is not to be condemned and a search for meaning is at least the first step towards an authentic spirituality and to an openness to the Spirit of God; however, because it does not encourage critical reflection and a rational understanding of what is meant by a search for oneness, it remains simply an emotional release of some kind. Because of this, its adherents remain prey to false beliefs, to ministrations by charlatans and frauds and in the grip of credulity.

### **THE DELUSIONS OF DAWKINS**

A major difficulty faced by religion is that just as the general public is largely ignorant of the creeds of the major religions, many of its critics are also disappointingly ignorant when voicing their criticisms. This is case with Dawkins, for example, as we have already mentioned. There have been several books rebutting Dawkins recent diatribe against religion<sup>22</sup>, so his arguments have been placed under scrutiny by a number of authors<sup>23</sup> and it is not our intention to repeat these arguments here. It is, in fact, all too easy to show that Dawkins’s arguments are for the most part based on faulty reasoning, ignorance and are lacking in sophistication. This is easily

illustrated by a consideration of a few examples; however, we shall content ourselves with only one.

Dawkins considers various proofs that have been put forward for the existence of God, beginning with Aquinas's famous five ways. It should be noted that prior to proposing the five ways in the *Summa Theologica*, what Aquinas discusses is the place of human reason in relation to faith. Aquinas notes that in the sciences, proofs are not offered for their basic principles, rather argue from their basic principles to other truths, similarly, it is possible to reach other truths by the use of human reason beginning with what God has revealed to us. This supposes that our questioner is prepared to accept that there are truths of revelation, that is, of Faith. If not, Aquinas says, "Si vero adversarius nihil credat eorum quae divinitus revelantur, non remanet amplius via ad probandum articulos fidei per rationes, sed ad solvendum rationes, si quas inducit, contra fidem." ["If our opponent believes nothing of divine revelation, there remains no longer any means of proving the articles of faith through reason, but only of answering his objections — if he has any — against faith."] <sup>24</sup> The non-believer, therefore, is hardly likely to believe a truth that rests on the acceptance of premises which are articles of faith and depend on Divine revelation.

In the second question, where Aquinas considers the question of whether God's existence can be proved, he begins by considering whether God's existence is self-evident and concludes that it is not. What is salient here is that he is responding to the assertion that God's existence is self-evident and argues against this. His interlocutor is a believer. This is also evident from the second Article, where the objector contends that God's existence cannot be demonstrated because it is an article of faith and so not amenable to proof, secondly, since the essence of God is not known, we cannot prove or demonstrate the existence of God, and lastly, we cannot prove the existence of God because His effects are not commensurate with Him as their cause. That is, because God is infinite, His effects are not proportionate to their cause, namely, God and so His existence again cannot be demonstrated. Aquinas argues against each of these propositions, importantly allowing that if a person cannot follow or understand a proof, he or she can accept the existence of God as an article of faith.

In Article three, Aquinas addresses the question of whether God's existence can be proved. The second objection is interesting, for it seems to be put by a very Dawkinsesque figure, who argues that everything in the world can be explained by reduction to nature and similarly voluntary action to human nature or will and so there is no need to claim that God exists. Aquinas's response is to say that God's existence can be shown and to suggest the five ways. He says, "Respondeo dicendum quod Deum esse quinque viis probari potest." This can be translated as, "I reply saying that God's existence can be demonstrated in five ways." The word "probari" does not necessarily mean prove in the sense that it is often taken. <sup>25</sup>

Dawkins dismisses the first three ways as being essentially the same and though it is true that there are similarities, it is not the case that

they are the same, especially if they are considered from a scholastic — or Aristotelian — point of view. The first proof, the argument from movement, depends on an understanding of act and potency, a very significant part of Aquinas's metaphysics. Aquinas says that it is not possible for something to move unless it is put into motion by something which is actually in motion already. This is perfectly sensible, since what is potentially in motion cannot put something in motion because it is not actually in motion. What is not in motion is not able to actualise motion in something else. To modern ears, this suggests a modern interpretation which assumes knowledge about the concept of momentum and also the concept of energy. These are both modern conceptions which were not really properly understood until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As a proof beginning from a particular metaphysical background, the proof from motion is not as easily dismissed as Dawkins seems to think, nor does it reduce to the causal proof.

The second proof is where we find the proof from the need to stop the infinite regress of efficient causes. Aquinas notes that nothing can be the efficient cause of itself, since it would have to be prior to itself, which is clearly impossible. The only solution is to postulate a first efficient cause. This first efficient cause, however, needs some quite special properties, since if it is to be the first efficient cause it needs to have been able to have brought itself in to being. This proof is not based on act and potency as the first is, but on the nature of the causes which exist in relation to one another. If there is no first cause, then neither can we talk about an intermediate or an ultimate cause, since the relationship between causes does not seem to provide a coherent understanding of how one cause can be followed by a sequence of causes. If there is no first cause, there is no way of being able to specify what is the first cause, what are intermediate causes and what are final or ultimate causes. This seems to me to be rather different from the first proof.

The third proof relies on an understanding of possibility and necessity. Again, this does not seem to be very closely related to a reduction to a concept of an ultimate cause, though it is true that Aquinas invokes what has already been proved (in his view) namely that if something is necessarily caused by one thing, that thing itself needs to have been caused by something else which itself was necessary. To break the infinite regress, of course it is necessary to invoke the existence of something which necessarily brings itself into existence. Aquinas is well aware of this. The argument is not a causal argument. Aquinas says that if it was only possible for something to exist, there would be no reason why it should be the case that it exists at all. That is, if there was nothing, there is no reason to suppose that this state of affairs would not continue, since nothing which potentially exists has any means whereby it comes to exist, hence, it would continue to not exist. But there is something in the world, so, since something exists in the world and is necessarily caused by something else which exists, to stop the regress we invoke the idea of something which necessarily exists of itself. Though this is similar to the proof from efficient

causes, it is not quite the same. Again, Dawkins misses the subtle differences which make a difference in our understanding of the proofs of God's existence.

Dawkins has much more to say about belief in God and its irrationality in the remainder of his book, but, as indicated above, falls prey to the irrationality of which he accuses believers. His attempt to show once and for all that God does not exist falls well short of the sophisticated and considered way in which Aquinas deals with the non-believer. The real problem is not so much Dawkins himself, but those who would accept Dawkins's views in the same uncritical and credulous way that he says religious believers accept religious beliefs.

### **PUBLIC EDUCATION, CULTURE AND CREDULITY**

One of the major sources of credulity, particularly about religion and religious faith, is the lack of adequate religious education or even education about religion. The distinction between these is important in countries, such as Australia, in which the public or government education system is secular and non-denominational. In the government education religious instruction takes the form more usually of education about religion, rather than religious education. Parallel to the public education system is Catholic school system, as well as schools established by other Christian denominations. Religious education is taught in these schools, but students do not seem to have a strong knowledge of their faith. Within the public (government) school system, despite the provision for religious instruction, students seem to know very little about the Christian faith or any other faith. In the relatively few schools of other religions, such as Muslim and Jewish schools, it is difficult to make any general observations about the extent to which students leaving these schools have a grasp of the key tenets of their faith. In the main, ignorance to a large extent of what religions actually hold and teach and why they do so grips a very large percentage of the population.<sup>26</sup>

Within the tertiary sector in Australia, despite the presence of affiliations of departments and schools of theology to universities and even of schools of theology within a few universities, their importance in terms of their ability to make a contribution to public debate is quite muted.<sup>27</sup> Theological argument is rarely heard in public and a theological response to particular public concerns and issues is seldom taken seriously. Arguments which introduce a religious dimension to a discussion are simply dismissed as Catholic or Christian and so having no place within the public discourse. In some cases, views opposing politically correct secular ideas are dismissed as the ranting of a biased lunatic. As MacIntyre argues, the idea of an educated public with a common tradition and understanding has vanished, so that public debate in which the protagonists are familiar with the cultural tradition in which a debate is conducted is no longer possible.<sup>28</sup> This is most strikingly evidenced in the lack of understanding of basic

Christian references which were once part of the common culture. What is worrying in the lack of consideration of theological argument is not only the lack of an educated public which understands the subject matter of theological argument even though it disagrees with it, but also the reversion to faulty reasoning. Dismissing an argument on the grounds that it is Catholic, for example, is simply an *ad hominem* attack and a sign of either intellectual laziness or a lack of openness to rational argument. The latter is a manifestation of a form of credulousness, since rationality is dismissed.

