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Diversity in Unity: Harmony in a Global Age

Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXX

edited by
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INTRODUCTION

HE XIRONG AND YU XUANMENG

This short introduction is to expound the general idea of this volume, and to describe the main idea of each paper, so that it may be easier for the readers to catch the theme and to choose the paper to be read in detail, as they like.

As we move into this 21st century we encounter the emerging and characteristic factor of globalization. What previously had been a world divided by natural barriers of oceans, mountains and deserts has now come to be perceived as an integral whole.

This is due in part to the technologies of transportation, communication and commerce, but it is due as well to a corresponding evolution of the human consciousness. As the first humans stepped onto the moon they looked back to see the earth as one, integral and whole. No longer could any place or people be considered wholly alien. All were to some degree united in sharing a common destiny.

Though we are in the age of globalization, we are not very clear about it. It is a very complicated process with many aspects and implications. By now what can be seen as relatively obvious is the human being's economic activity, or commerce according to the same, supposed rule of justice, at least as accepted by merchants. As people consume imported goods, sometimes they need to change their way of life, that is, they begin to consume some goods they did not consume before and they need to live in new ways. For instance, when a peasant previously used firewood for cooking begins to use gas, he needs to work for money rather than for self-support. If some new way of consuming becomes popular, various aspects of the way of life change at the same time, such as custom, tradition, mores, even the way of organizing a state. So we can say that globalization work changes in all aspects of human life, from individual to nations. For Marxism, the superstructure is decided on an economic basis, with the mode of production as its active force. Therefore as globalization goes ever deeper, there is a problem of whether people are willing to give up their old ways in favor of new ways of life. This problem lies at the root of contemporary controversies in ethics, culture, education, etc. and is concentrated in politics. In any case, as globalization advances, whether willingly and unwillingly, and different ideas and interest meet, there is risk of conflict. War cannot be accepted as the way to resolve possible conflicts in the future, instead of the power of weapons, we need dialogue among all walks of people, investigation into the issues in all their aspects, in order to find a proper way to answer the challenges we

face. So the dialogue should proceed not only on the theoretical level, but also in the realm of practice.

It is not surprising therefore that a first set of papers in this volume should be concerned with universalism, a metaphysical issue. It has been an old problem since Greek philosophy as well as Chinese traditional philosophy. Parts of the global whole, willingly and unwillingly left out of the general consciousness, now take up the issue of belonging, articulated in terms of an integrating philosophy termed universalism.

In this light, Part I begins the work with chapters on the horizons of knowledge about universalism by several Chinese scholars. Chapter I by Tong Shijun, "Varieties of Universalism," describes, first of all, the recent debate on universalism as a hot issue in China. It was caused by an editorial, published by a newspaper on May 20, 2008 to glorify some selfless and heroic deeds and the government's urgent and efficient rescue efforts in helping the people suffering from the tremendous earthquake in Sichuan on May 12. The editorial applauded those deeds and efforts as showing "universal values before the world as well as its own people". The article immediately aroused sharp criticism and counter-criticism. Some did not agree in attributing those deeds and efforts to universal values instead of the national values that we Chinese have respected for thousands of years or the socialist values that have been leading the country since 1949; some especially were not satisfied with the implications in the article that these "universal values" had been neglected in the past and that now we finally managed to have them transplanted to China from the West. And others held that there do exist some universal values shared by all the people around the world and we should not take them as the values appropriated by the West. Actually, as professor Tong mentioned, before the above debate, there had been two relevant debates respectively in the "theoretical circles" and "the academic circles". The debate in the first circles focused on how to make Marxism, a universal truth, into the practical one for use in the particular case of the Chinese reality. The debate in the second circles focused on whether we need universalism. To deny universalism, one might cite Confucianism as a sample which had prevailed China for more than two thousand years.

As to the background, professor Tong argued that there are different types of universality, hence, a variety of universalisms. One of the divisions is between religious universalism and secular universalism. Within secular universalism, there can be a further division between universalism based on some (absolute) ideas (universality) and the universalism based on generality. Within universalism based on universality, in turn, there can be universalism in value or in culture. Another division within universality-based universalism is between

“dialogue-oriented universalism” and “monologue-oriented universalism”. Both of them can be maintained in a Euro-centrist way. To avoid Euro-centrist universalism, professor Tong distinguished essentialist universalism from constructivist universalism. To justify constructivist universality, Marx, Habermas and Taylor were cited. He concludes that “there are no universal values that are out there to be grasped and realized, because any value has to be interpreted in particular contexts and to be realized through concrete practices. A value is really universal only on the basis of a fruitful interaction between “*Verkehr*” in Marx’s sense and “*Kommunikation*” in Habermas’s sense, or on the basis of a process of real historical changes that has been made more and more self-reflective and self-responsible by a process of rational communication”.

In Chapter II, “Philosophical Reflection on Universal Ethics: The Case of Confucian ‘Golden Rule’”, by Yu Zhiping, a concrete case concerning universality is discussed. The ethical expression of so called “Golden Rule” is “not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself.” The author holds that from the very beginning the Golden Rule was treated as one of the ways to practice benevolence. It means considering another person’s feeling by comparing one’s own feeling in contacting with others. It was also called Duo (度, measurement), hence has the implication of Li (理, reason or principle) and righteousness (义). The author thinks that, since considering others has to do it with reason and righteousness as well as Duo (measurement), the golden rule is universal and can be externalized. At the same time he clearly understands that there might be different understandings about universality as the characteristic of the golden rule. Two philosophers are mentioned in this chapter, one is Nietzsche, the other is Levinas. For Nietzsche, the author of this paper pointed out, to be a moral person only shows his cowardice and weakness. The so called golden rule presupposes a “behavioral equivalence among people” which is suspicious. Thus, the golden rule was neglected completely by Nietzsche. The author of this paper shows the difference between Nietzsche and Confucius, namely that Nietzsche saw the human being only as a naked person, out of the social life, however Confucianism never viewed a person without his social existence. Compared with Nietzsche, Levinas seems not to be so individualistic, for he stresses the other. For Levinas, self-centeredness is wrong. The relationship with another plays a very important role not only in formulating ethics, but also in founding the basis of philosophy as such. Levinas’s philosophy has a strong characteristic of altruism, which is helpful in rectifying the centrism in modern times. But he stands opposite to Nietzsche too extremely. For, if the other is God, as he says, where is the place for ego? Therefore, what

we need is an appropriate relationship between I and the other. Confucianism's consideration gives us such a sample. By this way, the author of this paper presents a philosophical reflection on the universal ethics.

Chapter III, "Justification of Universalism and Justice," is written by Professor Chen Xiangqin. The main issue here is the relationship between universalism and justice. Chen argues that, in the theoretical arena we have many controversies and quarrels between universalism and relativism, particularism or pluralism. Superficially, the controversies focus on the problems: what is universality? What kind of knowledge, society, civilization, values, ideas or law is universally available in human history? However, substantially, the problem of universalism is a problem of justice. The point of view by this author reminds us that the term "universal" from beginning is formulated as the characteristic of some kinds of knowledge such as mathematics and physics, and whether universal or particular it has nothing to do with human being's interest. But when it comes to the issue of human being, be it of social system, value or ideology, all concern a human being's interest. Therefore universalism has become a big controversy today. Then the author turns to the issue of justice. He raises the question: what is justice and presents two typical ideas of justice: the idea of justice in ancient times and in modern times. By ancient times, the author means the ancient Greece. At that time, justice is the complete virtue or the supreme virtue. Justice is also transcendent, that is, justice permeates and measures all other virtues. As Plato noted, justice represents the human relation with the divinity. It is God's nature which helps to construct the human polis. However, in modern language, liberty is the supreme conception which conditions people's knowledge of socio-politics, humanity and justice. In this context, liberty has become an essential category of justice. The term liberty together with the term quality and right, have been organized into the keystones of the ideas of modernity. But if liberty is the essence of every person, there is a problem in how to establish the social order when people with different wills meet. This is the dilemma faced by liberalism today. This paper tells us the practical background behind the controversy between unity and diversity.

If globalization means the encounter of the peoples all over the world as they exchange their cultures and goods, learn each other's languages, travel in each other's lands, and what is more, unite to answer the common challenges faced by environmental changes in the climate and pollution, or even, as some people guess, the possible invasion from the outside-space, it is all right and no problem. But if globalization means people all over the world should live and think in the same way, or organize their social life in a unique pattern, it's bad, and the

controversies arises under the name of universalism. Universalism, as a theoretical term, is even more influential than the term globalization. It may work not only on the level of the whole world, but also may pervade particular societies. Of course, now more and more people are aware of the mistake of universalism. There are differences among people, even between two persons. Though people prefer to substitute commonality, uniformity for universality, a theoretic problem needed to be clarified as to where comes out the term universality and how it becomes universalism. Professor Yu Xuanmeng's paper, *A Critique of Universalism*, is presented in Chapter IV of this volume. He thinks that only if the above problem is clear, can universalism be dismissed.

The author of this paper traces the term universality to Plato. Though Plato himself never used the word universal, there is no doubt that the idea created by him has the characteristic of universality. As the idea represents the truth of the things, therefore the universal idea has the priority over the concrete things. Later in Kant, universality is integrated with necessity. This means that a concept with the characteristic of universality, since it is without exception, should at the same time have the characteristic of necessity. It is clear that the so-called universal knowledge is not the broadly accepted knowledge, nor that knowledge covers broader areas. Still Kant holds that, we do not know whether the knowledge reached by the operation of these concepts is the real essence of the natural world. Hegel was dissatisfied with Kant's separation between cognition and the essence of the world. In his own philosophical system, not only are the movement of the process of the outside world and that of cognition combined together, but also, the principle or law governing the natural world is available to human society. This unique system of concepts was called by Hegel the system of absolute spirit. It means the history of human being should also obey the principle originated from philosophy of nature. Extending the universal knowledge about nature to the human society, is called by Hegel universalism. From the above argumentation, the author concludes that there is no knowledge which is of universal value. Since value is not a natural thing, but belongs to the human affairs, the term "universal value" is a term of universalism. That anyone tries to make his own value universal is doomed to be failure. There could only be some common value within a certain time and group of people.

To show the mistake of universalism, the author appeals to the way of human existence. For the sake of flourishing of human existence, man should try all his possible ways in life. But universalism gives universal knowledge priority over other knowledge; it limits human being's way of existence to sheer cognition, even a very narrow way of cognition, that is, conceptual thinking. Even if knowledge is helpful to human life, it cannot separate from human practice. To criticize

universalism is to emancipate the human being's various ways of existence in light to the different survival environment. Though the paper does not mention the term globalization, we can construe from it that, globalization, as a substantial event taking place in our time, should not be mixed with universalism.

Chapter V "The World System in Civilization Crisis," by Karim Douglas Crow from International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies. Under the title of Part Two: Crow illustrates the origin of the present world system, points out the crisis, including financial crises, terrorism and so on which we face today; the cause leads to the present world system; and suggests the alternations for the future world system. He points out that the present world system is divided between centre represented by developed countries and periphery represented by developing countries. Superficially the difference between the two sides is caused by economics and technology; substantially it is the result of the culture or ideas of 18th century enlightenment movement. The ideas of human reason and progress drive the European search for happiness. Based on knowledge of history, Crow holds that the present world system previously was caused by military forces. To put it in other words, the present situation is not the unique way of human life. The people in the periphery might have their own way without the imposition of the institute of a market economy. Recall of the past is in order to chart a better future course. This mandates toleration of a variety of economic patterns and cultural modes, and opens the way towards addressing genuine human needs within an emergent multi-polar era.

Chapter VI, "Radical Hermeneutics and the Search for Authentic Understanding," by Tran Van Doan, begins the search for positive answers by directing attention more deeply to a metaphysical level where Gadamer and Derrida meet on the grounds of the classical issue of the one and the many. The issue is originally from Heidegger's criticism of Kant's answer to the question "what is man?" Heidegger goes to the root of the question, whereas Kant is restricted in the level of phenomena. To put it in other words, Kant is in the level of beings (i.e. what it is), and Heidegger goes into the level of the Being of beings, that is, he goes to the root to show why and how the beings as beings. Of course, here Being is human life itself and human being is already being in its surroundings (Da-). This means in turn that human being reveals itself with both Being and the surroundings. It occurs with the event, or to use Heidegger's term, *ereigniss* (appreciation). This means that as human life discloses itself there originally integrates Being and beings. Being and beings are together in the event unique to every human being as it discloses itself. Here we find the origin for the formal logic formula $A=A$, or identity. Starting from this point there come two wings of hermeneutics represented separately by Gadamer and Derrida. For

Gadamer, since human being is already living in the world, the tradition and commonality is included in human life. From another angle, Derrida emphasizes not commonality, but rather authenticity. He believes that each event, each moment is a unique moment of Being's self-revelation. The theme here has more profound meanings, while for this volume, it is clear that diversity cannot be separated from uniqueness in the root of human existence.

Chapter VII reflects the special interesting of Professor Anatolij Karas in Kant's concept of freedom. By the concept of freedom, Kant does not only free human being from the causation of natural law, but also endows them with value. Here imagination an attribution of freedom is noted as having a "productive dimension which allows it (experiment) to integrate diversity and achieve a certain unity." It turns out that the physical thing is transformed into an object with certain value and meaning. The author goes on: Since every one aims at his own subjectivity, which constitutes especially one's own autonomy and independence, and exercises one's own subjectivity, we speak of human communication or shared, common or universal interest.

Chapter VIII, "Unity in Diversity: the Clue to the Age-Old Problems," by Gholamreza Aavani, looks for unity not despite of, but in, diversity. For him, unity is no doubt related to multiplicity. This is an age-old problem. To be sure it is a metaphysical problem, but we should not forget that metaphysical problems have their repercussions and corollaries, so that its universal nature can be the best theme for mutual understanding and the dialogue among civilizations. Unfortunately this profound problem is missed in modern philosophy, partly due to some negligence in attending to the grave issues in metaphysics, partly due to the rejection of metaphysical issues as genuine problems, or to such philosophical presuppositions, as that such problems belong to Western metaphysics which has come to a deadlock or been deconstructed. We can see that at the beginning of philosophy the problem of unity with diversity was an important one discussed in Greece as well as in China. The author cites extensively from Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, to show this in ancient Chinese sage. From the uniqueness of the Tao, there has come into being the world of multiplicity or the variegated manifoldness of phenomena, each of which is a manifestation or a peculiar immanent aspect of the transcendent Tao. One should behold the unity of Tao in every one of its manifested aspects. One attains spiritual integrity through the realization of such unity. The author goes further and argues that, most of the Pre-Socratics held almost the same worldview of Lao Tzu. But due to Aristotle's interpretation of the Pre-Socratics, the above sense is almost lost. To legitimate the above point, the author cites both Heraclitus and Parmenides. Plato's *Parmenides*, which is a very difficult dialogue to understand, is mentioned and explicated.