Coupled with a lack of knowledge about what religions actually stand for is the appropriation of religious symbols as fashion accessories, but more worryingly, is the decoupling of profoundly religious practices from their contexts within a particular religion. A crucifix becomes merely a fashion accessory when it has become emptied of any religious significance and this occurs when the general public has been rendered ignorant of what such a symbol means. Spirituality, as we have already said, has become detached from its religious roots and as a result, has lost any connection with the ineffable and the sacred. Wholesale ignorance leads to credulity and, as we have already commented, the uncritical acceptance of New Age spirituality as a substitute for a religion based on rationality simply on emotional appeal is credulousness which can have harmful consequences. Contemporary studies of spirituality report that there are almost as many different definitions of spirituality as there are writers about it.<sup>29</sup> Without a connection to religion, it is difficult to see in what sense what people refer to as spirituality is connected to a conception of it within a religious tradition. The attempt to redefine spirituality as some kind of sense of the cosmological or a feeling of oneness with the universe empties it of content and renders it banal. This is a serious problem because a content-less spirituality is no spirituality at all and people are being duped.

In Australian culture and Western culture more generally, there is a well chronicled flight from Christianity.<sup>30</sup> The result of abandoning, for example, a Christian culture, also seems to give rise to a kind of privileging of religious practices of Aboriginals or native peoples and the notion that these religious practices can somehow capture the notion of the Divine more ably than, say, Christianity. The Shaman is considered more of a religious leader than the priest, if present practices are any guide. Of course, if a Christian faith is abandoned, it has to be replaced with something else and often this is a kind of cobbled together set of beliefs which are barely comprehensible and often incoherent.

Benedict XVI, as Joseph Ratzinger, has argued that in Europe, Christianity in particular has been marginalised and that this poses grave dangers to European civilization.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, he writes that dishonouring Christianity and what is sacred to Christians is not considered to be a lack of respect, but rather, it is thought in such a case to uphold freedom of speech to allow Christian faith to be jeered at and for sacred symbols to be shown disrespect. Great respect, on the other hand, seems to be shown to non-Christian religions.<sup>32</sup> There is some considerable evidence of this in

Australia, which is specifically hostile to Christians and Catholics in particular. Catholic positions on various public issues, such as abortion, euthanasia, therapeutic and reproductive cloning, gay unions and many others, tend to be dismissed not because of faulty logic, false evidence or unsound argument, but simply on the grounds that it is Catholic. Religion is forbidden any role in the public domain, so that, in the case of Christian politicians, they are attacked for taking particular positions on the grounds that they ought not bring their religious values to bear on their decision-making on policy matters. On the other hand, those who espouse no religion and have only secular values are not required to similarly leave them to one side in decision-making. It is unclear how decision-making on any policy issue can avoid invoking the values and beliefs of individual politicians, since their perspectives on the world will have been shaped by their experiences, by their upbringing and their personal values.

Relativism has given rise to credulousness and it is evident from the foregoing that ignorance, intellectual laziness, a reluctance to act rationally and a lack of critical judgement have played a considerable part in this. Relativism canonises no religion, but this has the effect not of freeing individuals to construct their own religious values, but of not having any at all. Worse still, because religion is based on a metaphysics which holds that the universe is intelligible, is able to be understood through the power of reason and that the truth can be learnt, the abandonment of religion undermines any conviction that there are any absolutes at all. This is a parlous state of affairs to be in.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have argued that post-modernity and liberalism, though in many ways having a positive influence on human thought by encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own beliefs and values, has, through the rise of relativism, encouraged the view that any opinion is as good as any other across all levels of Western institutions. The Protagorean idea that man is the measure of all things<sup>33</sup> has given individuals licence to think that mere opinion is enough and that since there are no standards of truth, there is no reason to suppose that one opinion is better than another. Sources of information are uncritically accepted, without any assessment of their reliability.<sup>34</sup> The media no longer appeal to rational argument, but rather seek to influence by playing on the emotions of a very credulous public.

Credulity in the public sphere manifests itself through a reliance on intuitions, on emotions and feelings: rarely is there an appeal to reason. This is manifested in credulity about scientific matters, where theories are accepted without any attempt at assessing them. Global warming and climate change, for instance, are uncritically accepted without any recourse to a rational assessment of any scientific arguments. This is not to suggest that there are no serious climate issues to be faced, but simply to point out



the lack of critical judgement being shown by the general public. The same may also be said about the promise of miracle medical cures.<sup>35</sup> The overblown claims in other areas of science are also accepted without critical scrutiny.

Religion and religious faith as a communal activity has also given way to individualism and to a view that one faith is more or less as good as any other. Since reason has been abandoned, this has resulted in the rise of irrational religions, of beliefs and values which are largely cut off from any notion of an ultimate truth which we strive to reach. Dawkins, who one might have been inclined to praise for his spirited and outspoken polemic against fundamentalism and so, in a misguided kind of way, defence of truth, fails because he falls prey to the same irrationality for which he criticises his opponents. Spirituality, for a long time the heart of Christianity, has been appropriated by New Age gurus who peddle a superficial spirituality which is shorn of any connection with its religious origins and so lacks any rationality, relying heavily on feelings of oneness and wellbeing.

It could be argued that faith in consumerism and technology has to some extent replaced faith in religion. Technology and consumerism are not completely unrelated, as new technology, plasma and LCD screens create demand for consumption of these products. One can seriously question whether religious faith has been replaced by consumerism in the capitalist West. There is ample evidence for this; it is the logical outcome of a society which is obsessed with gratifying individual wants and desires. There are, however, some signs, albeit forced on the world through skyrocketing oil prices, that there are more fundamental communal needs to be served before individual needs.

The sudden realisation that consumerism may be driving the planet to extinction may be one reason why there is a realisation that human beings need to work together if they are to bequeath a world worth living in to their children. There is, therefore, hope that reason will prevail over sectional and personal interests and there will be realisation that though there is some truth in Spengler's view<sup>36</sup> that civilisations rise and fall, nations and communities are too closely interconnected for the fall of any civilisation, such as the West, not to affect the rest of the world. This may herald a return to rationality and an end to credulity and selfishness.

*Australian Catholic University  
Melbourne, Australia*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Postmodernism, whatever else it does, rejects the view that there can be only one interpretation of history, for example, that there is only one truth. It denies that there are any criteria for distinguishing between so-called high culture and mass culture, it rejects grand narratives (to use

Lyotard's well known phrase), and hence any privileging of particular ways of doing science. Religion is only one source of spirituality and one religion is as good as any other. Although maintaining a healthy scepticism and an open mind is important, postmodernity falls prey to relativism and it is hard to see how it can avoid self-contradiction.

<sup>2</sup> Baudrillard – despite his postmodernism – points out, rightly, that in modern society, advertising and marketing develop a range of signs which become the language by which we communicate. Worse than this, because of the centrality of language (according to postmodernism) to how we depict and understand the world, these signs structure our reality. The world just is the way advertising and marketing says it is. See J. Baudrillard, “The System of Objects”, in M. Poster (ed.), *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 22. See also P. McLaren and Z. Leonardo, “Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Terrorist Pedagogy,” in M. Peters (ed.) *Naming the Multiple: Poststructuralism and Education* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1998), p. 218. Though it is not intended to take this up here, Baudrillard's nominalism about language notwithstanding, consumerism demands consumption whether or not persons want to consume or not. That is, people go shopping not because they need to purchase the necessities of life, but in order to surround themselves with objects and goods of various kinds. There is something deeply irrational about this.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, M. Harrington, *The Politics at God's Funeral: The Spiritual Crisis of Western Civilisation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983); E. R. Statham, Jr., “Ortega y Gasset's ‘Revolt’ and the Problem of Mass Rule”, *Modern Age*, vol. 46 (2004), pp. 219-226; David B King, *The Crisis of Our Time: Reflections on the Course of Western Civilisation, Past, Present and Future* (Cranbury, NJ: Sasquehanna University Press, 1988); Leo Strauss, “Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilisation”, *Modern Judaism*, vol. 1 (1981), pp. 17-45; M. Nussbaum, “The Clash Within: Democracy and the Hindu Right,” *Journal of Human Development*, vol. 9 (2008), pp. 357-375.

<sup>4</sup> See M. Peeters, *Hijacking Democracy: The Power Shift to the Unelected*, vol. 2-3 (2001), available at [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.14879,filter./pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.14879,filter./pub_detail.asp) [Accessed: 30/6/08]. In essence, Peeters's point is that various global movements, though espousing values that most agree with, because they are removed from any connection with the individual living in a community, seek to impose a particular view of these from above. Global problems, because they need global solutions which must be sought across many states, result in the diminution of sovereignty as well as decision-making remote from the individual. The financial crisis gripping the world is perhaps illustrative. No one nation is capable of solving the crisis and it may be that even nations acting together may not prevent the world sliding into recession. World leaders take their cues from financial officials and various remedies are being tried, but the

individual worrying about his or her mortgage or indeed whether he or she will have enough to eat, has no voice in the discussions and for the most part is not responsible in any way for the crisis which threatens livelihoods and blights futures.

<sup>5</sup> See S. P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), p. 310.

<sup>6</sup> D. Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, edited by E.C. Mossner (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1984), Book II, Part II, p. 379. This role of reason, as subordinate to passion, can be contrasted to Plato's tripartite analysis of the soul, in which reason is the charioteer who attempts to control the unruly horse of passion, while guiding the good horse of courage, prudence and ambition. Reason, according to Plato, is not subordinate to passion, though of course may be overwhelmed by passion. See Plato, *Phaedrus*, tr. and intro. C. Rowe (London: Penguin, 2005), esp. Sectn. 246. Plato also discusses his analysis further in *Republic*, Book IV and *Timaeus*, Sections. 69c-70a. See Plato, *The Republic*, tr. and intro. H.D.P. Lee (Harmondsworth: Penguin; 1955) Plato, *Timaeus [and Critias]*, tr. and intro. Desmond Lee (London: Penguin, 1971). Reason's role is not just to determine the best means to achieve desires, but to also determine what desires are worth pursuing.

<sup>7</sup> For example, in a radio broadcast, Jane Watson, a Reader in Mathematics Education at the University of Tasmania, observed that few adults, much less children, had any understanding of what 'statistics' meant. The concept of an average, for example, was ill-understood. A crucial skill to develop, given the number of opinion polls published in the daily press. See J. Watson, "The need for statistical literacy" at URL <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/science/ockham/stories/s29.htm> (1997) Accessed 2/7/08. For a more recent report on the falling levels of science literacy, see the CSIRO media release of February 1, 2005. "Declining interest in science a concern", At URL <http://www.csiro.au/news/ps2uk.html> Accessed 2/7/08. On the other hand, the PISA survey of scientific literacy, numeracy and literacy, indicated that Australian school students are performing well in these areas. Nevertheless, Australia's relative standing against other OECD countries has significantly declined. See S. Thomson and L. De Bortoli "Exploring Scientific Literacy: How Australia measures up. The PISA 2006 survey of students' scientific, reading and mathematical literacy skills" *OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)*. Paper 2 (2008). At URL <http://research.acer.edu.au/ozpisa/2> Accessed 2/7/08.

<sup>8</sup> The difficulties of conducting research on alternative therapies should not be underestimated, however. Nonetheless, it is problematic that there is little or no research to support its use in the community. See E. Edzard, "Obstacles to research in complementary and alternative medicine", *Medical Journal of Australia*, 179 (2003), pp. 279-280.

<sup>9</sup> Bradley reports that there is little regulation of alternative therapists and that the number of adverse events reported as a result of people using

such alternative treatments has risen considerably. See M. Bradley, "Too many quacks in alternative medicine," *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 31, 2004. At URL <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/05/30/1085855438025.html> Accessed 2/7/08.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, J.W. Cresswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2008), for an outline of research methods used in the social sciences.

<sup>11</sup> For some discussion of the debates about quantitative and qualitative research, see M. Hammersley, "The Relationship between Quantitative and Qualitative Research: Paradigm Loyalty versus Methodological Eclecticism" in J.T.E. Richardson, (ed.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 159-174.

<sup>12</sup> The remarkable ease with which contradictory conclusions on the same question that can be reached is astonishing. In education, for example, debate has long raged about whether single sex schools are better than mixed sex schools without any firm conclusion being reached. One study will show one conclusion, another, the other.

<sup>13</sup> The perils of extrapolating data are well known. See for example, A. Kohler, "The Dangers of Mathematical Modelling", *The Mathematics Teacher*, vol. 95 (2002), pp. 140-145.

<sup>14</sup> Marshall Sahlins, however, warns that sectional interests have no qualms about using scientific uncertainty to create doubts about what the evidence may currently show as way of continuing to pollute and degrade the environment. See M. Sahlins (2003) "Artificially maintained controversies: Global Warming and Fijian Cannibalism", *Anthropology Today*, 19, 3, 3. On the other hand, *Time* magazine reports Judge Michael Burton as claiming that there are nine significant errors in Gore's film, including the claim that sea levels will rise about 6 metres if the ice covering Western Antarctica and Greenland were to melt. *Time*, "Examining Gore's Truths" (29/10/2007), 170 (2007), pp. 14-15.

<sup>15</sup> Data and theory are intertwined in any case. Observation is theory laden, which means that people will see something and then interpret the observation in a particular way. It is not uninterpreted. There are many articles which take issue with Gore's analysis. A quite interesting one is provided by the website Junkscience.com at URL <http://www.junkscience.com/Greenhouse/> Accessed 13/5/08.

<sup>16</sup> See K. Shapiro, "Lessons of the cloning scandal (Observations) (Hwang Woo Suk)", *Commentary*, 121 (2006), 61-65.

<sup>17</sup> William B. Drees, *Religion, Science and Naturalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Preface, p. xii.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> David Stove, for example, takes great delight in demolishing some

of the cherished views of Darwinianism. See D. Stove, *Cricket versus Republicanism and other essays*, edited by J. Franklin and R.J. Stove (Quakers Hill, NSW: Quakers Hill Press, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> W.V.O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", *From a Logical point of View* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 41.

<sup>21</sup> R. Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam Press, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> Dawkins, *The God Delusion*.

<sup>23</sup> See A. McGrath and J.C. McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion? Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine* (London: SPCK, 2007); T. Crean, *God is No Delusion: A Refutation of Richard Dawkins* (Oxford: Family Publications, 2007); D.R. Stone, *Atheism is False: Richard Dawkins and the Improbability of God Delusion* (Lulu.com, 2007); John Haight, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris and Hitchens* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* [hereinafter *ST*], tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, rev. D. Sullivan (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), I-I, Q.1, Art.8.