The theme of this volume, *Diversity in Unity: Harmony in a Global Age*, is actually seeking the way of harmony for a nation and for the world. Chapter IX, “Optimal Harmony Communication and *Waitui* (外推)” by Vincent Shen, goes directly to the point and comes up with the idea of optimal harmony, meaning mutual enrichment, and of *Waitui* (strangification) as the way to reach it. On these ideas, the author cites extensive resources in the history and provides his own commentary. Confucius and Lao Tzu in ancient China are mentioned first. Both of them praised highly the situation of harmony. Confucius even designed the guiding principle for harmony, that is, each one should cultivate his virtue to treat others with benevolence (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), and ritual (*li*). Empathy, generosity and reciprocity are presupposed in the above treatment towards others. Hence harmony could be reached by this way and its enlargement could be realized in family, community, nation and finally in the all under heaven. Lao Tzu expressed his idea of harmony before Confucius. He maintained that everything which comes from Tao is originally harmonious. So there is no need to appeal benevolence, righteousness and ritual. On the contrary he asked people to return to their original way of existence. Though the Confucian idea of harmony is relatively modern than that of Taoism, both of them represent the ideals of the ancient times. Now we are in a time of post-modernity and face many new problems concerning harmony. The ideas of Charles Taylor, Habermas, Husserl and some other modern philosophers are discussed. All of them rendered some suggestive ideas to overcome the conflict, but some shortcomings remain. Taylor, proposed a “politics of recognition”, which leads to the recognition of one another as an authentic individuals with identity, hence to the possibility of reciprocal dialogue. Here every human being is treated as equal and possessed philosophical subjectivity in which the difference and the Multiple Others have not been really recognized. So this author said, “based on the recognition of each and everyone’s identity and mutual recognition, there must be an original generosity to Multiple Others as well as a process of realization of something beyond, a surplus of mutual enrichment.” “...if there is no recognition of and interaction with Multiple Others, there is no ethics at all.” Habermas’ theory of communicative action is a necessary condition in modern society for obtaining consensus. He emphasized the priority of linguistic communication. To safeguard the success of communication, he put four claims for the ideal situation of communication: understandability, truth, sincerity and legitimacy. There are no norms for the above four items. To this point, Husserl, much earlier than Habermas, had proposed the idea of “communicative act”, which is not limited to the linguistic and intellectual level, but includes also the evaluative and practical process. Based on the above observation, the author proposes strangification.

This concept might mean, in the process of dialogue to put oneself in the position of others in linguistic, pragmatic and ontological level. In the process of strangification, empathy and generosity is emphasized for the sake of mutual enrichment. The author believes “that communication and mutual enrichment among all kinds of differences, transcending the limit and conflict of each individual’s and social identity and national sovereignty and security, with more emphasis on the sharing of life values and stories, are the hope for future peace and solidarity”.

Part III in turn carries this into the practical order reflecting the theme of the 2013 World Congress of Philosophy, which sees philosophy not only as theory but as way of life. In this light Chapter X, by He Xirong, delves into the pattern of Chinese values. She describes the change of the Chinese people’s view of value in the past more than thirty years. She divides it in two stages. The first stage begun just as the government made the policy of reform and opening to the outside world which means the leadership of the state gave up the policy of “taking class struggle as the program” and turned to that of “economy as the central task”. It specialized further in turning from a planned to a market economy. The new policy stimulated the autonomy of the people, at the same time the previous view of value held by people begun to change. It could be generalized into the following three aspects: Collectivism largely gave up its role to that of individualism; pursuing benefits more than pursuing righteousness; the sole and unique communist value system gave its way to the value of diversity. As a result, the economy becomes more and more prosperous at the same time there arose some negative social problems. To answer the new challenge, the Party called people to build a civilization in spirit as well as in mater. Then it goes to the second stage which took place shortly after the occurrence of the above negative phenomenon. In this stage, we can see some obvious changes. For instance, the Chinese traditional culture has been assimilated if it accords with the life of modern China. Beside, some of the western civilization also has been accepted. Of course, all of these serve the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Therefore one can see in China a diversity of the value complex with socialist value as its core.

Edward Wamala takes up the theme of harmony in Chapter XI as a way of recognizing both the diversity and the unity of all. He explicates the relationship between the two with many aspects of practical social life in Africa. One thing he mentions is the evangelization of Christian missionaries in Africa. Though St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans had made a clear distinction between the “essentials” and the “disputable” of the Christian faith, some missionaries could not get the point. They took the Latin language and a western musical instrument, the organ, as key and indelible elements of Christian worship. Of course it was difficult for those missionaries due

to their failure to distinguish between the merely contingent cultural elements from the core Christian message, and the failure to recognize and respect diversity in the evangelization. The same happened in the invasion of Africa by the colonists. To build new states, the colonial governor lumped together different ethnic groups, and drew arbitrarily borders. It dismembered tightly knit ethnic groups, on the one hand, and brought together disparate and often loosely related linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse groups, on the other hand. Many African states were built in this way. The consequence of that top-down approach was a feeling of alienation which left many troubles in the process of independence. The author writes: "National unity has been a problem precisely because the architectures of that unity were unmindful of local ethnic sensibilities. In the circumstances, the national unity that has been constructed has remained largely suspicious." The relation between unity and diversity is also a problem in liberal and democratic society. Here the key problem is that the liberal individual must meet other liberal individual who is different from him. To be able to live in a civil society, men need to submit to the authority of the sovereign. There comes the problem of plurality and commonality, i.e. of diversity and unity. This concern did not prominently emerge in traditional ideology, which assumed commonality of value. Today as we live in a global village, the challenge becomes even greater. There come many new contradictions we did not have before, such as between gay support and antigay crusaders, abortionists and antiabortionists, conservatives and liberals, etc. On this situation we can see two different points of view. One holds that man as a rational agent naturally has clear standards of right and wrong, good or bad. Therefore men must adhere to the standards as they set; this allows for no exceptions. Another starts from a tacit recognition of our social cultural diversities and argues for the possibility of a plurality of world views. This author holds for recognizing the diversities and enabling the cultures to meet. This is because on the one hand, diversity is an existing fact; at the other hand we have positive examples of the co-existence of different cultures and mores, such as the United States of America. This paper is very suggestive in that, when the issue unity and diversity is discussed, various aspects of the present conditions in the world are illustrated.

How is unity possible in the contemporary world? Can we have true intercultural dialogue? With such questions we come to Chapter XII, "Hospitality, Diversity and Unity," by William Sweet. To demonstrate that hospitality can facilitate unity in diversity, the nature and special features of hospitality are elaborated. What is impressive is the practical character of hospitality which brings with the host and the guest a corresponding virtue for the one who offers hospitality and the one who accepts it. Here the guest should show his thanks and respect or gratitude

to the host. In turn the host also should show his thanks to the guest for his acceptance, for it confirms that the offer is a proper one, otherwise an offense would be committed. Therefore there is mutuality in the relation between or among parties, an harmonious, beautiful and good atmosphere. The author advocates extending the virtue of hospitality to the dialogue among different cultures. The atmosphere is especially needed in the age of globalization with migrants present everywhere and refugees in some places. The paper stimulates the readers to think more. Actually hospitality as a practical virtue was held not only by Christian. It is impossible for any nation or ethnic group, existing independently, to survive up to this days without exercising hospitality among the members in greater or lesser degree. Otherwise they would fight each other to death. There needs to be discussed why people treat others not so hospitably in secular society, or generally speaking, in modern society (in which people treat each other according to laws based on human rights), or even why there occurs terrorist killing innocent people.

By the title “The Wisdom of Friendship: The Contribution of Western Philosophy for the Dialogue of Civilizations,” Chapter XIII by João Vila-Chã, Aristotle’s view of friendship in *Nicomachean Ethics* is investigated in detail. It reminds us that, for Aristotle, friendship is an inner virtue of human beings combined with happiness and good. Though there are different levels in being a friend of others: for the sake of utility, pleasure and a perfection of one’s own virtue (to let others be happy), still friendship acts as the basis of political life, for as the free association of friends it remains always a political option. What is more, perfect friendship can grows on the basis of the imperfect two. It is clear that the author tries to show the attitude of the western people with the Greek philosophy tradition toward the people of the world that is, to be friends even in the low level at the beginning allows us to enter relations of true and perfect friendship by acquiring a kind of interior consistence of character.

In Chapter XIV by Edward Alam, we read a paper concerning the religious attitude toward the harmony of the recent world. The author holds that religion can have a positive role in leading the world into harmony; at the same time, by taking the promotion of harmony in this age as a vocation, religion itself will have a new paradigm. The main reason for the above point is that, on the analogy of how mind should combine with body and a bride should have her bridegroom, the true, good and beauty exist together in a unique human life. But today they are sought separately in epistemology, ethics and aesthetics. To go beyond the limitation of each one, we need a spirit of transcendence, which is preserved in religion.

The readers might find that the volume covers a relatively broad area: from metaphysics and practice to ethics, as indicated by the title of

the three parts. Not only are the areas different but the points of view may be different. But what all the authors are willing to make contribution to solve the problems faced by human beings in the process of globalization, so as to benefit people around the world.

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PART I

UNIVERSALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

CHAPTER I

VARIETIES OF UNIVERSALISM

TONG SHIJUN

“Universalism” is an old term and the debate between universalism and particularism has a long history. In recent years, in China as well as in the West, the term and the debate have attracted new attention among many people in relation to many events. There are varieties of universalism, however, and we should not come to a conclusion concerning universalism until we are clear concerning the kind of universalism we are for or against. In this paper I am going to make a philosophical analysis of varieties of universalism after a short presentation of the recent debates concerning universalism in China.

RECENT DEBATES CONCERNING UNIVERSALISM IN CHINA

There has been a heated public debate in China since the 8.0-magnitude earthquake in Sichuan on May 12, 2008, which killed at least 80,000 people. The whole nation, including young people, business men, the entertainment circles and other groups of people that tend to incur criticism for moral reasons, reacted to the disaster in a very decent and even heroic way. Two hours after the earthquake, Premier Wen Jiabao was on board a plane to the quake-battered area. A tremendous amount of money was donated and thousands of volunteers rushed to Sichuan. Newspapers, television stations and, especially the internet, brought numberless moving stories and pictures to everybody's home about people helping each other without considering their own loses, in some cases even by sacrificing their own lives. On 2:28 pm of May 19, exactly one week after the earthquake, at the arrangement of the central government, the whole nation stopped to observe three minutes in silence for the ones killed in the quake.

On May 20, a newspaper in the south that had been quite popular among readers, especially among intellectuals, published an editorial glorifying these selfless and heroic behaviors, and applauding the government's unprecedentedly urgent and efficient rescue efforts as redeeming its commitment to “universal values before the world as well as its own people.”¹ The article immediately aroused sharp criticism and

¹ Editorial of *Weekends in the South*, “Sufferings Afflicted by the Earthquake in Sichuan Has Brought up a New China”, in *Weekends in the South* 《南方周末》, May 22, 2008.

counter-criticism. Many people did not agree to attributing these wonderful things to universal values instead of the national values that we Chinese have respected for thousands of years or the socialist values that have been leading the country since 1949; and many especially were not satisfied with the implications in the article that these “universal values” had been neglected in the past and now we finally managed to have them transplanted to China from the West. Many others, however, argued that of course there are universal values and we should respect them like all other nations should, and we should learn from others if these values are realized better in other countries. Somebody criticized those who labeled “universal values” as something “Western” and then either praise or blame these values for being Western. Some added that the rescue efforts may actually show that some traditional Chinese values, such as the idea of “*tian xia*” or “all under the Heaven”, which refers to the sense of obligation to the most inclusive community under the Heaven, the idea of “*ren*” and “*yi*” or benevolence and righteousness, which implies the sense of personal identity that is inseparably mingled with our communities, and the idea of “*jia*” or family, which expresses the most deep-seated root of our moral sentiment, are of universal validity and we should do more to make our unique contributions to the values shared by all peoples in the world.

Before this debate in the public sphere, there had been two relevant debates respectively in the “theoretical circles” among those who argue basically on the basis of the official ideology, and in the “academic circles” among scholars, especially among philosophers. The debate in the “theoretical circles” is about whether and how we should adapt Marxism to the conditions in China. The official position on this issue is that Marxism is our guiding ideology as universal truth, but any universal truth should be expressed in a way suitable to the new situation in which it finds itself and should be applied in a way suitable to the reality to which it is to be applied. The debate in the “academic circles” is about whether and how we should defend “*pu bian zhu yi*” or “universalism” versus “particularism”. Since early 1990s, Heidegger, Derrida, deconstructivism, post-modernism and so on, have been attractive to not a few Chinese scholars and intellectuals with their criticisms of the modern tradition of rationalism and Enlightenment.

A major element shared by these criticisms is a certain form of anti-universalism. In addition to these influences from the West, some Chinese scholars in their efforts to rejuvenate our national tradition argued that universalism is something Western; we Chinese traditionally do not have it and we should be happy without it because universalism proves not only to be theoretically problematic, but also to be practically harmful. According to Zhang Xianglong, a professor of philosophy at Peking University, “universalism is a way of thinking and acting

according to which what is of highest value, whether it is cognitive, ethical, religious, economic, political or other, can be directly expressed as propositions, and this value can and even should always be applied universally, or to be universalized, so as to form a ‘standard’ that is valid to all relevant phenomena regardless their differences.” (Zhang, 2008, p. 307)

Zhang said he was against universalism and for Confucianism as a “non-universalism”, which “does not think that those things of ultimate values can be sufficiently expressed by separate propositions because they are inherently related to concrete and changing processes, and therefore need to be realized in a timely form in historical contexts; they cannot be made up and be extended according to some existing standards that are supposed to be universally valid” (Zhang, 2008, p. 307)

Zhao Dunhua, another professor of philosophy at Peking University, published a paper in 2007 to defend universalism against the trend of particularism he saw in some Chinese scholars’ nationalist and anti-globalization thinking. Whether certain ideas or values are valid or not, Zhao argues, depends on whether they can lead to the improvement of the situations of those who believe them; whether they have really done so should be judged by those who are directly concerned instead of those who made or spread them. Whether some ideas or values are universal or not is a matter yet to be decided or created, rather than something already completed (Zhao, pp. 31-44).

RELIGIOUS *VERSUS* SECULAR UNIVERSALISM

The first distinction I want to make is between universalism in a religious sense and that in a secular sense. In some sense the word “catholicism” just means “universalism”, since it is derived from the Greek word *Katholikos*, which means “universal” (Naomi Schor, pp. 43-4). But the word “Universalism” itself is created to refer to a sect within Protestantism, as the article of “universalism” in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* explains:

(Universalism is a) “belief in the salvation of all souls. Although Universalism has appeared at various times in Christian history, most notably in the works of Origen of Alexandria in the 3rd century, as an organized movement it had its beginnings in the United States in the middle of the 18th century. The Enlightenment was responsible for mitigating the sterner aspects of Calvinistic theology and preparing the way for the reemergence of the doctrine of universal salvation. The Universalists believed it impossible that a loving God would elect only a portion of

mankind to salvation and doom the rest to eternal punishment. They insisted that punishment in the afterlife was for a limited period during which the soul was purified and prepared for eternity in the presence of God.”²

In contrast to “universalism” in this sense, there are many types of universalism that are secular, for example, in international studies (Wallensteen, 1984, p. 243). Universalism is more often a term for philosophical positions, in various philosophical fields, including logic, epistemology, ethics, moral and political philosophy. In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, for example, there is an article entitled “Universalism in Ethics”, according to which universalism is “the claim that ethical standards or principles are universal”. This “claim”, it is said, “is an ancient commonplace of many ethical traditions and of contemporary political life, particularly in appeals to universal human rights.”³

UNIVERSALITY-BASED VERSUS GENERALITY-BASED UNIVERSALISM

The Chinese debate on universalism is focused on universalism in the secular rather than the religious sense. Under the Chinese expression *pu bian zhu yi*, however, the term “universalism” is understood in China by different persons in different ways depending on the particular understanding of the Chinese term “*pu bian*.” This refers both to “universal” and “general” in English, or both to “universality” in terms of the validity of ideas or values and to “generality” in terms of their extension. Zhao Dunhua, the philosopher who defends universalism as I mentioned above, defines universalism as “the belief in the universal applicability of certain knowledge, world-view and value-view” (Zhao, p. 31). Yu Xuanmeng, a colleague of mine at the Shanghai Academy of Social Science, on the other hand, defines universalism as a position that understands the grasping of universality or the universal at the highest possible level as the highest goal of philosophy, even of theoretical thinking in general. This position, he claims, is a typically Western phenomenon that was not introduced into China until modern times, and as Chinese philosophers we should be able to live without it, as did our ancestors. (See Yu Xuanmeng, 2006, p. 126)

² “Universalism”, *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2008).

³ “Universalism in ethics”, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0 (London: Routledge, 1998).

These two types of universalism can easily be mistaken for each other. Hegel, for example, derived the conclusion that Western philosophy is a philosophy of universal validity from the fact that, in his mind, Western philosophy is better than any other kind of philosophy in grasping universality. There is, in my view, a middle term between the premise and the conclusion, that is, the more general a concept is in extension, the more universal is its validity. Here I use the term “general” and the term “universal” deliberately in different senses. In everyday life we usually use these two terms interchangeably, but I think it important to make a distinction between them here. The universality in validity and the generality in extension are two different things. “The Earth is elliptical”, for example, is not general in its extension, since it refers to only one object; but this proposition is valid universally, on Mars as well as on the Earth.

John Rawls made the similar distinction between “universality” and “generality” when he was discussing the formal conditions of the principles of justice. Rawls (2000) writes:

First of all, principles [of justice] should be general. That is, it must be possible to formulate them without the use of what would be intuitively recognized as proper names, or rigged definite descriptions. Thus the predicates used in their statement should express general properties and relations. (p. 113)

Next, principles are to be universal in application. They must hold for everyone in virtue of their being moral persons. (p. 114)

In the following discussion I will refer to universalism only in the sense of the position that is based on the idea of “universality” in terms of the validity of ideas and values, instead of “generality” in terms of their extension.

VALUE-FOCUSED *VERSUS* CULTURE-FOCUSED UNIVERSALISM

There can be, again, two types of universalism that both take universality or universal validity of ideas or values as the key concept. According to one type, a certain value (instead of a certain system of values, which is what I mean by “culture”) is valid everywhere; according to the other, a certain system of values (instead of a certain value) is valid everywhere. We may call the former “value-focused universalism”, and call the latter “culture-focused universalism.” Here I

put aside the distinction between “value” and “norm”, a distinction that is emphasized by Jürgen Habermas (1995, p. 115).

An example of the value-focused universalism is what is referred to by Yu Yingshi, a prominent Chinese American historian, when he said that both China and the West cherish a certain highest universal principle and regard it as being valid for everybody (Yu Yingshi, pp. 26-29). In the West, Yu thinks, it is the idea of justice, while in China, it is the idea of *ren* (or *li* in later periods). Both are regarded to be universal in validity, but on different “value presuppositions” of each culture.

Against Yu Yingshi’s claim that different cultures have different value presuppositions, I call that different cultures have or should have the same set of value presuppositions as culture-focused universalism. The culture-focused universalism is not characterized, in my view, by the argument that a certain value (such as justice, love, liberty and dignity) is valid everywhere, but by the argument that a certain system of values (such as the so-called American values, Asian values or other values) is valid everywhere. A culture is composed not only of various values, but also of a particular way of ranking these values, and a particular set of rules regulating the realization of these values and application of relevant norms. Even if values included in a certain culture are, separately speaking, all universally valid, a particular way of ranking them and a particular set of rules regulating the realization of these values and application of relevant norms is not necessarily universally valid everywhere. Both the claim for the universal validity of the rule of law and the claim for the universal validity of the rule of rites, for example, are culture-focused universalism in the above sense. They differ in their understanding of the status of individuals and the nature of the inter-personal relations, but they may share the same attitude of imposing one system of values on other nations.

Between the value-focused universalism and the culture-focused universalism, of course, there is a close connection. We all live in our particular cultures, so whenever we claim universal validity for a certain value, we may actually be claiming universal validity for a certain culture, a certain system of values, a certain “value presupposition” in Yu Yingshi’s sense, or a certain way of ranking values as I would like to call it.

MONOLOGUE-ORIENTED *VERSUS* DIALOGUE-ORIENTED UNIVERSALISM

Among positions within the category of value-based universalism, I want to pick up the kind of universalism that regards the right to communication as universally valid and then compare it with other types of universalism. This type of universalism is important because it directs

our attention to the fact that any rights, including the so-called natural rights, have to be interpreted in some way before we can say whether they are valid or not, or whether they are valid universally or not, and as soon as you refer to the necessity of interpretation, you also raise the question whether and how a certain interpretation is valid or not. The point is that it is only within a certain community, and through communication among its members, that we can possibly decide whether a certain interpretation of a certain right concerned with the members is valid or not. This type of universalism, which regards the right to communication to be a universal right before any other rights, may be called “the dialogue-oriented universalism”, and be opposed to what we may call “the monologue-oriented universalism”, according to which what counts as universally valid can be decided by some person or some nation unilaterally and monologically.

The typical case of monologue-oriented universalism is the neo-conservative thinking behind the current USA administration’s foreign policy. In several articles published after 911, Jürgen Habermas calls the kind of universalism implied in the American policy towards Iraq “a unilateral universalism”, or the universalism of the old Empire, which interprets the world in the remote horizon beyond its border only from the centralized perspective of its own world-view. This, according to Habermas, is a perspective from which a subject tries to objectify both itself and the world around it and to bring everything under its control. From this kind of perspective, values, even those that will possibly receive universal recognition, are regarded as goods that can be possessed individually and distributed globally. In opposition to this type of universalism, Habermas demands a decentralization of our own perspectives, or a relativization of our own opinions according to the meaning-perspectives of others that share the same equal positions and rights with us (Habermas, 2003). This position is what I call “the dialogue-oriented universalism”.

Interestingly, the two major criticisms made by Habermas of the American foreign policy here, that is, the monologue perspective of an isolated individual on the one hand, and the conception of universally valid values as individually possessable and globally distributable goods on the other, are somehow parallel to his criticism of the basic theoretical design of John Rawls’s theory of justice. Rawls’ theory of justice starts from the so-called “original position”: reasonable representative persons are asked to make rational choices of fundamental social structures behind a “veil of ignorance” that has filtrated out their particularistic status. Habermas (1998, p.52) poses three questions to this theoretical design: “(1) Can the parties in the original position comprehend the highest-order interests of their clients solely on the basis of rational egoism? (2) Can basic rights be assimilated to primary goods?

(3) Does the veil of ignorance guarantee the impartiality of judgment?" The first two of these criticisms are quite close to Habermas' criticism of the American foreign policy. This shows at least partially that the American foreign policy should not only be explained in social terms or by referring to interests of particular classes or groups, for example, but also in cognitive terms or by referring to some particular ways of thinking.

I have discussed Habermas' criticism of Rawls elsewhere (Tong, 2003); here I only want to say that Rawls's universalism is neither purely monologue-oriented universalism, nor purely dialogue-oriented universalism. Considering the importance he gave to the "original position" from which people make their choices behind a "veil of ignorance", we may call his version of universalism a "virtual dialogue-oriented universalism", which stands in between the dialogue-oriented universalism defended by Habermas and the monologue-oriented universalism advocated by the American neo-conservatives.

WEST-CENTRIST VERSUS NON-WEST-CENTRIST UNIVERSALISM

At first sight dialogue-oriented universalism must be against Euro-centrism or West-centrism, since it is against the unilateral way of understanding the meaning and validity of certain values and norms. On a closer look, however, this is not necessarily the case. Here enters the fourth distinction concerning universalism, the distinction between West-centrist and non-West-centrist universalism.

There can be two types of West-centrist universalism. The first type of West-centrist universalism is the one we have just discussed, that is, the position that regards some values to be universally valid from a unilaterally Western perspective. If this type of universalism is West-centrist in the sense that the meaning and validity of something regarded as universal is understood from the Western perspective, the other type of universalism is West-centrist because it regards universalism of any kind, including the dialogue-oriented universalism we mentioned above, as a particularly European or Western phenomenon. The position that regards (even dialogically) some values or norms to be universally valid here is itself seen not to be universally valid. Samuel Huntington, for example, warned of the danger of "clash of civilizations" by, among other things, arguing that universalism shared by nations across the Atlantic is a uniquely Western phenomenon that is not expected to be acceptable to other peoples.

Richard Rorty, as a thinker who is closer to his fellow left-wing European intellectuals like Habermas, is a more typical case here. He regards himself as a "Western liberal intellectual", advocating tolerance,

liberty, equality, especially dialogue, etc. But he thinks that for these values there is no need to have a universalistic or essentialist justification that is beyond particular cultural communities. Any justification, according to Rorty, is made within a particular society. "The pragmatists' justification of toleration, free inquiry, and the quest for undistorted communication", he says, "can only take the form of a comparison between societies which exemplify these habits and those which do not, leading up to the suggestion that nobody who has experienced both would prefer the latter" (Rorty, 1991, p. 29). Rorty regards this position as a central feature of the kind of pragmatism that he defends, which he explicitly calls an "ethnocentric" position: "We should say that we must, in practice, privilege our own group, even though there can be no noncircular justification for doing so. We must insist that the fact that nothing is immune from criticism does not mean that we have a duty to justify everything. We Western liberal intellectuals should accept the fact that we have to start from where we are, and that this means that there are lots of views which we simply cannot take seriously" (Rorty, 1991, p. 29).

Here Rorty, it seems to me, mixes up several different things. By saying that universalism is uniquely European or Western, he seems to be claiming three different things at the same time. Firstly, he is claiming that universalism is a position that can only be found in European history or European culture. Although this is a disputable empirical statement, we can put it aside for the time being because we are not concerned mainly with the empirical fact here.

Secondly, he is claiming that universalism is a position that can only be valid to the Westerners, or those who have learnt to feel and think like Europeans. This position I do not accept. Although from the historical point of view universalism in the above sense (secular, value-based and dialogue universalism) has been more strongly and more systematically argued for and more systematically institutionalized in the West, the justifications that have been provided for universalism are not valid only to the West. On the contrary, these justifications can also be made on the basis of some national resources in the non-Western world, as well as on the basis of the arguments that people of all nations would have no problem accepting.

Thirdly, when he claims that universalism is valid only to "Westerners" or "Europeans", he is actually claiming that it is valid to them at a particular moment, since "Westerners" or "Europeans" at different ages are quite different from each other. But a universalistic justification for ideas or values like toleration, free inquiry, and the quest for undistorted communication is important not only in order to show their trans-cultural validity, but also for the sake of the Western efforts of internal critique of itself. Actually, the seemingly particularistic

“politics of recognition” or “identity politics” can itself be regarded as a variety of the universalistic “politics of liberation”;⁴ thinkers like Michael Walzer and Charles Taylor argue for pluralism and against liberal universalism without giving up, and even by resorting to, universalism in various forms.⁵ I will go back to Charles Taylor later.

ESSENTIALIST *VERSUS* CONSTRUCTIVIST UNIVERSALISM

Universalism is criticized very often together with essentialism, and a certain version of universalism is often defended together with some justification of essentialism as well.⁶ Essentialism is the position according to which each culture and concept has its inherent nature, so that “Western culture” is inherently different from “Chinese culture” by its nature, “femaleness” is inherently different from “maleness” by its nature, and so on. This position neglects the fact that both cultures and concepts are constructed in the process of history, so that if one wants to defend universalism at all, one should also draw a clear line between universalism and essentialism. Universalism, in my view, is not necessarily essentialist; it may well be constructivist.