<sup>25</sup> Fergus Kerr in a discussion of the five ways argues that the five ways ought not be taken out of a theological context in the way that many philosophers have. It is true that the Five Ways depend on the acceptance of certain kinds of proposition, but these are not particularly contentious – namely of the fact of one's own existence and hence, at least the possibility of that which is the source of our existence. See F. Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 58ff.

<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, studies do show that Catholic schools do make a difference. See Thomas C. Hunt, Joseph A. Ellis, and Ronald J. Nuzzi (eds.) *Catholic Schools still make a difference: Ten years of research 1991-2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Washington DC: National Catholic Educational Association, 2004). Though this may be so, this does not mean that students are not ignorant about major beliefs of their faith.

<sup>27</sup> The lack of real interest in religion in Australia is indicated by the marginalisation of religion that occurs in the Academy, where few secular universities have thriving departments of theology. This may not be uniformly the case all over the world. In Australia, there are quite a number of independent providers of theological education, such as the Melbourne College of Divinity which is affiliated with the University of Melbourne, the Sydney College of Divinity which is affiliated with Sydney University, Australian Catholic University, Edith Cowan University and the University of Western Sydney, the Adelaide College of Divinity, which is affiliated with Flinders University and the Brisbane College of Theology, soon to be dissolved, which is presently connected with Australian Catholic University, having previously been connected with Griffith University. Other affiliations also exist, but it cannot be said that theology is at the heart of the secular university in the way in which Newman envisaged theology ought to be in his vision of what a university should be. See J.H. Newman, *The Idea*

of a University, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), Discourse IV, pp. 58-75.

<sup>28</sup> A. MacIntyre, “The Idea of the Educated Public” in P. Hirst (ed.) *Education and Values* (London: Institute of Education, University of London, 1987), 15-36. MacIntyre says in an interview for *Cogito*, published in the *MacIntyre Reader*, that instead of an ever widening educated public we have a semi-literate television audience. See K. Knight (ed.), *The MacIntyre Reader* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998), p. 272.

<sup>29</sup> Wilfred McSherry, Keith Cash, and Linda Ross, “Meaning of spirituality: implications for nursing practice”, *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, vol. 13 (2004), pp. 934–941. In this review of the use of the term “spirituality”, the authors examined some 2000 papers and concluded that the use of the term fell into two broad categories – those that involved belief in God and those that did not. Spirituality was identified as being about the meaning and fulfilment of life, connectedness with others and existentialism.

<sup>30</sup> The number of churchgoers has been in decline for a number of years, as indicated by various census figures.

<sup>31</sup> See J. Ratzinger, “The Spiritual Roots of Europe” in J. Ratzinger and M. Pera, *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, tr. M. F. Moore (New York: Basic Books, 2007), pp. 74ff.

<sup>32</sup> Ratzinger, “The Spiritual Roots of Europe,” p. 78.

<sup>33</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, tr. Robin A. Waterfield (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987). See also U. Zilioli, *Protagoras and the Challenge of Relativism: Plato's Subtlest Enemy* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2007).

<sup>34</sup> For example, what is called common knowledge in many instances, since it relies on information from the media or what is gleaned from the Internet, from websites such as Youtube and Facebook, may be inaccurate, but is uncritically accepted as true. Wikipedia is a very good example of a great idea which unfortunately has gone wrong. The idea that a compendium of information could be collected from a variety of contributors is a very good one. The problem, it has been discovered, is that there is no one vetting the information being placed on Wikipedia, and so no control over whether what is placed there accords with the facts. In one sense, perhaps, in a post-modern world it does not matter whether what is uploaded on the Web is true or false, since the question of what is truth is arbitrarily answered.

<sup>35</sup> A recent exposé in the *The Sunday Age*, highlights the credulity of people to the promises of charlatans with some modicum of scientific knowledge. In this case, cancer sufferers were told that their cancer could be cured through a series of expensive alternative therapies. See W. Birnbauer, “It’s a cancer clinic called Hope. But critics accuse it of preying on the vulnerable and peddling unproven treatments, for \$3500 per week”, *The Sunday Age*, front page, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> O. Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, tr. and notes by Charles Francis Atkinson (London: Allen and Unwin, 1932).





## CHAPTER XXIX

# HUMANISTIC TRADITIONS IN RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY, PAST AND PRESENT

VASILIJ GRITSENKO

In the intellectual history of Russia, all currents of world philosophy may be found. However, Russia has its own philosophical tradition. The sources of Russian philosophy are in Russian education. What are the basic features of the Russian philosophical tradition?

Traditional Russian philosophy is idealistic and religious. It is not idealist in the sense that the term has in Western philosophy. Its idealism consists in an orientation to an absolute ideal, beauty, wisdom – “Sofia”. V.S. Solovjev (1853-1900) called this the *Bogochelovechestvo* (Godmankind, or merger of the divine and human world). This organic outlook, which includes the natural, social, and cultural in a uniform process, is peculiar to N.O. Lossky (1870-1965). In his philosophy, all is subordinated to idea of *Vseedinstva* (universal unity); all serves the perfect ideal.<sup>1</sup> In his M.A. thesis, “The Crisis of Western Philosophy” (1874), Solovjev aspires to a “universal synthesis of religion, science and philosophy.” He believes that science should provide knowledge of the real world; philosophy about the ideal world; and religion about God. In Russian philosophy, validity is always considered as in a condition of crisis. It is accompanied by a high degree of intellectual masochism, and the traditional radicalism of Russian idea: « either everything, or anything ».<sup>2</sup>

The basic problem of Russian philosophy is to find a way to rescue humanity. Russia and the Russian people have been more often been considered as a victim than a rescuer of mankind. F.M. Dostoevsky (1821-1881) considered the Russian people as chosen by God, to «rescue all mankind» from capitalism and socialism. He suggested a return to the ideas of early Christianity, and believed that, with their help, it is possible to achieve love and humility.

One of cardinal problems was to determine the proper approach. Some saw Russia as somehow integrating East and West. P.J. Chaadaev (1794-1856) suggested replacing Orthodoxy with Catholicism. N.A. Berdjajev counted Russia as part of this East-West dynamic. Some supported a Western ideal of progress, such as A.I. Gertsen, N.P. Ogaryov, T.A. Granovsky, and V.P. Botkin in Europe, but with socialism, instead of under capitalism.

Slavophiles included I.V. Kireevsky, K.S. Aksakov, A.N. Homjakov, and N.J. Danilevsky, and they held that Russia has a specific character: Orthodox, autocratic, and nationalist. Even before Spengler, Danilevsky (1822-1885) put forward the idea of the presence of a set of

cultural-historical types: the Egyptian, Chinese, Chaldean or Old Semitic, Indian, Iranian, Jewish, Greek, Roman, Arabian and European – though all of these civilizations are equivalent. In the opinion of Danilevsky, the European type has exhausted the potential. The Orthodox type is capable of embodying the religious, scientific, economic and political and, thereby, providing for the further development of mankind.

V.I. Lenin (1870-1924), being a Marxist and a Communist, considered that Soviet communism was a way of rescue for all mankind, a way of liberating the proletariat through the achievement of communism – the ideal social system arising after capitalism.

The idealism of Russian philosophy finds a continuation in the recognition of unity of beauty, the blessed, and the truth in an ideal. Beauty is moral by its very nature. Both idealists and materialists Agree: “It is wonderful that there is life,” according to N. Chernyshevskiy. “In the person all should be fine...” is A.P. Chekhov’s formula. “Beauty will rescue the world,” is Dostoevsky’s formula. However, Dostoevsky does not have a way of reconciling and achieving harmony between God and the world, the empire of good and the validity of evil. The person is overwhelmed by the God who has created him and by nature. The laws of the nature and the laws of reason are incommensurable. Therefore, the person is doomed to live in a hostile and incomprehensible world. The religion of the person is a belief in the possibility of perfection and the achievement of the maximum moral ideal. The person creates the best world when he or she develops morality in him or herself, and does not answer violence with violence.