In the history of ideas, some thinkers can be regarded as respectively representatives of the essentialist universalism and representatives of the constructivist universalism. The former tends to base universalism on objective facts, while the latter tends to base universalism on human activities or practices.

Hegel’s universalism may be seen as a case of the position that regards universalism as related to metaphysical facts. The universal, according to Hegel, develops itself through a series of particular

⁴ Because, as Charles Taylor says, “Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.” See Charles Taylor, 1994, p. 25. Also see John Higham, pp. 195-219.

⁵ As Michael Walzer in his lecture on “Nation and Universe” (The Tanner Lectures on Human Values delivered at Brasenose College, Oxford University, May 1 and 8, 1989) distinguishes two types of universalism, one “holds that there is one law, one justice, one correct understanding of the good life or the good society or the good regime, one salvation, one messiah, one millennium for all humanity”, and the other holds that liberation is a particular experience that is repeated for each oppressed people. Walzer calls the first type of universalism the “covering-law universalism”, and the second type the “reiterative universalism”, thinking that the latter contains the acceptance of pluralism and particularism.

⁶ An example is Martha C. Nussbaum, “Social Justice and Universalism: In Defense of an Aristotelian Account of Human Functioning”, *Modern Philosophy*, Vol. 90, Supplement (May, 1993).

moments; in his philosophy of history, the universal behind all civilizations and historical events is the so-called “*Weltgeist*” or “Reason”. World history as a “universal history” is a process composed of various stages, of which each particular stage, as a particular moment of “Reason”, displays itself in a particular sphere of history: oriental, ancient Greece, Rome and German. Hegel thinks that only at the last stage does the *Weltgeist* reach a stage that really suits it at last. At this stage, world history as universal history is completed. Development of other regions in the world, according to Hegel, is not the development of the native civilizations in these regions, but at most a realization of what has been achieved in Germany. From this point of view, obviously, modernization in non-Western societies can only be a process of Westernization, or even Germanization. At the level of metaphysics or philosophy of history, Hegel is a universalist; at the level of theory of social development (of which modernity is one of the stages), however, Hegel is a Euro-centrist, and a particularist.

The theories of social evolution of the post-Hegelian nineteenth century and the theories of modernization in mid-twentieth century may be regarded as representatives of the position that sees universalism as related to empirical facts. “Instead of stressing the specificity of European civilization, or European modernity,” S.N. Eisenstadt said, “these studies assumed that the development of modernity constituted the apogee of the evolutionary potential of mankind, the kernels of which are in principle to be found in most human societies. Hence they asked for the conditions which can facilitate—or impede—the development of such modernization, in principle, in all human societies” (Eisenstadt, p. 3). To some degree these studies, like Hegel’s, actually take something European as something universal, or as Eisenstadt continues to say that “they implicitly took for granted that the European (and perhaps also the American) experience constitutes the major paradigm of such a modern society and civilization” (Eisenstadt, p. 3). From this presupposition, they “evaluated societies by various indices of modernity, development, or modernization, and tried to determine to what extent the societies studied approximated to the model or models of modern industrial society or else what impeded their advance in terms of these indices. The possibility that a modern social order might develop from within different societies was recognized and explored” (Eisenstadt, p. 3).

Both these positions, which take universality as something completed, were criticized by thinkers belonging to the intellectual school of historicism. Historicism put history above Reason, and historical consciousness above metaphysical ideas or scientific knowledge. Wilhelm Dilthey is a major advocator of historicism, but it is noticeable that he is actually not very satisfied with historicism

because he thinks that when we assemble what is regarded by historicism as relative “it seems to work towards dissolution, scepticism and impotent subjectivity” (Dilthey, p. 121). In order to overcome this tendency, Dilthey says that, the nineteenth century put forward a serious idea to us: “What is relative must be related more profoundly with what is universally valid. The empathic understanding of the whole past must become a power for shaping the future” (Dilthey, p. 121). Hegel was talking about the relation between the universality (the universal) and particularity (the particular) in the realm of concepts. Theories of modernization are about the relation between the particular stages of development and the universal laws of development in the realm of history. Dilthey was talking about the relation between what is actual and what is possible, or the relation between what is completed and what is to be constructed. With regards to reality, there exist different cultures and value systems, of which it is hard to make generalizations. With regards to possibility, however, hermeneutic efforts can help us break up barriers between different cultures and value systems and strive for mutual understanding in the direction of a universally valid goal. Dilthey writes: “Historical consciousness itself must contain rules and powers to help us confront the past and turn freely and independently towards a unitary goal of human culture” (Dilthey, p. 121). This kind of universalism does not recognize invariable laws, either in a metaphysical vein or in a scientific vein. What is universal is not pre-given or preset, but a result of free and independent efforts of criticism, interpretation and intellectual synthesis in the future.

Whether influenced by Dilthey or not, some contemporary thinkers can be regarded as Dilthey’s successors in the sense that they also see universalism not as a pre-given fact, but as something that is possible now and will be constructed through the practices of communication and understanding in the future. Jürgen Habermas, as we mentioned above, is one case. Charles Taylor, who is well-known for his connection with the tradition of hermeneutics and historicism, is a more typical case of the position that regards universalism as related to human efforts of historical construction. A major argument that Taylor made against the political philosophy of liberalism and what he called “acultural” theories of modernization is that they both emphasize too much the universality among cultures, but neglect their particularities. In the debate between universalism and particularism, Taylor’s “communitarian” position and his idea of “multiple modernities” both seem to be closer to particularism. But the context in which Taylor advocated his seemingly particularistic view is the Western society in which both value universalism and cultural universalism are widely accepted. So even when he took pains to argue for the importance of particular identities and of multiple modernities, he actually presupposed

a certain commitment to some basic cross-cultural consensuses and principles.

Though to many people Taylor seems to be a defender of any nation's "right to survival of culture", he does not think that those cultures that have the practices of demanding a widow to be buried alive together with her dead husband, of killing unwanted female babies, or of slavery, should be equally defended and protected. Like Habermas, Taylor makes a distinction between "norms" and "values," and thinks that different cultures can reach a certain kind of "overlapping consensus" (in Rawls' sense) on some action norms (Taylor, 1999, p. 125). Taylor explicitly accepts universalism as one of the important features of modern cultures, with the premise that "all human beings count and have rights" (Taylor 1997, p. 161), and says that "[i]t is hard not to read these as gains" (Taylor 1997, p. 161). Taylor not only accepts universalism with regards to fundamental human standards as the bottom line, but also accepts understanding and communication between different cultures as the goal. In order to pursue the "politics of recognition" as a new form of the "politics of liberation", Taylor places his emphasis not on the minimum consensus among different cultures, but on the importance for the trans-cultural action norms to be given various "alternative foundations" in various cultures, or on the necessity and possibility of the "fusion of horizons" (Taylor 1999, p. 133) reached among these cultures.

Taylor seems to be closest to particularism when he was justifying the idea of "multiple modernities."⁷ He not only argues for the instrumental value of the multiplicity of modernity (because universally valid modern institutions can be rooted only when they are connected with multiple native cultures), but also its inherent value: a modernity that is homogenous all over the world is, in his view, not only improbable, but also undesirable. This idea can be easily understood as a position in which we can only talk about the difference between various models of modernity, but we cannot compare their relative merits. If it is true, then we will not only lack the criterion to compare and evaluate different models of modernity, but also be unable to make any judgment on each model of modernity itself and improve it accordingly, because every judgment presupposes a certain "alternative" as the criterion, and implies a questioning of the legitimacy of a certain type of existing modernity.

⁷ For a detailed discussion concern Charles Taylor's idea of "multiple modernities", see Tong Shijun: "Normative Implications of the Idea of Multiple Modernities", in *Ideas and Culture*, Volume 3, Press of East China Normal University, December 2003.

One may be able to find reasons in Taylor's texts to support this kind of reading, but another reading can get stronger support, in my view. According to this, what is most important is not to confirm the value of the multiplicity of modernity, nor to confirm the value of each model of modernity, but to confirm the value of a specific attitude towards our own as well as others' models of modernity. This is the willingness to do that kind of cultural comparative studies that will inevitably change our position in a fusion of horizons that will hopefully come afterwards. It is the admission that we are far from the ultimate horizon that will be taken as the starting point for showing the relative values of various cultures. (Taylor 1994, p. 73) The aim of comparative cultural studies is to reach understanding among cultures; like Gadamer, Taylor criticizes Dilthey for taking the aim of understanding as to overcome our own perspective in order to enter the other's horizon, but demands to see understanding as an effort to reach a "fusion of horizons" through cultural comparisons and dialogues. Taylor admits that this understanding achieved through comparisons and fusion of horizons reached through dialogues has no limit. For example, if after hard efforts a group of Christian scholars and a group of Muslim scholars reach a common language that satisfies both, for example, they may have to continue their efforts when they meet Buddhists. Here the only possible ideal of objectivity, according to Taylor, is inclusiveness. This inclusiveness can only be a matter of contingent fact, but not a matter of principle, because it is always possible for somebody to be left out. (Taylor 1997, p. 152)

If I am not totally wrong in saying that Dilthey, Gadamer and Taylor (to some extent we can also include Habermas here) hold a version of universalism that is based on "practices" instead of "facts," I can go on to say that they understand "practice" more or less as "interpreting the world" rather than as "changing the world". Karl Marx says: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it" (Marx, 1978, p. 145). I agree with the conceptual distinction between "interpreting the world" and "changing the world", but do not agree to separate the efforts of interpreting the world clearly from the efforts of changing the world in our everyday life. In our times, "understanding" and "interpreting" are recognized not only as basic ways of our being in the world as agents of cultural and historical activities, but also a basic way of our being as the subjects of the information economy and the consumer society. This means that "interpreting the world" is more and more an important way of "changing the world."

Having said this, we should be clear about the fact that there is, after all, a difference between the two. Though both translated as "*jiao wang*" in Chinese, for example, Marx's "*Verkehr*" in his *Die deutsche*

Ideologie and Habermas's "*Kommunikation*" in his *Theorie Kommunikativen Handelns* are not the same thing. The point here is that a trans-cultural universalism in the real sense is more a practical achievement of the progress of the world history, characterized by a "*Verkehr*" that involves almost all nations, than an intellectual achievement of communication between different cultures. What is more important, of course, is to combine these two types of "practice", and to regard universalism as a more reflexively constructive process that is informed by the rich achievements of the debates between universalism and particularism as well as among different types of universalism, so as to avoid the tendencies to reduce the constructive process of universalism to economic globalization, global Westernization or homogenization in various other forms.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above analysis, there seems to be no simple answer to the online survey question we mentioned in the beginning of this paper, "Do you think we should advocate universal values or not?" There are no universal values that are out there to be grasped and realized, because any value has to be interpreted in particular contexts and to be realized through concrete practices. A value is really universal only on the basis of a fruitful interaction between "*Verkehr*" in Marx's sense and "*Kommunikation*" in Habermas' sense, or on the basis of a process of real historical changes that has been made more and more self-reflective and self-responsible by a process of rational communication. This, in turn, is better guaranteed by the achievements of real historical progresses. This interaction will not be a vicious circle if we agree with Habermas' view of pragmatic preconditions of communicative action, (Habermas 1979, pp. 1-68) and Taylor's view of the "potential" or the competence that makes it possible for something that is properly human to be realized. (Taylor 1997, p. 161) For Marx too his view of the mutual presupposition of "true individuals" and "true communities" (Marx and Engels, pp. 86-9) in *The German Ideology*, as well as his view of the progress from "relations of personal dependence" through "personal independence founded on *objective [sachlicher]* dependence is the second great form" to "free individuality, based on the universal development of individuals and on their subordination of their communal, social productivity as their social wealth" (Marx 1995, pp. 107-8) in *Grundrisse*.

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CHAPTER II

**PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION ON
UNIVERSAL ETHICS:
THE CASE OF CONFUCIAN “GOLDEN RULE”**

YU ZHIPING

**“WHAT YOU DO NOT WANT DONE TO YOURSELF, DO NOT
DO TO OTHERS”**

Confucius has defined the notion of Consideration clearly in *the Analects* 《論語》, when Zi Gong (子貢) asked him, “Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one’s life?” The Master said, “Is not Consideration such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.” (*Wei Ling Gong*, 衛靈公) When Confucius talks about the important terms such as Benevolence (or Humanity, Kindheartedness, namely Ren, 仁), Righteousness (or Appropriateness, namely Yi, 義), Rite (or the proper behavior, namely Li, 禮), to realize (or Wisdom, namely Zhi, 智), Faithfulness (Xin, 信), he never gives a ready-made interpretation of the concepts, but only explains and reviews them in different conditions according to different persons and different issues. But many of his disciples sometimes try to promote Confucius’ thinking or meaning to the level of several universal ideas. The Prince Ding (Lu Ding Gong, 魯定公) asked, “whether there was a single sentence which could make a country prosperous”. (*Analects, Zi lu*, 《論語·子路》) Zeng Zi (曾子) generalized Confucius’ all-pervading unity with “that to be true to the principles of nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others.” (*Analects*, 《論語·里仁》) Zi Gong (子貢) asked, “Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one’s life?” Confucianism also commits itself to congeal Benevolence and Love (愛) on the theoretical level, and meanwhile insinuates the principle of Benevolence into people’s daily lives, to find the way to its practicability and maneuverability.