L.N. Tolstoy’s philosophy (1829-1910) is not nationalistic and is nonconfessional. Lev Nikolaevich was confident that if each person willed to be moral, better and more just conditions of life would arise automatically. The more obedient the person is, the faster this end will be achieved, as in Buddhism or Hinduism. But from where can we take moral ideals, norms, and principles? The answer is: from religion. Tolstoy has analysed all the basic religious beliefs and has created a new system of morals which has, as its major principle, the refusal of violence or “non-resistance”. The main point is that revolution is not called for, and the center of attention is the person and his or her moral development. Tolstoy holds that God is understood by each person in love and in good things. The ultimate goal of life is inherent in the person, and Tolstoy offers three recommendations: do not do violence to anybody and do not prepare for it; do not take part in violence against others; do not approve of violence.

We can probably realize such a goal only in a society where there is no state or authority, which are the main sources of evil. A peace overthrowing of authority is possible by the evasion of duties to the state by all the members of the society, i.e., what he called anarchism.

In method, Russian philosophy is not so much analytic as synthetic. It aspires to achieve truth – truth which is found through suffering, but with the help of reason. Real truth is not learned; it arises during introspection. Solovjev believes that true knowledge grows out a synthesis of empirical,

rational and mystical knowledge, and their interrelation. The synthetic method of knowledge in life depends on intuition, figurative-emotional associations, analogies, and extrapolations. Lossky recognizes that knowledge of the world is provided exclusively by intuition. Intuition comprehends essence of the world as well as the essence of life, as it covers feelings, reason and will of the person.

The synthetic character of Russian philosophy was most full embodied in Solovjev's philosophy. He tried to create a systematic world outlook which would connect social and religious human life and simultaneously provide freedom of creativity.

In «Readings about Godmankind», Solovjev focuses on ideas of Universal-unity (всеединства) and Sofia (wisdom of the God). Universal-unity is a condition of the unity of the world and the person, embodying an ideal *Suborns* (an organic or spontaneous integrated "spiritual community"), based on a «universal synthesis of religion, science and philosophy». Sofia (Софийность) is the wise coauthorship of God and the person. Solovjev designs a new form of belief – “Theosophy” – an organic synthesis of religion, philosophies and sciences. He sees this as achieving the purpose and sense of the historical process of Godmankind, that is, a unification of the God and the person, by filling the spirit of mankind (одухотворение). The first step on this way is the association of all Christian faiths. «The Theocracy» should arise by the association of the “universal church» and the monarchical state, on the basis of a unification of God and the person.<sup>3</sup>

The new philosophy should connect Eastern understanding and Western knowledge. It should carry out a universal synthesis of science, philosophy, and religion, and provide the meaning of life of the person. Solovjev aspired to unite Christian Platonism, German idealism and scientific empiricism, and create a special philosophy, capable of opening up the riches of the doctrines of Christianity. In the view of Solovjev, the triad of religion, science, and philosophy should be able to reach absolute truth. The absolutely true is not learnt separately by science, philosophy or religion. Solovjev's Christianity focused on the completeness of life.<sup>4</sup>

Traditional Russian philosophy is a philosophy of a life. This characteristic is unlike that found in Europe. Its main subject is the, the person, its experiences and ideas. The rationalism of Russian philosophy is not academic, but moral-practical. “Russian philosophy,” writes A.F. Losev, “was never engaged in anything besides soul, the person, and internal “struggle”<sup>5</sup>. G.S. Skovoroda (1722-1794) focused not on reason, but on the heart. In the heart, the person carries the “empire of God” and “the empire of Evil,” in each person they create an eternal struggle between the is and the ought.

Russian philosophy is not a system of axioms (as in B. Spinoza) or system of categories, as in Hegel, but a living, synthetic vision of the world. Thus there is much literary reflection on meaning of life, and the problems of the human and the divine. In comparison with western scientism, positivism and pragmatism in Russian philosophy has had a broad character.

It is not interested in the world in itself, or nature in itself, or truth in itself. Its calling is to investigate the soul, to search for the truth of life and its meaning.

N.A. Berdjaev (1874-1948), the founder of religious/personalist existentialism, considered the basic principles of human existence to be freedom and creativity, the ability of individuals to act and self-determine. Creativity is the religious dimension, showing the attitude of the person to God. It is the basis of the meaning of life – but also a problem of philosophy. Philosophy should connect theoretical and practical reason, and provide seek integrity in knowledge. Reason seeks to incorporate will and feelings, and avoids the limitations of rationalism.<sup>6</sup>

The major insight of the philosophical anthropology and sociology of Russian philosophy is “Sobornost”. Though the term is found in church language and in the philosophy of the Slavophiles, “Sobornost” admits is more than this. “Sobornost” is not a physical set of people and their spiritual unification, exemplifying a parity of the person and the world, a unity of the general and individual (A.I. Homjakov). It is a principle of the harmony of the freedom and necessity of the person.

This idea, in another form, is expressed in the «anarchical communism» of P.A. Kropotkin (1842-1921). Kropotkin criticizes Hegelianism and assimilates the mechanistic materialism of d’Holbach, Lamettrie, and Diderot. Kropotkin develops a synthetic philosophy -- a unity of physiophilosophy and sociology. On his view, the subject of “synthetic” philosophy is nature and society; economy, politics, and morals. Its tool is the “inductive-evolutionary” method of natural science. From biology, Kropotkin transfers to society “the law of mutual aid” (as opposed to Darwin’s law of struggle for existence). Manifestations of this “biosociological” law can be seen throughout history: in patriarchies, rural communities, republics of free cities, and so on. Revolutions arise as means to remove obstacles to public progress – specifically, a private property and the government. The ideal of “anarchical communism” is the federation of free industrial communities – communes.<sup>7</sup>

In Russian philosophy, the person and its destiny in the world were considered, as a rule, globally. This is its advantage, but it is also its tragedy. In this, we find a tragic perception of time. The perception (recognition) of the world and the person from the point of view of ‘the end of the world,’ served as a basis for looking at role of the person as more than global, and one that goes into the cosmos.

N.F. Fedorov (1828-1903) held that philosophy should not serve as an explanation or a transformation of knowledge into «the project of the best world». From his point of view, the idea of a common cause is an idea of regulation of nature, and management of its blind forces. In this process, science and technology, philosophy, history, and art should find their place. They should remove any opposition between the person and nature, and seek their harmonious interrelation. The person should be neither the slave, nor the master of nature. It should be its reason, its will. It is possible to

control some atmospheric processes, to adjust the seismic phenomena, and to use the geological character of the Earth and the energy of the Sun. It is possible to transform the Earth into a spacecraft of the universe. It is increasingly possible to find ways of prolonging life and overcoming death, and to think about human settlements in space and the development of the universe. The person can become the subject of “common cause” only in the framework of Sobornost, where “personal perfection is provided with the general perfection.” Fedorov believed that “the philosophy of a common cause” can inspire belief in the boundless potential of humankind.<sup>8</sup>

In the writings of K.E. Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935) lies the idea of the atom as a material-spiritual element of life. The entire material world consists of atoms, and thus life is both eternal and yet – in any particular configuration – temporary. The accumulation of knowledge, the painless destruction of all imperfect forms of life, social selection of the most intellectually powerful individuals, public control over the birth rate, and education should promote the creation of an advanced society. Mankind will be released from an excessive corporeal environment by moving into space, and thereafter there will come a life full of intellectual pleasure and free from fear.

One well-known representative of Russian cosmism<sup>9</sup> is A.L. Chizhevsky and, together with the work of V.I. Vernadsky (1863-1945), we see the formulation of principles of a gradual transition of the biosphere into a noosphere. Russian cosmism has formulated a paradigm of anthropocosmism, not on the basis of an opposition between “I” and “not-I”, but on the principles of an optimal parity of the person and nature. This co-evolution of humanity and nature, and the development of a noosphere, is a matter which has come to be associated with the contemporary movement of transhumanism, and demands special attention.

*Krasnodar State University of Culture and Arts*  
*Krasnodar, Russia*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> N.O. Lossky, *Conditions of the Absolute Good* (Moscow, 1991); *God and Cosmic Evil* (Moscow, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> S.L. Frank, *Russkoe Mirovozzrenie* [The Russian Outlook] (St. Petersburg: Nauka) / *Social studies* (1991). № 1., p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> V.S. Solovjov, *History and the Future of Theocracy*, in 2 Vols. Vol. 1 (Moscow, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> V.S. Solovjov, *War, Progress, and the End of History: Three Conversations*, in 2 Vols. Vol. 1 (Moscow, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> A.F. Losev, *Russian Philosophy* (Sverdlovsk. 1991), p. 82.

<sup>6</sup> N.A. Berdjajev, *Philosophy of Freedom. The Meaning of the Creative Act* (Moscow, 1989); *The Meaning of History* (Moscow, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> P.A. Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchy* (Moscow 1920); *Ethics*

(Moscow, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> N.F. Feodorov, *The Philosophy of a Common Cause* (Moscow, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Michael Hagemester, “Russian Cosmism in the 1920s and Today,” in Bernice G. Rosenthal (ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997), pp. 185–202, and George M. Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and His Followers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

## CHAPTER XXX

# BUILDING CULTURAL BRIDGES IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

*JOSEPH C. A. AGBAKOBA*

### INTRODUCTION

It is becoming increasingly clear that it is necessary for the world to have a global ideology that would provide for and project justice and respect for persons and communities as well as provide a basis for the minimizing and resolving of conflicts locally and internationally. In this paper, we shall explore the possibility of social mechanisms (interactive processes) that can aid the development of cross-cultural dialogue and shared trans-cultural beliefs and values (universal values), which will foster inter-communal and international peace and harmony.

We are looking at culture here from the perspective of social action, that is, as an instrument that transforms individuals and communities; culture here is considered as an expression of the guiding principles of action in a society. An expression of a popular philosophy, ideology or world view; culture or ideology in this regard provides a common frame of reference and legal structures for the development of knowledge, ethics, laws, economic, and political and social institutions. To achieve our objectives, we shall address the following questions:

1. Can we have cross-cultural dialogues that can bring about shared or universal values?
2. What is the nature and basis of such values?
3. What challenges and problems are there in the formation and development of universal values?

We shall also try to demonstrate concretely that we can have positive answers to the above questions by uncovering some potentially universalizable values and elements of African culture.

### THE PROBLEMS OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISONS AND UNIVERSALISM: MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

Let us begin to answer the first question by pointing out that modernism was universalist in outlook, but much of its universalism was the universalization and the projection of the values/ideology of a particular class, ethnic group or culture. This constitutes one of the major critiques of modernism by postmodernists, who have pointed out that the creation of

ideas, truth and knowledge are context-based and so confined to contexts.<sup>1</sup> Postmodernism is deeply relativist; it undermines universalism; and, is itself unable to provide a common frame of reference that will help in solving the world's problems, such as violence and conflict, and the integration of peripheral economies into the global economy. In order to achieve one of the major purposes of this paper (which is to answer the first question above positively), we have to formulate universalism in a way that overcomes the major problems and issues raised by postmodernism. We shall address the issues raised in the second and third questions above.

One major challenge posed by postmodernist thought to the emergence of universal values (or a universalistic ideology) centres around the relativity of conceptual schemes, and even of truth itself, which make universal and objective standards baseless and cross-cultural comparisons and exchanges fruitless. The problem can be stated thus: conceptual schemes differ; conceptual schemes determine the meaning and significance of observations and ideas; and they do not only determine what counts as evidence in favour of truth claims but also direct the search for such evidence; truth, knowledge and logic thus differ according to conceptual schemes; there are no objective standards outside conceptual schemes to which we may appeal in order to determine the superiority of one conceptual scheme over another.<sup>2</sup> However, as W.H. Newton-Smith points out, this is based on the erroneous assumption that two people from different cultures, holding contending and different ideologies, theories or paradigms cannot communicate. They, however, can communicate and understand each other via the medium of translation; and given this communication, they should be able to agree on what they mean in respect of a given observation or idea and, consequently, they should be able to have a common basis for agreeing or disagreeing about the truth or falsity of their claims, about consistency and coherence, et cetera.<sup>3</sup> This however raises the problem of the accuracy and reliability of the translation of one language, theory and paradigm into the idioms and expressions of another; and consequently, issues of commensurability and incommensurability.

#### **THE PROBLEM OF THE COMMENSURABILITY OR INCOMMENSURABILITY OF IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS**

The way that the question of commensurability or incommensurability arises depends on whether or not the concepts, notions and beliefs of a system can be adequately captured by the language, concepts, or notions of another belief system. However, we need not worry too much about this type of incommensurability. This is because language is usually sufficiently rich and dynamic to capture the concepts and meanings of other languages. Further, the disagreements between worldviews and ideologies are not so much about differences in meaning, but rather about conflicting and contrasting views.



We should, therefore, be concerned with another type of commensurability and incommensurability; we may call this ideological commensurability / incommensurability. Commensurability (or, as the case may be, incommensurability) refers to whether or not a pair of ideologies/belief systems agree on the kind of evidential supports required to validate/invalidate the claims of an ideology/belief system, including whether or not a given evidential support is required in the first instance and the weight attached to it (for some ideologies, especially religious ideologies, are based on unconditional claims which many classes of events would not invalidate). Debates and disputes can be readily resolved between commensurable systems by reference to shared standards of what counts in support of truth and falsity, right and wrong, et cetera – that is, shared views of evidential support. Belief systems that appear very different may be commensurable, while apparently similar ones may be incommensurable. For example, Christianity and African Traditional Religion, which are very different (for instance, one is monotheistic, the other polytheistic) are commensurable to a large extent. This is because, in African Traditional Religion, the evidence for the existence, power and prestige of a divinity lies in the material survival and well-being of an adherent. This intersects with the part of Christianity that says that a believer will not lack what he/she needs for his/her material sustenance. This to some extent explains the rapid evangelisation of certain parts of Africa, notably South Eastern Nigeria. The missionaries brought material survival and well-being to the people through their schools and hospitals. Education made it possible for people to work in the modern sector of the economy and rewarded people far more than the traditional sector, raising their status in society; hospitals brought medicine that saved lives and restored health in cases where traditional medical and health care were ineffective.

A situation of commensurability allows one ideology to subsume another with minimal irreconcilable conflicts. Commensurability allows for the universalisation of an ideology or elements of an ideology as it goes on to subsume other ideologies. However, the world is not composed of commensurable ideologies alone; there are incommensurable ideologies and these pose greater challenges to the emergence of a universal ideology that will serve humankind. The existence of this partly explains the lack of promise of (what Plamen Makariev describes as) abstract universalism and essentialist universalism – the one projecting a set of context-free, ahistorical values that do not actually exist; the other relying on a metaphysical unity that is not proven, and which does not have any practical value in terms of accounting for or reducing, the conflict of ideologies.<sup>4</sup>

The real problem with incommensurable systems is that material evidence cannot readily lead to the settlement of disputes. Thus, convergence and agreement can only be found in the realm of reason (reliance on intuition – defined here as information/knowledge obtained without recourse to reason or the senses – will not help; because people may have different conflicting intuitions with equal clarity and certainty; in any

case, some of the incommensurable ideologies we have, especially religious ones, are based on conflicting intuitions or “revelations,” as the case may be). We should, therefore, look at the structure of an ideology – that is, its logical or formal structure – to determine: (a) The internal consistency of an ideology and (b) The horizon or radius of consistency of an ideology.