“Only the Consideration (or the Deference, namely Shu, 恕) of Benevolence can be practiced for a life time. What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others. This is called Consideration.”¹For a Confucian, theoretically speaking, Benevolence is a principle that he

¹ He Yan and Xing Bing (何晏·邢昺), *The Annotating on the Analects* 《論語注疏·衛靈公》 (Beijing: Press of Peking University, 1999), p. 214.

should follow all his life, and is also a hardworking pursuit, but in fact, it cannot present directly in the concrete behaviors of daily life. Confucius has said the so-called “I wish to get the Benevolence, and lo! The Benevolence is at hand” (*The Analects*, Shu Er, 《論語·述而》), “To be able to judge of others by what is nigh in ourselves” 《論語·雍也》, all merely point out the direction of metaphysics; it still belongs to a kind of vacant consciousness and psychological perception. If we want to apply the Benevolence to practice, we should find the concrete and doable path and method or moral endeavors (工夫). So “as the way of humanity which cannot be named, the Benevolence is not directly grasped or looked forward to through a word of Consideration. ‘What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others’, looks negative in appearance, but you can find it in your mind immediately.”²

In *The Analects* 《論語·顏淵》, Zhong Gong (仲弓) asked about Benevolence (Ren, 仁), the Master said, “It is, when you go abroad to behave to every one as if you were receiving a great guest; to employ the people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice; not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself; to have no murmuring against you in the country, and none in the family.” This question was raised by one of Confucius’ disciples, Ran Yong (冉雍), who was 27 years younger than his teacher had good virtues, and quite the bearing of a superior man. But the rule advocated by Confucianism, not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself, does not come out of Confucianism, but had appeared earlier than Confucius. “What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others,”³ said *The Doctrine of the Mean* which is one piece of *the Book of Rite*. The book of *Guan Zi* 《管子》 even quotes the archaism, “what I do not want, do not do to others, this is Benevolence.”⁴ The sentence of “not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself” is an ordinary idiom frequently used by ancient people initially. But it was immediately elevated by earlier Confucianism to the high level of Benevolence, and was regarded as efforts to practice the notion of the Benevolence. “The statement of ‘not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself’ means that a benevolent man can usually get the way of Consideration (恕). What

² Ch’ien Mu (錢穆), *The New Interpretation to the Analects* 《論語新解·衛靈公》 (Beijing: Press of the Union of Life, Reading and New Knowledge, 2002), p. 413,

³ *The Doctrine of the Mean*, see *the Book of Rite*. (Changsha: Press of Yue Lu (嶽麓書社), 1989), p. 495.

⁴ *Guan zi* 《管子·小問》 ‘see *the Complete Books of Hundred Schools and All Philosophers* 《百子全書》, Volume 2 (Changsha: Press of Yue Lu (嶽麓書社), 1993), p. 1375.

you do not want to do, do not do to others, because others also do not want it at all.”⁵

If we say that “the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, seeks also to enlarge others” (Confucius said this in *The Analects*, 《論語·雍也》) this explains the opinion of Benevolence from the active aspect. “Not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself” gives content to the Consideration from the negative aspect. But the two aspects are inseparable from each other, only because Benevolence and Consideration are united in itself. Confucius’ words of “establishing others” and “enlarging others” are the result of Benevolence coming true outside, and also the actual composition of the virtue of Consideration. Confucius had said in *The Analects*, “He who hated what is not virtuous would practice virtue in such a way that he would not allow anything that is not virtuous to approach his person” 《論語·里仁》. The man who gets Benevolence will not like to make himself and others in the scene of non-Benevolence. Zi Gong (子貢) said in *The Analects*, “What I do not wish men to do me, I also wish not to do to others” 《論語·公冶長》, but his Master said to him, “you have not attained to that.” Though Zi Gong himself had not carried out his words all along, he had always challenged himself to pursue the virtue of Consideration.⁶

⁵ He Yan and Xing Bing (何晏、邢昺), *The Annotating on the Analects* 《論語注疏·顏淵》 (Beijing: Press of Peking University, 1999), p. 158.

⁶ Zi Gong (子貢), who was 31 years younger than his teacher Confucius, was very clever, tricky and nimble. He was good at comprehending the thing’s essence and the keys to problems. He could always judge of the whole from one sample, so he excelled the wisdom of the ordinary person. In *The Analects*, where he said, “What I do not wish men to do me, I also wish not to do to others” 《論語·公冶長》, we can find that he hid barbs in his words. His Master had been driven to the wall, and was actually dimmer in dumb his senses: “you have not attained to that” should be regarded as a kind of first helpful evadable words. Confucius cannot do anything but depreciated the young man to his face. Actually, the sentence from Zi Gong (子貢) should be explained in two different aspects. What you do not wish to do, do not to do to me, in the same vein, what you wish to do, do not do to me. No matter what you wish, or do not wish, for better or worse, do neither to me. The disciple cannot blame his teacher, so Zi Gong can only talk to himself and gives himself an example for himself. In the case of a hail of bullets into which one is charged to move forward, if you would not like to come on, do not ask me do so. But you are sure not to impose your truth, creed, belief and value to me, which you are taking delight in talking about, otherwise it is namely a kind of might or violence. Whoever has no right to impose his justice or injustice to others. The virtue of Consideration (恕) includes the content of doing as you would want to

TO CONSIDER OTHER PERSON'S FEELING AS MY OWN, *DUO* (度)

How does Confucianism practice its virtue of Consideration? A basic way is to consider the other person's feelings in terms of one's own feelings, which in Chinese is *Duo* (度). According to the explanation of Xu Shen's *Dictionary of Chinese Characters* (許慎, 《說文解字》), "*Duo* is a criterion or standard." In the structure of the form of the character, *Duo*'s original meaning is two arms opening to measure the object's distance or bulk, later it extends its meaning straightforwardly to scaling, measuring, computing and accounting. Later men extended its meaning to conjecture, guessing, considering and pondering.

The philosophical meaning of the character *Duo* aroused the interest of thinkers who lived in the early Han dynasty and paid more attention to it. Jia Yi (賈誼) said in *The New Book* 《新書·道術》, "*Duo* is considering myself from others' aspect; what is contrary to *Duo* is Absurdity (妄). But considering others from my own aspect can be called Consideration; the contrary to Consideration is the Desolation (荒)."⁷ Thus, *Duo* had been raised to a life attitude and the basic notion in dealing with other peoples and things of the world. In brief, looking at myself from another position, or becoming conscious of others before myself are really *Duo*. Absurdity is the attitude and behavior contrary to *Duo*, namely never considering the other's existence, except without regard to any other factors at all. When I consider others with my own purpose and feeling I put others in my position, which is Consideration. But Desolation is just contrary to it. Desolation is the attitude of eliminating the others from one's view; there is no place for others in one's memory, only oneself. There are some differences between *Duo* and Consideration which take place when you look at others and look at yourself. But essentially *Duo* and the Consideration are alike; they are both more important virtuous criteria in our human communication.

About the requirement to focus and direct to set the object and methodology of *Duo*, Han Ying (韓嬰), another great scholar of Confucian Classics in western Han dynasty, expounded in his book, *The Outer Commentary on the Classic of Songs* 《韓詩外傳》, "The saint

be done by others and judging other person's feeling by one's own, but it has the more internal request to respect others and treat them equally. By all appearances, this can supply Confucius' theory of Consideration.

⁷ Jia Yi, *The New Book* 《新書·道術》, see *the Complete Books of Hundred Schools and All Philosophers* (《百子全書》), Volume 1 (Changsha: Press of Yue Lu (嶽麓書社), 1993), p. 371.

considers others with his own feeling. To consider another person's feeling by my own, to consider another person's affection by my own, and to consider other kinds by my own, are the basic rules from the ancient age to today. The same kind always has the same reason, no matter how long it goes."⁸ Firstly, *Duo* only comes from me; I should have got Benevolence, or otherwise I consider others without any real content, or regard others as being as bad as I. Secondly, the direction of *Duo* is never demanding others to consider merely me or to serve me only, but to regard others' benefits as one's own interest. Thirdly, the object of *Duo* should be only others' interest rather than my own. Anyone considering himself is really an autocrat who isolates himself from all the people. Fourthly, the measure of *Duo* is analogizing and contrasting with your own mind and your own affection with others. Considering others is not complex as you analogize or contrast others' mind with yours.

A man can consider another person's feeling by his own, this predicates that he can also carry out Consideration. There is a connection between "considering myself from others' aspect" and "considering others from my own aspect" that changes and stimulates each other. Han Ying said in his book, *The Outer Commentary on the Classic of Songs* 《韓詩外傳》, "Man in the old times knows the world without going outside the door, grasps the nature of Heaven without peeping out the windows. Reason is not what he can look at and hear more than kilometer, but he always considers it with his own mind, judges it with his own affection, as he does not want to be hungry and suffer coldness, he may be aware that all people would like to benefit from creature comforts. He detests the moil, then he can realize that all the people want to be cozy. He abhors caducity and fatigue, then, he can know that all the people try to be affluent. The saint had lived up to three things, so he can govern the country without levering his bed. Therefore the right path of becoming a superior man is just faithfulness and consideration."⁹ All knowledge and all truth both come from the conscious activity of my mind. What is called "knowing the world without going outside the door" and "grasping the nature of Heaven

⁸ Han Ying (韓嬰), *The Outer Commentary on the Classic of Songs* 《韓詩外傳》, Volume 3, Chapter 28, see Xu Weijue (许维遹), *The Collected Commentaries on the Outer Commentary on the Classic of Songs* 《韓詩外傳集釋》 (Beijing: China Publishing House (中華書局), 1980), p. 113.

⁹ Han Ying (韓嬰), *The Outer Commentary on the Classic of Songs* 《韓詩外傳》, Volume 3, Chapter 38, see Xu Weijue (许维遹), *The Collected Commentaries on the Outer Commentary on the Classic of Songs* 《韓詩外傳集釋》 (Beijing: China Publishing House (中華書局), 1980), p.127.

without peeping out the windows”, actually means that man is trying to put a good use of his moral sympathetic feeling, fancy and intellect. The method of doing Consideration is very convenient, understanding with one’s own heart what other people think about it, and how other people regard it. There is no secret for the saintly King or the great emperor to manage his common people better than according to his mind, namely analogizing the mind of common people with his mind, so they can console their people and keep their nation in order.

According to the record by a Confucian classicist in western Han Dynasty, Liu Xiang (劉向) in his book *Garden of Anecdote* 《說苑》, the Leud Xian in He Jian Kingdom (河間獻王) said, “The ancient monarch, Yao, considered the common people with his mind and paid more attention to the poor persons in his nation. He was in agony when his people suffered; he worried about all flesh failing to be happy; if folk were hungry, he must say ‘this means I’m hungry.’ If there were folk in the cold, he must say that ‘this means I’m cold.’ If there were folk in criminality, he must say that ‘this means I make him to do so.’ To let Benevolence be clear and to establish Righteousness, to make the virtue plentiful and to expand education, can cause the people to be more diligent without any award, and all in order without any punishment. The method of Yao’s governing rule is that he had carried out the way of Consideration himself first, then, educated his people.”¹⁰ In the legends, Yao always shows more consideration for his people in hardship; he can consider another person’s feeling by his own; he can also judge others as he should were he in their place. When his people fall into tribulation, he feels distressed, and is anxious for their wellbeing. As long as the monarch can consider his people, there will be a good political order in his country.

However, *Duo* is not only a kind of simple psychological guess, or a series of pure emotional desire, there is universal reason and some absolute value just filtering in it. Otherwise, man cannot really consider others, and cannot reach them. The occurrence and the representation of man’s sensibility are very secret and very individual; they cannot transfer between different minds. What can come out with language and can be thought about, even what can be transferred is just a puny part of our spirit, like the tip of an iceberg. Thereupon, more content of *Duo* should be restricted to the Reason (or the Principles, namely Li, 理) and Righteousness (Yi, 義) that have the human mind’s commensurability, and can be externalized and objectified. Mencius said, “What is the mind

¹⁰ Liu Xiang (劉向), *Garden of Anecdote* (《說苑·君道》), see *the Complete Books of Hundred Schools and All Philosophers* 《百子全書》, Volume 1 (Changsha: Press of Yue Lu (嶽麓書社), 1993), p. 546.

then of which they similarly approve? It is, I say, the principles of our nature, and the determinations of righteousness" (*Gao Zi*, in *the Book of Mencius*). Why does Mencius omit or eliminate the content of sensibility directly, and leave the Reason and Righteousness? The cause may be that the former is very difficult to state, describe and transfer, so that it cannot be the credible foundation for composing a realistic order of human relations. Mencius also said, "Benevolence is internal and not external, Righteousness is external and not internal." Then, Benevolence is a kind of internal spiritual pursuit, but Righteousness is just a standard and criterion which can be externally represented. In spite of the fact that the two involve all "the mind of which they similarly approve", Righteousness is more knowable, and relatively maneuverable, and it can be recognized and generalized in the crowd.

But in "the mind of which they similarly approve", what is the extent of "similarly approving"? Dai Zhen (戴震, 1723-1777), a thinker and scholar in Qing dynasty, said, "The mind by which they similarly approve are Reason and Righteousness, but 'the similarly approving', itself is a kind of opinion. What all the people in the world regard as the truth can only be called 'the similarly approving'. The Reason can be distinguished in our minds, and the Righteousness also can be judged in our minds. In analyzing, the constant rule in our minds is Reason, and what suits Reason can be called the Righteousness. So to understand the Reason is just to understand things' differences, to master the Righteousness is just to know how to judge. If you do not understand things' differences, you will sometimes doubt them and be puzzled; if you do not to know how to judge, your action will always be deflected and harm the doctrine of the Benevolence. Anyone who seeks Reason and Righteousness but has not enough Wisdom (智) cannot get them at all."¹¹ There are essential prescriptions of Reason and Righteousness, the feelings and opinions which consist in our minds cannot match them. The 'similarly approving' that can be tested by all the people in the world in all ages can only be Reason and Righteousness, namely the great truth; this cannot alter and has universal value. They can be generalized and decided by our reason. Moral truth needs to be valid everywhere, and never fall in fault. We can find a kind of universal guide line of morality and justice in the course of liking the other person's feeling to our own.

Yet how can both our minds be "similarly approving"? Or why do our minds possess the function of forming and understanding moral truth?

¹¹ Dai Zhen (戴震), *A Commentary on the Meanings of Terms in the Book of Master Mencius* 《孟子字義疏證·卷上·理》. (Beijing: China Publishing House (中華書局), 1961), p. 3.

According to Dai Zhen's analyses, "The mind can employ organs such as ears, eyes, noses and mouth, but cannot replace their function. Every organ has its own function, and they are not interchangeable. Every man and everything get their gift from the Heaven, and can communicate with it forever. What exists under the Heaven is making a sound, or recognizing color, or having olfaction, or having physical powers. To the exclusion of those four things, there is nothing at all in our world. The external communicates with the internal, so the four organs can really carry out their function, and become what they are essentially. There are two relations between Wu Xing (Five Elements theory, 五行), namely to come into being and to restrict one another. Things will succeed from the former, because the Physical powers (Xue Qi, 血氣) have got its support, but things will be defeated for the latter because the Physical powers have lost it. Because of the function of Yin Yang (陰陽) and Wu Xing, the internal which can be cultivated fully depends on the external. The Physical powers which fill the Heaven and Earth can be called External; when it works in my body, we can call it Internal. When the Physical powers get promoted between the External and the Internal, we are fully cultivated."¹² The human mind dominates the organs of the five senses, then, when the organs of the five senses receive outside stimulation we human beings can obtain the Physical powers of the external. Because the human being has received the Physical powers of Heaven and Earth, he can communicate with everything which also lives between the Heaven and the Earth. Everything has received the Energy (Qi, 氣) of Yin Yang and Wu Xing, so they can present the same Reason. In the way of Wu Xing, the five elements come into being or restrict one another, resulting in forming or defeating things. The truth of Yin Yang and Wu Xing fill everything, including the human body, whose the external and Internal are always united. Therefore my mind can consider others, and affect things. Things can be communicated between Heaven and humans, between things and people, between others and me, between subject and object.

The Energies (Qi, 氣) of Yin Yang and Wu Xing present themselves in the things in the nature of the way of Heaven (Tian dao, 天道), but when it becomes cognized and comprehended by the human mind, it turns into the necessity of the way of humanity (Ren Dao, 人道). Dai Zhen said also, "We can master the Reason and the Righteousness through the necessity in which we examine the nature of the Physical powers. There are no differences between Nature and Necessity in fact.

¹² Dai Zhen (戴震), *A Commentary on the Meanings of Terms in the Book of Master Mencius* 《孟子字義疏證·卷上·理》(Beijing: China Publishing House (中華書局), 1961), p. 7.

When the Nature is understood clearly and entirely, it will turn into Necessity. Thus we can get the supreme rule of Nature. If we let Nature slide, we would lose the Nature immediately, and we would get non-Nature. Only should we let the Nature belong to Necessity, can we revert the original face to the Nature? Human beings exist in the world only depends on the Physical powers and one's mind."¹³ Reason and Righteousness is just the Necessity of the way of man, though they are considered in our mind and talked about, it reflects the essence of the way of Heaven. Necessity would lose its transcendental object, which can be regarded as its stimulating spring, without Nature. So that we can say, the way of Heaven and the way of man, Nature and Necessity, which have come into language and the thinking, will not oppose each other, but are united in these. And we can infer further, that the forming of our human world has no more than two sources, one is the noumenon, or the Great Way in Chinese ancient philosophy, which can be regarded as the Nature of the Physical powers; the other is our mind's recognition, which belongs to our subjective understanding.

IS THERE ANY "BEHAVIOR'S EQUIVALENCE"?

After Confucius' age, later Confucian scholars always tried to promote the doctrine that "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others" to an ethical value, which is absolute and universal. But we cannot ignore other trends in this proposition, namely how can we eliminate in time the violence and might of ego to hurt others. This is surely a big all-important ethical question. In the system of politics and the military in which there is some confrontation between the strong and the weak, the latter in the dry tree want to emphasize and appeal to that "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." They expect that the mighty force can consider others' feeling by his own, and put himself in the others' position, envisage others' existence, respect the multiformity and the variety of our world, and give others more and more suitable, living space. However if we change the point of view, and look at the side of privileged colony, who is in the green tree and control the discourse, the way of Consideration will present another side. If the strong colony imposes their faith, belief, truth, value and ideas that they are fond of, upon the relatively weak colony, and pose themselves as the savior (you should receive my help, and you cannot refuse my help, you must know that we are liberating you), then, the aftereffect must be most disastrous. Indeed it will lead to centralization and hegemony. Confucius

¹³ Dai Zhen (戴震), *A Commentary on the Meanings of Terms in the Book of Master Mencius* 《孟子字義疏證·卷上·理》(Beijing: China Publishing House (中華書局), 1961), pp. 18-19.

demands that “the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others” (*The Analects* 《論語·雍也》). At the same time, we should abide by the way “What we do not want done to ourselves, do not do to others” (*Wei Ling Gong*, 衛靈公). This rule applies to both the strong and the weak; it has certain degree of universality. But what the strong do to the weak is also “establish others” and “enlarge others”. His measure and method both embody the basic intention of the way of the Consideration, even his primal motivation is also goodness and friendly. But why the realistic result is just in the opposite of what he wishes?

Then, the premise and idea concealed in the golden rule gradually show themselves to us. The extent of communication between human minds defers. In the condition of noumenon, the substance has no relationship with other substances, they may be fully different but also like each other, there is not any commensuration and any isolation among themselves. But as soon as the human mind buds, the meaning of the world begins to be created and to be multiplied. Man as a thing in itself need not communicate with others. But when man becomes a social animal, namely a human being, he needs some way to communicate with another. Then language becomes the first social existence and holds the balancing role in the social world. The communicating content between human minds is actually just the meaning expressed by the language, though it is barely a slim part in our internal mind. As most of our internal mind cannot be communicated among us, it cannot be expressed in languages either. The emotional communication must be based on language and thinking, otherwise the other cannot understand your most simple form of expression. The way of Consideration always premises the mind’s communication, but is also limited. Endlessness of communication can only be found in the exact operation of mathematical equations. The same is true of the understanding and comprehension between different people who have a different social background and a different religion and culture, which sometimes shows on the surface of the psychological structure. The understanding and comprehension among different peoples cannot reach a thorough uniting and absolute integration. A thing is in gear and very reasonable in this area, but when we transfer it to another area, it will look very absurd. A good person thinks so, but the evildoer doesn’t necessarily think so. What is cast away by good people is just pursued by the crafty sycophant. It is exactly just as the folk opinion says, “Human minds are as varied as human faces.” In addition, “The heart is separated by the kyte, so it is very difficult to guess.” It is impossible to share entirely, so Consideration is not definitely omnipotent. Whether the individual free will can be promoted to universal will, and further,

how it can, to which degree, for Confucianism, is a series of very complex and arduous philosophical problems. To enlarge blindly the universal meaning of the way of Consideration will extremely damage its influence; To universalize the way of Consideration cannot settle all conflicts in the human world.¹⁴ To reach others absolutely among different peoples is just a white lie.

Friedrich Nietzsche negated firmly the universal validity of rule, "What we do not want done to ourselves, do not do to others", in his late years. In Nietzsche's opinion, morality is always a kind of quillet of the weak who want to escape the existential battle. Cowardice is indeed another name for morality. So in his posthumous manuscripts, Chapter 925, in the 1880s, he thought it scorned a moral request such as "What we do not want done to ourselves, do not do to others", and regarded it as just a stupidity of Anglicism (*einer niaiserie anglaise*). He said, "What I do not want done to myself, do not do to others" (*Was du nicht willst, dass dir die Leute thun, dass thue ihnen auch nicht*). It is considered the basics of wisdom, acumen and morality, which is the so-called 'golden maxim' (*guldener Spruch*). John Stuttgart Muller believes it! (Is there any Britisher who doesn't believe it at all?). Apparently, Nietzsche looked down upon the so-called "golden rule". Actually, man believes "What we do not want done to ourselves, do not do to others", so he conceals such a premise in his thinking that man can gain the coequal response from others. Nietzsche wanted to criticize the delusive premise. He gave us an example, "We will not attack unless we are attacked" (*thue Nichts, was dir selber nicht angethan warden soll*). This credendum can forbid all actions. But the covert notion is that my actions usually bring profits (*dass eine Handlung immer vergolten wird*).¹⁵ However, if a man who has mastered the so-called golden rule alleges now, "people should do so in order to make the other have no idea to take the road, we can make the other not harm us in this way." At this

¹⁴ Lü Kun (呂坤, 1536-1618), a Confucianism in the later Ming dynasty, had said, "To communicate with others in the way of Consideration is just regarding others' feeling as his own and becoming conscious of others before associating myself. But this way is not omnipotent. There are many things in the world that you do not want to do but others want to do, and you want to do but others do not want to do. There are many wondering things that we should pay more attention to it. See his book *Moaned Words* (Shen Yin Yu, 《呻吟語·應務》) (Beijing: Press of Scholar Garden (學苑出版社), 1993), p. 174. So we are not sure what you wish to do is just what others wish to do, similarly, what you do not wish to do is not necessarily what others do not wish to do. The principle is very difficult to understand, the difference between the similarly approving is actually very tiny. But it is sufficient to let us reflect upon. All the contravention and the conflict in our human world both arise from the wanting and not wanting in our minds.

time, what should we do? In fact, we can do nothing, whatever we do is useless. There isn't any difference in our action between waking up to and non-waking up to the rule of "What we do not want done to ourselves, do not do to others". Napoléon Bonaparte would not like to be killed, but he still launched incalculable robbing battles, which had led to cruel bleeding and death. Moreover, all of these can be understandable for Napoléon. He may never think it is not kind or have any misgivings. Nietzsche wanted to negate completely the "Behavior's Equivalence" (*Aequivalenz der Handlungen*) among peoples, so that he can take off the logical basics of the golden rule. In his opinion, only the ignorant, domestic animals' instinct (*der Instinkt der Heerde*) can describe themselves only through a maxim, and believe such a lie such as "man is equal, mixes in equality: how I treat you, so you do it to me (*wie ich dir, so du mir*)".

The human's mistake is caused by faith of "a sort of Behavior's Equivalence which is impossible to occur in reality". On the contrary, "It is impossible to get the result from every action." "There isn't the same action among the real individuals, so there are also no rewards (*keine Vergeltung*)....When I do one thing, I do not by a long sight think that others can do the same thing just like me. What I have done is just belong to myself."¹⁵ Evidently, Nietzsche had gone to another extreme. He negated boldly the universality of the moral golden rule, and at the same time negated also the commensurability among people. The human's behavior was understood just as a kind of unattached, closed and pure action which has no common sense and cannot be determined by any historical factor. It has no specifically social relevance. Thus the "individual" in his eyes seems to a naked thing in itself without any existing connection and social brand. But the standpoint of Confucius scholarship is precisely on the human life; Confucianism never left the social existence and the ethic premise in which man communicates with others. Even if the communication between peoples is located indeed in the surface of our consciousness, it can strike up the moral and ethical principle, and can bring out the value and meaning of human beings. So it is worthwhile to affirm and hold it.

THE "AUTONOMY" CANCELS "THE OTHER"

However, can man reach the others really through the way of Consideration; can ego be united with the others finally? In Confucianism, this is out of the question, because everyone has a

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht*, versuch einer Umwerthung aller Werthe. *Nietzschs Gesammelte Werke*, Seite 297, 298 (Deutschland: Neunzehnter Band, Musarion Verlag München, 1926).

common kind of nature in his own mind, everyone can communicate with others, and human beings live in the value world of Reason and the Righteousness. But if we trace to the bottom of this question, we can find that the premise for considering others in Confucianism is very doubtful. Though man can communicate with others, but in the deep-seated soul, there are big differences between the ego and others. In fact, the word, "between", is always blurry; this is enough to explain that there is some septum between the ego and others. No one can see the boundary, and I cannot reach others completely in my subject consciousness, or *vice versa*. Strictly, to reach others and to reach the personal are both impossible. They are always limited, which can only go along to a certain degree. What people communicate can be considered only on the surface in our subjective consciousness so that the ego in the deep-seated layer will never be considered by the others. There is a great fixed gulf forever between the society and the ego. Emmanuel Levinas, a contemporary thinker in France, initiates a kind of others philosophy and altruistic ethic which has an intensive containing spirit.¹⁶ Levinas inherits phenomenological tradition, and even exceeds it. In Ernst Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, "Intentionality" (*Intentionalität*) is a consciousness that points to the other, so the relation of Intentionality is only the relation of epistemology. But Levinas develops the Intentionality into a relation with the others. So it is evolved as an ethical relation, which emphasizes its moral meanings. The ego in modern philosophy, which includes Husserl, is always just a concept of epistemology, ego is equal to self-awareness. In self-awareness, every non-identical can be deoxidized, melted, assimilated and absorbed. Wholeness exists in the internal subject; everything is not external, it cannot go out of my own consciousness. So the self-consciousness confirms itself as an absolute being which can contain everything infinitely and has huge absorbability. The spirit of epistemological philosophy is "autonomy", whose existence is conquered by the people, while the others perish, with everything returning to the consciousness. None but the thinking and the self-consciousness are ever restricted, so they are always absolutely free. But what the others philosophy emphasizes is just "heteronomy". We should keep a kind of social relationship with the absolute others who differs from myself in the truth and in our thinking.

According to Levinas, the autonomous inclination of epistemological philosophy is very dangerous because it tries to ensure

¹⁶ The further discussion can be found about Levinas's others philosophy and altruism ethic in Feng Jun's (馮俊) book *The Ethic Thought in Contemporary France*, refer to Chapter 5, Session 1, *Levinas' Phenomenological Ethic Thought* (Shanghai: Press of Tong Ji University, 2007).

the subject's existence, freedom and identity, and it has presupposed that only the subject has the right of freedom, which regards it as reasonable and self-sufficient, and needing us help from others. Such philosophy suffers from the habit of narcissism. It has regarded the other as an object that must be consolidated, eliminated and conquered, even as an obstacle of the scientific identity. The truth is just an absolute victory of this kind of consolidation, elimination and conquering. All the thought is nothing but the possessing of the others. Finally, all others escape from the view of epistemological philosophy, which leaves in epistemological philosophy just a naked consciousness itself of our mind. So to establish others and to reach others pursued by Confucianism is doomed to be impossible. The internal desire and discourse hegemony which absorbs others, eliminates others and cleans-out the whole was has implicated from the start. To cancel the freedom of others' existence is essentially inhumanity.