The internal consistency of a system of thought is the basis of its coherence, and this has been the bedrock of the coherence theory of truth. But the internal consistency of a system is only inward looking; it looks at the constituents of a system, not at the system as such – that is, at the system itself in relation to formal possibilities (e.g., How much of reality or humanity, for instance, does a given system, or part of system, represent or describe?; Is the representation or description positive or negative, or neither positive nor negative?). When we address these logical dimensions, we will be able to determine the radius or horizon of consistency of an ideology – and this tells us how much of reality and possible experiences such an ideology addresses or deals with, and how much it leaves out or tends not to address, as well as how consistent it is in dealing with reality and possible experiences.<sup>5</sup>

The wider the radius or horizon of the consistency of a system, the more comprehensively coherent and true (in the sense of the coherence theory) such a system is; the more its appeals to reason; the higher its chances of convincing people on rational grounds. Let us note here that even though an ideology/culture as such may not have a perfect radius of consistency, some ideas that are a part of it or have developed within it, may have a formal structure with a perfect horizon of consistency. Such ideas have actual or potential universal dimensions and applicability.

It is possible to have two different systems sharing the same radius of consistency, that is, the same formal structure but differing in their claims and imperatives. However, it appears that if there is any such pair of systems, they will converge on many fronts – for instance, we can expect convergence on respect of human life, stealing, conservation of the environment, and so on. Such points of convergence could be developed to form the basis of a universal ideology.

### **THE CONVERGENCE OF IDEOLOGIES AND UNIVERSALISM**

As we can see from the foregoing, ideologies can converge in the march towards a universal ideology by: (1) one ideology subsuming another in the case of commensurability – though it should be noted, that the subsuming of one ideology by another is not usually entire, because elements of the subsumed ideology/culture survive in the dominant one, enlarging and diversifying some of its aspects; (2) (especially in respect of incommensurable ideologies) rational persuasion, through embracing an ideology that shows superior consistency in relation to another<sup>5</sup>; (3) locating the compatibility of ideas in ideologies that have perfect radii of consistency and internal consistency.

Apart from the above, the process of the convergence of ideologies and the advancement of a universal ideology, will be enhanced by focusing on and using values that are inherently compatible with or expressible in a comprehensive consistent formal structure. One of the values that are inherently expressible in this form is beneficence – and, thereby, values that directly derivable from this notion, namely, empathy, charity, solidarity and cooperation. The more beneficence is endorsed and expressed (intensively and extensively) by an ideology, the higher the potential for such an ideology to provide the fabric for a global ideology. Thus, the radius of beneficence of an ideology is a major asset in the evolution of an ideology in the convergence process of ideologies. It should be noted that the radii of beneficence and consistency of an ideology determine the inclusiveness and potential for inclusiveness of an ideology, and that the strength of inclusiveness of an ideology is a key factor in its success on the global level.

The mechanism for building a global ideology in our view is communication. Communication, here, involves intense dialogue that will demonstrate the radii of consistency, beneficence and inclusiveness of an ideology/culture; that will bring out the potentially universalisable ideas that express beneficence, inclusiveness and other notions compatible with a global ideology; and that will cause the subsuming, conversance and fusion of ideas. Education is part of this communication process that should aim at the preservation, consolidation and transmission of the beneficial fruits of dialogue and exchange of ideas. There is also a need for the transformation and reform of customs and social institutions to provide the structural and legal basis for the expression of universal values; where necessary.

## **AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND UNIVERSAL VALUES**

Let us now look at traditional African beliefs and values in the light of the criteria set out above. Placide Tempels properly identified the ontological conception of the world in traditional African thought in the notion of vital force(s).<sup>6</sup> The world is composed of forces of different degrees of strength and essential qualities. Hence, the universe is organised in hierarchical order with the supreme vital force at the top and the least vital force at the bottom. Moreover, it would appear that a higher vital force can control and direct a lower vital force. (The Igbo express this notion of force by the word, *ike*, and the notion of the variety of forces by the statement: *ike di no kpu no kpu*, that is, that there are different forces with different capabilities.)<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the belief in the existence of a variety of forces organised in a hierarchical order, Africans tend to believe that lower order forces share in elements of the higher order force. This is akin to John Scotus Erigena's idea of lower order universals contained in or derivable from higher order universals.<sup>8</sup>

Things (both physical and non-physical) are known according to the force they manifest, and the totality of these forces is reality in its entirety. Although we can experience the manifestation of force physically

(for instance, we can observe a lion or a dog showing courage), the power that makes this possible is a non-physical essence that may exist independently of the physical thing; in other words, ultimate reality consists of essences that are like Leibniz's metaphysical point – active, intense, causally efficacious, but non-local; they may however be embodied or disembodied at any time.<sup>9</sup> Thus, beings in the physical world are essentially the same as beings in the non-physical world; hence we have the saying among the Igbo: *ka o di na enu, ka o di na ani*: as it is above (in the heavenly or spiritual order) so it is below (in the earthly or material order).

The ontological view forms the foundation of the African conception of human nature, knowledge, ethics, society, and social action. One idea that follows from the view that – for the self-conscious being like the human being – the world is made up of forces, is the conscious pursuit of self-survival, including especially material self-survival and the pursuit of an ever-increasing forceful manifestation of the self. The more powerful a being manifests, the stronger and higher it is in the ontological order (for instance, a king occupies a higher place in the ontological order than his subjects). This leads to a highly subjective orientation in the conception of human beings, ethics and social action; for instance, 'Do not kill' usually means 'Do not kill a member of your family or clan or community'; 'Do not steal,' means 'Do not steal from a member of your community.'<sup>10</sup> There is no objective order as such, because things, events and social reality are from the point of view of how they increase or decrease the vital force of a person and his/her ability to manifest power; they are good and acceptable in so far as they conduce to survival and the manifestation of power, bad and unacceptable in so far as they do otherwise. We have here a highly subjective, personalised and ego driven view of the human being and his/her place in the scheme of things. One might well think that traditional African thought is at its roots existentialist and Nietzschean.

This type of ontology and conception of human nature explains the foundation of African ethics in blood-bond as well as its particularistic character (that is, its self-regarding focus – the self here refers not simply to the individual, but also the collective self and the community in which the individual is anchored) and its relatively narrow radii of consistency, beneficence and inclusiveness.<sup>11</sup> People from the outside group are to be taken advantage of as one pleases and as circumstances permit; and obviously, such persons are not to be given the same rights and respect as an insider; they can only gain such rights and respect if they undergo some process that will cause them to be 'grafted' onto the family tree or the blood line of an insider; inclusion is thus restricted and difficult.<sup>12</sup> In spite of the above observations, however, there are elements of African philosophy and values that are universalizable, and that can meet our criteria for universal values namely social justice/welfare and collective responsibility.

## **UNIVERSALIZABLE AFRICAN VALUES**

In the search for equity and fairness, the Igbo consider the individual as an instance of vital force, of being, equal ontologically with other human beings, possessing potentials that are ultimately unfathomable. Consequently, unless there is some overriding reason (such as an office, which gives higher responsibility and demands more expenditure), things are shared equally among people regardless of age. For instance, in a polygamous family (and the norm was polygamy in the traditional setting), the distribution of a man's wages or earnings amongst his wives is done on the basis of the equality of the wives, regardless of the number of children each of the wives may have, or the sex of such children, or indeed whether a wife is childless. It might appear unjust for a wife with six children to receive the same agricultural products or money for her sustenance and that of her children as a wife with one or no child. But it is calculated that the woman with six children apparently needs resources while her children are growing; she has to work extra hard and possibly depend on relatives for the sustenance of her children. When her children are grown, however, and are able to help on the farm, she will have more hands working in her farm than the woman with fewer children or no child; at this time she will have many hands contributing towards her upkeep, and she can relax and enjoy the fruits of her labour, while the woman with fewer children or no child will have fewer hands contributing towards her upkeep and she will endure more hardship. It is therefore expected that a wise wife with few or no children will use the surplus that she may have in her more youthful years to help in bringing up the children of her co-wife who has many children, so that when she becomes old and is in need of help, her stepsons and daughters will look after her. The important thing here is that these women are given their rights; they can now act freely to secure or not secure their future. The interesting idea here is that people are given their due, regardless of circumstances. This is interesting because the consideration of what counts in favour of getting more than others, and vice versa, in respect of distributive justice is frequently subjective and arbitrary. And, the application of the wrong principle in distribution can lead to conflict – as could be seen in the Niger Delta area in Nigeria where militants are up in arms against the Federal government for keeping the bulk of the revenue that comes from oil and petroleum; whereas the oil producing areas should take the bulk of the revenue that comes from their land.