But the philosophy of heteronomy advocated by Levinas advocates respecting the others, preserving others. Studying independence and heterogeneity, shows others' value and meaning. In Levinas' opinion, the others existence cannot be presented by my consciousness. The content that the others' reality should possess is more than what I have presented. Man comes to the world first in a moral existential identity. In the same way, in the relation between the others and me the others' presence is an essential existence, but it comes out before all knowledge and cannot be understood at all. The others' face should be a kind of command; I should not fasten the other in order to govern him, what can I do for the other is just reflecting on his face. This kind of reflecting is just the responsibility I must love in the other. It exists before my self-awareness. The first mission of Levinas' others' philosophy and others' ethic is to oppose and clear up the metaphysical collectivity (*totalité*). The collectivity is always a kind of integrated notion. It destroys the others' heterogeneity, and reduces it to the identity (*identité*). So the infinite, abundant life content is to be included in it. The force of identity is immeasurable, it can lick up the individuality, otherness, complexity and multiformity, and defy or ignore the value and meaning of personality and the detail in our ordinary daily lives. Basic to the way of Confucius Consideration is to have the others established and reach others through responding and comparing with others, and to depart from establishing myself and reaching myself. The method used is to imagine and understand others just like do myself. In fact, the collectivity is already fallen low in a kind of agro and the discourse of hegemony in front of the heterogeneity. But in this world, there is a kind of absolute existence which can escape from the leash of the collectivity, it does not come into the system of the

identity, which is just "the others", the heterogeneity, the face and diction of the others.

The other is always regarded as another ego in traditional metaphysics. To know the other is just to analogize, to consider the other person's feeling by my own, and to put myself in the place of another. Ultimately, others are regarded merely as an existence united with me. But according to Levinas, the other is utterly not another ego, but is a kind of existence which differs from me. The other differs from me, from another thing, and from others. Thus, the other is a kind of pure otherity, speciality, externality, transcendence and immensity. It is not that ego prescribes others, rather the ego gains its moral prescript through others.

Human existence relation is just a kind of communicated relationship with the absolute other in substance. The image which can delegate the others' heterogeneity is the unique face, which always belongs to everybody. In Levinas' opinion, the face can never be recognized, because it is neither a ready visual giving, nor a purely presented form, nor a kind of knowledge object, nor was it to be occupied by the others.

The face is the others' disincarnated presence, but the appearance is not the face's existential manner. The real face can never be seen. The heterogeneity is different from the Difference, only because the former is the transcending one, and cannot be owned, mastered, or integrated. The face is also a kind of authority and a kind of command; it transfers a kind of moral value and social meaning. The face is a kind of authority without any force. It can command you, request you, but never compel you. What the face has represented is just the moral "ought to" and the "must", rather than legal obligation and violence. Although the face can command others and instigate others, it also has its flimsy side because it always presents itself as a kind of demand and aspiration. It tries to arouse others' mercy and responsibility, which is always waiting for the others to do something for itself.

To regard the other as his purpose, Levinas is consistent with the request of Immanuel Kant. He insisted that man should regard the other as more important and a nobler being than himself. It is obviously a kind of evil that the collectivity dismisses the heterogeneity. Now that the other-heterogeneity can never be included in my concept about the others, the others' face will surmount forever my notion of it. The others' face is the infinite which cannot be grasped. The infinite resists the others' conquering and occupying to it. The others' face issue his command to me, and arouses my moral consciousness, so it appears as a kind of moral standard which can measure what I've done; I must choose my manner of behavior on this basis of it. It is the first gift of the moral consciousness that, "the others are surely nearer to God than me",

this is the other's advantage over me. In fact, only the others' presence and the others' face can make of the internal consciousness in moral ego. To establish and perfect the moral ego must depend on others. The latter is just the headspring of my moral value.

Levinas' ethnics has already forced out the mistake of self-centralism. The other is boundless, the other is the god. Man should assume the responsibility for and obligation to others, so he can play a more important social role. We should turn the relationship between man and the world from a kind of knowledge relation to a kind of Good relation and further, make our behavior have a strong character of altruism. Levinas' altruistic opinion has succeeded in rectifying on the modern philosophical and ethical notions which insist on self-centralism all the time, but he means the opposite extremity completely.

If the other is God, where can we put the ego? The founding of the moral ideal and moral consciousness can never be established without the subject's endeavor and self-cultivation. How can ego combine the other into itself without any self-reflection on the others and this heterogeneity through self-consciousness? When the way of consideration gets into the discourse hegemony which has conquered the others, it shows that you have not known really how and what the other thinks about. And it will also denote that there is some distance between you and the others. Thus, it implies that you are short of the moral effort (Gong Fu, 工夫) of doing the Consideration. You must do more to understand the other's mood, desire and thought. As the premise and basis of the constitution of our world, the role of our consciousness and self-consciousness in the course of our virtue cultivation cannot be shaken. Besides, the so-called "the other's" philosophy and the altruistic ethics is still an internal need of achieving the virtuous ego in the last analysis, and is still a kind of self-consciousness. It is impossible to leech on the others and the heterogeneity.

If there is only the command of the other's face, it is difficult to make the people's behavior in accord with the ethical and moral request. According to the concept of Confucius, Benevolence (Ren, 仁), "to establish myself" and "to establish the others", "to make me reach Benevolence" and "to make the others reach Benevolence" are paratactic relations. They cannot be regarded as the relation of cause and effect or a timely relation. To pay attention to others, to keep a benign mutual-acting relation with others and to bear my own social obligation are virtues in modern society which urgently need be saved and energetically advocated. But this need not be at the cost of abandoning the ego and immolating the individual. In the course of virtue-cultivation, the role of the subject cannot be substituted completely. To prescribe the other as another ego that is different from me completely enlarges evidently the heterogeneity between the other and me, ignoring the

commensuration among people. If each of the others is the absolute and inimitable individual existence, language, society and all the moral value will have no way to be produced, and will lose all foundation.

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CHAPTER III

**JUSTIFICATIONS OF
UNIVERSALISM AND JUSTICE**

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In the era of globalization, Universalism has always been a controversial issue justified from intellectuality or criticized from relativism. The argumentation is particularly warm, when the issue is transformed from universality to universalism, and related to history, politics, ideology, etc.

I.

Generally, there are two typical attitudes for justifications of universalism, one is a minimum justification with analytical universalism, an other is a maximum justification with systematic or total universalism.

Universalism, from its minimum justification, means that at least some or a series of propositions, values, and ideas with the characteristic of supremacy and universality ought to be universal rules in all societies and civilizations. This justification is named analytical universalism, because such universal rules, values or ideas as liberty, equality, fairness, dignity, love, etc. abstract from any particular social relations, life styles, cultural patterns or civilizations. These universal ideas or values constitute the minimum law and rationality for social intersubjective relations in the human world. The representative theory of this analytical justification of universalism is liberalism. The essential problem which liberalism confronted is how to construct a united socio-political order to accommodate the diversity of life styles, customs, cultural traditions, moral laws and religious faiths. As the diversity of social structure is an indisputable fact in modern society, the mission of modern politics, which forms the view of liberalism, is to seek an order on the basis of intersubjectivity, overlapping consensus or communicative rationality commensurate to the diverse social structure. This liberal order is based on freedom, righteousness and equality of individuality; the modern constitutional democratic system is the incarnation of this liberal order.

Generally, maximum justification of universalism is to adhere to some civilization, society, cultural system or world outlook which has the characteristic of universality. This kind of justification may be named totalistic or systematic universalism. The typical thought of

totalistic universalism is Hegel-Marx's idea of world history. From the view of Hegel, modern history is world-history reproduced with such ideas as liberty or freedom as the universalities of the inner law and dynamic grammar of modernity.¹ In the totalistic context of universalism, society, civilization or modernity is the fundamental paradigm, in which the process of the evolution of world-history is a succession of a universalization of modernity laws. Some sort of society such as a bourgeois society or modernistic civilization has the virtue of universality, others are degraded to particular moments or pre-historical stages sublated by the world-history defined with bourgeois laws or modern grammar. As a result, some kind of discriminational centrism or imperial logic emerged from the concealed place of this universal language. The theory of the end of history and Euro-centrism has been coming on stage in universalist discourse. In the systematic universalist context, when the concrete socio-economic-political system comes into being, as the result of universal world-history, western civilization or modernity, the dominating universalism will be transformed into governmental or discriminational arrangements that degrade cultures, values, sexuality, ethnicity and class, so that injustice and unfairness are produced.

In this sort of argument with either the minimum justification of analytical universalism or the maximum affirmation of totalistic universalism, universalist language has always faced the refutation and negation of particularism, relativism and pluralism. The opponents of universalism insist that plural civilizations, cultural diversities and varieties of life-styles have no commensurability with each other, do not reduce to any such universalities as universal civilization, modernistic society or ecumenical cultural system in totalistic language, nor to any universal laws such as liberty, equality or fraternity in an analytic context. If the diversities and varieties of societies or civilizations are reduced to some foundational historical paradigms or laws of values, the richness and truth of historic-world experience will be dismissed in a universalist context. Furthermore, a universal governmental logic will, no doubt, come into being from further definitions and explanations on these fundamental categories or grammars, and a discriminative, unjust social system will to dominate the human world.

Superficially, Universalist controversies are about the following problems: What is universality? What kind of knowledge, society, civilization, values, ideas or laws is universally available in human

¹ For example, in *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel said: "For the History of the World is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom." See Hegel's *The Philosophy of History*, Trans. J. Sibree (Batoche Books Kitchener 2001), p. 477.

history? Substantially, universalist problems are related to the issue of justice. Universalism has always confronted so many refutations and negations, because the problems of unfairness and injustice have been hidden in the discourse and institutions of universalism. The verifications of universalism have to fall back on a minimum analytic standpoint, which attaches importance to the anxiety of unfairness and the certification of justice. From this aspect, the problems and controversies of universalism are related to the issue of justice; the justification of universalism is the problems of the possibility of justice.

II.

From the aspect of justice, the themes of universalism would be transformed into the following problems. If the social arrangements and orders are in virtue of justice, this society or civilization will be universal, will have the characteristic of universality, because particularities, varieties and diversities of cultures, ideas, values and life-styles will have fair treatment, status and righteousness in a just society. If the social system is vicious and unjust; these oppressed, exploited and discriminated people are entitled to reject to and resist this unfair system imposed in the name of universality.

The two certifications of universalism, as totalistic and analytic, share one common issue, that is justice. If systematic universalism has no way to verify that the universal society or civilization has the virtue of justice, those relativists, pluralists and particularists have enough reason to refute this as an unfair and unequal pseudo-universal social system. If analytic universalism has no reason to set the ideas and values abstracted to universalities as the essential elements of justice, those ideas and values will not have the qualities of universalities. Owing to the community (*polis* or *civitas*) being based on some essential universalities, which are in some ways the necessities and possibilities of socio-political life in human civilizations, it is necessary to justify or certify universalism. The pivotal issue is, in what sense, the universal appeal righteous? This subject is related justice. Accordingly, there ought to be some righteous justification of universalism from the standpoint of justice, i.e., to substitute justice issues for universalist problems.

In the context of justice, the problems of universalism as the relationship of the universalities and the particularities of diversities or varieties in socio-cultures, values, ideas, customs and traditions, and such issues as fairness on ethnicity, sexuality, faith, class, status, etc., can be transformed into the subject of justice as a totalistic virtue and other concrete virtues which embody the varieties and diversities of pluralistic life-styles in a universal modern society.

On the relationship between justice and other concrete virtues, Aristotle's thought has some profound and enlightened meanings. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle noted, that justice is a complete virtue; it is not part of virtue, but virtue entire. On the contrary, injustice not a part of vice but vice entire, in justice every virtue is comprehended.² From Aristotle's thought, justice is complete virtue in which other concrete virtues could realize themselves in socio-political praxis, and communities accommodated to the diversities of virtues are formed. Justice, as the entire virtue, covers not only the moral law of intersubjective relationships in society, such as fairness and equity, but also the virtue realized in the relationship of one person to himself, to his personality. One man could control his appetite, temper and fear, and could have a healthy self-mastered personality. We can say this man has an accomplished personality with a soul of justice. From this point of view, it could be said that justice is entire virtue, furthermore, it is the only virtue in which every virtue accomplishes its own purpose.

In a universalist context, the relations between justice and other actual virtues are such that various or diverse values, ideas, life-styles, races and classes, each could achieve its' fair treatment and status, and could realize itself with healthy, graceful and goodly state in a just society. So only the society or civilization with justice has the characteristic of universality.

III.

From the above, the controversies and disagreements on universalism are related to the understanding of justice. Hence the questions follow: What is justice? How to understand the meaning of justice? Justice as complete virtue is too abstract to describe, and to answer these questions is too difficult. In brief, this introduces two typical ideas of justice, the ancient and modern thought of justice.

In ancient Greece, justice as complete virtue or virtue of the whole, is a supreme grammar of polis community. Justice, as supreme virtue, is the gift of the universe, nature and divinity; it is the virtue and inner good of nature. From this point of view, justice is transcendent, it could not be found in any secular social orders, which is why the justice Socrates described in *The Republic* can in no way be found in any actual polis. In *The Protagoras*, in Protagoras words, Plato noted that justice is the human relationship to divinity, it is God's nature which is the law for constructing the human polis or civitas and which is awarded from

² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1129b30, 1130a10), translated by W.D. Ross (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

divinity³. In ancient Greek, the universe and nature was not only physical being, but also ethical being, sometimes justice is the order, purpose and inner law of nature. Justice means nature and virtue, the means and the good. The comprehension of justice as a natural, transcendent, metaphysical issue just like the ancient Greek idea is the representative idea in the ancient understanding of justice.

In modern language, liberty is the supreme conception which conditions people's knowledge of socio-political, humanity and justice. In this context, liberty has become an essential category of justice, and liberty, equality and rights have been organized into the keystones of the ideas of modernity. So theories and practice of justice have been changed into theoretic and practical problems of freedom, equality and rights. Right, as the practical conception of liberty, is on the one hand related to interest, wealth and resources so that justice is equality and fairness in distribution or rectification of interest and wealthy; on the other hand, right is connected with value, personality and dignity, while justice is diversity and fairness on recognition and self-realization with various ideas, beliefs, status, life-styles, etc. From this different point of right, various theories on justice are produced, such as distribution theory, recognition theory, rectification theory and representation theory of justice. Superficially these justice theories are differentiated in diverse ways, but substantially they share the one common precondition, namely, justice problems are reduced to problems of freedom, equality and right.