In traditional Igbo society, unlike more individualistic societies, people make demands on their relations, especially wealthy ones. A person may expect, for instance, that his uncle should pay his school fees, not on the grounds of charity, but as a matter of his or her right; similarly people expect that wealthy relations should redistribute some of their wealth to their relations and the community; the more they do so, the better. The ideas that justify these views include: (a) that the poor could refuse to obey the laws of the system that produced the wealthy person and, if such a system

collapses as a result, the wealthy man will collapse with it; and (b) that the community relies to a large extent on the poor for its security in the traditional society. The contributions of the poor in this regard were not monetized or rewarded formally in cash or in kind; their reward came informally, via the voluntary redistribution of wealth by the rich.

The acceptance of a social order in which there are poor who perform invaluable security services, makes the compensation of the poor necessary. This is not socialism but, rather, social justice; the poor should have some compensation as a matter of right. We may compare this with the social welfare and the welfare state of the West, which try to provide for low income earners and the jobless. The justification given there relies more on a watered-down form of Marxism – e.g., that the people who participate in production should be given a larger slice of the proceeds of their effort than they received in the early days of Western capitalism and industrialisation. Such economic arguments have little or no place in traditional African societies. However, their reasons for social redistribution of wealth are very important and applicable to contemporary societies.

The practice of the traditional African society above stresses the need to discover and practice reciprocity among individuals, among groups and among individuals and groups. These ideas are captured in the traditional Igbo notion of: *Ife kwulu, ife a kwudebie* (whenever a thing stands in a place or takes up a position, something else takes up a position close to it or stands in a close relation to it; a thing always stands in relation to something else). This saying stresses the need to look at things holistically and in relation to other things, and as comprehensively as possible. From this idea, one can derive the attitude of valuing all members of a society, regardless of their status or potential, because one cannot occupy the space meant for another. In addition, the Igbo say: *Mmaduka* (a human being, particularly a member of the family or clan, is greater or more important than anything else); consequently the human being who occupies the space that no one else can occupy is invaluable.

Based on the above notions, the traditional Igbo practiced some notion of social welfare for the poor; indeed, the word for poverty, *ogbenye*, means, in English, living on the charity of the community; which comes to the same thing as living on dole.<sup>13</sup> However, the idea of dole is regarded differently in the West from that of traditional Igbo society. In Igbo society it is loathed, because of its ontological implications, unlike in the west where poverty is associated with displeasing the gods – the result of sin or an unfortunate destiny. All of these are to be feared, because poverty threatens the full manifestations of a person's vital force; it even threatens the immortality of a person, because immortality lies in having a progeny, but poverty may prevent a person from having many wives and children, and poverty may prevent a person from having a proper burial ceremony. People, then, strove to be wealthy and there was a strong work ethic. If, however, in spite of a person's efforts, including sacrifice to the gods and other spiritual efforts, he or she remained poor, that person could count on

the charity of other members of the community. What the African notion of social justice and social welfare point to are the universalizable ideas of the invaluable nature of the individual, the intrinsic worth of the diverse social roles that individuals are capable of, the value of striving and the need to consider and look for reciprocity contextually and comprehensively, embracing the past, present, and future as much as possible.

The drive to labour within a comprehensive social context at least partly accounts for the African idea of collective responsibility. Traditional African society held the collective (the family, extended family, clan, etc.) responsible for the wrongdoings of all of its members; and conversely the collective could take pride in the achievements of any of its members. The collective, consequently, could be punished for the crimes committed by any of its members, especially if it was a grave offence such as murder. Collective responsibility has been criticised by individualistic thinkers and legal systems. However, the justification for collective responsibility lies in the fact that individuals are a product of the social stimuli they have received. If a person turns out to be a thief, for instance, it shows that those who were responsible for his or her upbringing did not do their work well, and they should, where possible, receive some punishment. Collective responsibility is more attentive to social relations.

When we apply our criteria for a global ideology, we see that collective social responsibility is more consistent with the reality of social existence, and we can conjecture that if a society is structured in favour of collective social responsibility, there will be more encouragement for action in favour of public spiritedness and the public good (and the development of beneficence). This, apart from other benefits, will strengthen the ideological and legal basis of the NGOs and international organisations that have been working for the public good on a global as well as a local basis.

## **CONCLUSION**

We have seen above that it is possible to have a basis for the integration of the diverse cultures of the world. This integration involves the universalization of the potentially universalizable elements in every culture; such universalizable elements can be identified by their formal structure and their potential for beneficence and inclusiveness. We are thus advancing the idea of formal universalism on the grounds that any form of substantial universalism must take the form of a universal, and that such a formal or logical universal cannot ultimately support substantial incompatibility. This perspective thus creates the basis for the unity or convergence of cultures and, at the same time, tolerance and support of diversity in respect of cultural elements that are peculiar in so far as they are not in opposition to the universal foundations of a global ideology or culture.

*University of Nigeria  
Nsukka, Nigeria*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Vernon Pratt, *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 51- 61.

<sup>2</sup> Pratt, *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, pp. 51ff.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Newton-Smith, *The Rationality of Science* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Plamen Makariev, "Cultural Diversity and Philosophical Universalism", a paper presented at the International Conference, 'Philosophy Emerging From Culture', held at the Soongsil University, Seoul, South Korea, 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> See J. C. A. Agbakoba, "Philosophy and Development: Meta-theoretical and Methodological Considerations," in *UCHE*, vol. 11 (2005).

<sup>6</sup> Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), pp. 44-74.

<sup>7</sup> F.O.C. Njoku, *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology* (Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 2002) pp. 128-129. Njoku's objection to Tempels' assertion that force is the supreme value in African thought is wrong. We only need to look the place of force(s) in the thoughts and works of the native doctors, who were the traditional philosophers and wise men, to see its centrality in traditional African thought.

<sup>8</sup> William S. Sahakian, *History of Philosophy* (New York: HarperCollins, Publishers, 1968), pp. 94-96.

<sup>9</sup> Ch. Perelman, *An Historical Introduction to Philosophical Thinking*, tr. K. A. Brown (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 148-150.

<sup>10</sup> C. Okwechime, *Onitash-Ugbo Through the Centuries* (Lagos: Max-Henrie Associates, Ltd. 1994), pp. 65-73.

<sup>11</sup> J. C. A. Agbakoba, "Globalization and Religious Ideologies and Conflict: A Critical Examination and Exploration of Alternatives," in *Contemporary Philosophy*, vol. XXVII, Nos. 1 and 2 (Jan/Feb & Mar/April 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Ben N. Chukwudebe, *Onitsha Quo Vadis* (Owerri: B.N. Chukwudebe, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1986), pp. 3-6.

<sup>13</sup> J.C. Ekei, *Justice in Communalism* (Lagos: Realm Communications Ltd., 2001), p. 142.



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# **THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY**

## **PURPOSE**

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

## **PROJECTS**

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and

look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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