From the liberal aspect, justice has lost its transcendental or natural virtues in ancient context, liberty or freedom is the inner and exterior rule and righteousness of justice. When liberty was comprehended as a subjective category of humanity, and differentiated from objective nature, difficulties appeared. In the humanitarian concept of liberty, where people have a preset complete perfect humanity or personality, justice is the only socio-political cause of humanity. The person, as individuality, has a moral and righteous priority; while as species, it has perfection of willing and personality. So in the liberal-equal justice order, everyone is free and autonomous, has equal human rights, and inter-individual equality is embodied not only in the legal system, but also in the moral context, even between vice and virtue. This could result in an embarrassing situation in which the individual and society could lose the righteousness to nurture moral judgment of the other and of society, losing the capability with praxis of the good social life. This is why liberalism is always anxious over social indifference, the destruction of the public sphere and the dilemma of goodness.

³ Plato: *The Protagoras* (322b, 322c), Trans., C.C.W. Taylor, Clarendon Press, London, 2002.

In the liberal context, problems on justice come into the theories and practices of liberty. If liberal-equal order is radically realized everywhere, ethical and political life would be lost in difficulties in which people have no right or ability to differentiate good and bad, virtue and vice, and finally, the possibilities of justice itself could be in danger. In contrast, cognition of ancient justice ideas may be more profound. From the ancient point of view, justice, as natural virtue, has a characteristic transcendental to the human world, the human being as a limited imperfect being is bestowed virtues such as justice, wisdom and rationality from nature and divinity. Because of human limitation, justice, virtue and goodness, which are embodied in humanity, are imperfect, uncompleted, diverse and various. So it is necessary to differentiate personalities between virtuous and vicious, normal and abnormal, healthy and unhealthy, etc. The capability of moral judgment as such is a transcendental foundation for socio-ethic-political life, justice as supreme virtue is the transcendent ideal of a realistic society. The first goal of political praxis is not to encase justice to one certain order based on some limited laws such as a liberal constitutional system (which of course is important), but to pursue justice as the inner good of the socio-political world, and to reproduce justice as to accommodate pluralistic and varied virtues in social production; this is a continuing and universal mission in historical praxis.

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CHAPTER IV

A CRITIQUE OF UNIVERSALISM

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Philosophy does not speak so much directly on the practical issues. But people in practical work would like to intensify their voice with philosophical terms, if possible. Recently in China one of the key words mentioned frequently is universalism, though from different points of view. One holds that we should follow some ideas from the west, since they are universal. Another holds that we should follow some universal ideas which originated in the Chinese tradition. Both seek something universal acknowledging that universality has the priority over particularity. Actually the debate concerns what kind of value is fitting for China, but no one wondered whether a concept of universal value is possible. In my view, to seek universal value is universalism, and universalism is an illusion. In this paper, the following points are discussed academically as a reference for those in practical work: What is the proper meaning of the term ‘universal’? How does universalism arise? What is the limitation of universalism? Why and how to overcome universalism?

UNIVERSAL AS A TERM ILLUSTRATING A SPECIAL KIND OF KNOWLEDGE

All the “-isms” originated from the West, including ‘universalism’. Checking ‘universalism’ in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, to our astonishment, it is not a philosophical term, but a theological one. It denotes a Christian movement and point of view that every human being’s soul would be saved at last. It is surely not what we are going to discuss here. However, the question of universalism is one of the hot

¹ Here I would like to thank Professor Gholamreza Aavani (Director of Iranian Institute of Philosophy), and Professor Dr. Wolfgang Welsch (Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Institut für Philosophie). They pointed out to me respectively that the original term “universal” used in Aristotle’s *Metaphysica*, translated by W.D. Ross, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941) is “katholou” which literally means “according to the whole”, that is “general”, not “universal”. Their knowledge confirms my point of view that only Plato entered the realm of universal, i.e., an absolute and transcendental realm, which is the origin to develop into later universalism. Professor Welsch even has more to say on this topic, as shown in his E-mail to me on November 4, 2009. It is a pleasure to have his ideas shared by us.

points in the domain of philosophy and most western philosophers would like to reject universalism, except some in the classroom teaching the history of philosophy.

Though ‘Pu Bian’ is a modern Chinese term formulated for ‘universal’, we did not have it as a philosophical term before we learned western philosophy, nor can we find it in any traditional Chinese lexicon. But today, people seem very much familiar with this term and use it frequently, such as, (to put it in English) “We acknowledge the universality of things”, (the usage here is very clumsy, actually the sentence might read, ‘we can see things everywhere’ or ‘there are things everywhere’) which is the reason that we should accept something as universal. The Chinese scholar’s misuse of the term exposes the need to trace back to the original meaning in the context of western culture.

Then, what is universalism in philosophy? As a rule, every “-ism” regards a certain theory advocating the priority of something. Universalism advocates the priority of something universal. The first thing is to make clear the meaning of universal. For this, we should trace it back to Greek philosophy.

We see that in *Metaphysics* Aristotle classified knowledge into different levels: sense, memory, experience and art. The difference between experience and art lies in: “...science and art come to men through experience....Now art arises when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgment about a class of objects is produced.”² That is to say, compared to knowledge of experience, art as knowledge has the form of universal judgment. Aristotle said, “We suppose artists to be wiser than men of experience.”³ “...and this because the former know the cause, but the latter do not. For men of experience know that the thing is so, but do not know why, while the others know the ‘why’ and cause.”⁴

Here we see, universal is a term illustrating a certain sort of knowledge. For Aristotle, universal knowledge is the highest knowledge; it exposes the cause and principle of things. Therefore it is the task of philosophy to seek such knowledge. He argued that the wise man has the characteristics of knowing all things as far as possible; being capable to learn things difficult; being more exact and more capable of teaching the cause in every branch of knowledge. Besides, the wise man must not be ordered but must order. And, the knowledge he seeks is more of the nature of wisdom. “Such and so many are the notions, then, we have as wisdom and the wise. Now of these characteristics that of knowing all things must belong to him who has in the highest degree universal

² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 981a2-6.

³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 981a25.

⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 981a29-30.

knowledge; for he knows in a sense all instance that fall under the universal.”⁵ It turns out that what Aristotle meant by universal knowledge is the knowledge about cause and principle of things. “Judging by all the tests we have mentioned, then, the name in question falls to the same science; this must be a science that investigates the first principles and causes; for the good, i.e. the end, is one of the causes.”⁶

For Aristotle, there is individual knowledge and universal knowledge. Universal knowledge has various degrees. Philosophy is universal knowledge in the highest degree, as he said: “There is a science which investigates being as being and the attributes belong to this in virtue of its own nature. Now this is not the same as any of the so-called special sciences; for none of these others treats universally of being as being. They cut off a part of being and investigate the attribute of this part; this is what the mathematical sciences for instance do.”⁷ Of all knowledge, only universal knowledge touches the essence of things. It is the knowledge about cause and principle; philosophy is the most universal knowledge, for it investigates the first principle.

In fact, earlier than Aristotle, Plato was the first one to raise the notion of universality. No one would deny that Plato’s idea is universal, though I did not find in his works the term universal or universality.⁸ The term universal used by Plato is different from that of Aristotle. For Plato, it is absolute universal or universality; while for Aristotle, it means universality generalized from experience, or to be exact, it is general or generality. This distinction was made clear late in Kantian.

Kant talked about the issue of universality, too. The challenge Kant faced was from empiricism, that, given experience was the ground for all knowledge, there could be no universal knowledge. But the fact is that we do have mathematics and natural science (mainly physics at that time), maybe metaphysics as well, which have the characteristic of universality. However these problems are raised: How is pure mathematics possible? How is pure natural science possible? How is metaphysics possible as a science? In short, how are synthetic judgments

⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, (982a20).

⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 982b7.

⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1003a20.

⁸ I checked *Plato, The Collected Dialogues*, edited by Edith Hamilton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), and *Plato, Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper (New York: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), both books have the term ‘universal’ listed in the index, but as I checked the pages as index refers one by one, nowhere could I find the term in the text, though the content really shows where Plato was introducing the idea with characteristic of universality. The fact shows that, by the time of Plato there was even no word ‘universal’ or ‘universality’ as we today understood.

a priori possible? Kant pointed out that the key problem here is universality. He said,

David Hume, who among all philosophers came closest to this problem, still did not conceive of it anywhere near determinately enough and in its universality, but rather stopped with the synthetic proposition of the connection of effect with its cause (*principium causalitatis*), believing himself to have brought out that such an *a priori* proposition is entirely impossible, and according to his inferences everything that we call metaphysics would come down to a mere delusion of an alleged insight of reason into that which has in fact merely been borrowed from experience and from habit has taken on the appearance of necessity; an assertion, destructive of all pure philosophy, on which he would never have fallen if he had had our problem in its generality before his eyes, since then he would have comprehended that according to his argument there could also be no pure mathematics, since this certainly contains synthetic *a priori*, an assertion from which his sound understanding would surely have protected him.⁹

That is to say, behind the question of how synthetic proposition is possible, the essential problem is how universal knowledge is possible. Kant's answer is well known that, given the fact that there is universal knowledge (mathematics and natural science) and its universality cannot be derived from experience, the only way we can conceive is that universality is out of a human being's special faculty in formulating sense data into knowledge. The ontological categories supposed to express the essence of the outside things now, for Kant, become the expression of human being's faculty of knowing. This turn is the so-called Copernican revolution.

Thus, we see two sorts of usage of the term universality. Though there is some difference between Aristotle and Kant, for the former universality denotes a certain knowledge different from experience; for the later the term universality does not only denote a sort of knowledge, but also and even more essentially denotes the human being's knowing capability, it is without doubt that universal or universality means a sort of knowledge.

⁹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.146,

To search universal knowledge was the main task of western philosophy, at least of the main stream of western philosophy. Universalism is closely related to universal knowledge. It stems from a human being's own way searching that sort of knowledge. To demonstrate the point more clearly, we need to go deep into universal knowledge.

UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE IS NOT THE BROADLY ACCEPTED KNOWLEDGE

Not all sorts of knowledge is universal knowledge. It would be a mistake if we take anything that could be understood and communicated as universal. When we sympathize with another in sorrow, despair, or share with others the feeling of happiness and joy, there is understanding and communication, but it is not something universal. Not all things that could be communicated are universal knowledge. To search universal knowledge is the task of the western philosophical tradition. This is more conspicuous as compared the Chinese philosophy which takes being a sage as its main task.

To speak negatively, universal knowledge does not equal knowledge broadly accepted. Much knowledge has been believed and known broadly by people since ancient times. Among many examples, for instance, before the Copernican theory, people broadly believed that the sun moved around the earth. But it is not correct today. Universality is the feature of certain knowledge, no matter whether people accept it or not. For example, the effectiveness of mathematics would not be changed according to different people and nations. Again, the laws of physics will always work within certain conditions. To put it in other words, the assertion of universal knowledge is certainty and without exception. Whether a sort of knowledge is universal or not, does not depend on whether people approve and accept it broadly, or, reject and object to it broadly.

To speak positively, universal knowledge is rational knowledge grasped merely by its conception. Early in Plato's writing, it is disclosed that the object of perception is without certainty; it varies according to different persons. He supposed there were ideas to represent the one out of many and the unchangeable out of the changeable. By ideas human beings for the first time conceived the existence of something universal. They are the objects of rational thinking.

Rationalists, especially Kant, define universality even more clearly. The following two points should be noted. Firstly, there are two sorts of universality, both grasped by thinking. One is universality in a broad sense; the other in a rigorous sense. The broad sense of universality includes what is generalized from experience, the universal

degree of which will increase according to the accumulation of experience. However since the experience is always limited, the universality made by induction from experience has its limitation. In this way human beings could get only knowledge of probability. Universality in the narrow sense denotes the strict universal. The knowledge formulated by strict universal concepts is considered as the absolute universal knowledge. Kant made a clear distinction between the two universals. He said, "Experience never gives us judgments true or strict but only assumed and comparative universality (through induction),...thus if a judgment is thought in strict universality, i.e., in such a way that no exception at all is allowed to be possible, then it is not derived from experience, but is rather valid absolutely *a priori*".¹⁰ This strict universality, for Kant, is also called "absolute universality"¹¹. To be sure, the universality of Kant is Platonic, not Aristotelian.

To be noted, in English, there are two terms, universality and generality. We should leave the former for absolute universality, and the later for "universality" derived from experience. For the verb "to generalize" has the meaning of "to infer or form (a principle, opinion, conclusion) from meager or insufficient facts", "to infer (a general principle, trend, etc.) from facts, statistics, or the like". In modern Chinese we have the term "Yi Ban" as its translation. Generality differs according to the number of facts inducted. The more facts taken into account, the more general it is. High level generality sees low level generality as particular. In this sense, even particularity is a sort of generality. It is a generality in lower level compared with that in a higher level. For instance, compared with the notion living being, animal is a particular one, but, when compared with the notion human being, animal is the more general notion. At the highest level is absolute universality. Universalism as an "ism" would not advocate something less universal. This is the point distinguishing universalism from relativism; the later usually holds something generalized from experience. To be rigorous, universality should be strictly distinguished from generality, just as universalism from relativism.

Second, what is closely related with the notion of universality is necessity. Strict universality, as Kant said, is without exception. Therefore, it is at the same time necessity. He said, "Necessity and strict universality are therefore secure indications of an *a priori* cognition, and also belong together inseparably. But since in their use it is sometimes easier to sow the empirical limitation in judgment than the contingency in them, or is often more plausible to show the unrestricted universality

¹⁰ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p.137.

¹¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p.187.

that we ascribe to a judgment than its necessity, it is advisable to employ separately these two criteria, each of which is in itself infallible".¹²

The sort of knowledge that has the characteristics of both universality and necessity is objective knowledge. Because this sort of knowledge says something without exception, it could not be denied by anyone. Kant's example of such knowledge is, "all the propositions of mathematics" and, in physics, the proposition "every alteration must have a cause" (138). For Kant, the objective knowledge is measured by its universality and necessity; which in turn resulted from the human being's category *a priori*. Therefore the so-called objectivity of knowledge does not mean that such knowledge reveals the essence of the outside things or the thing-in-itself, rather, it is the feature of the knowledge itself. As to the problem of whether there is thing-in-itself and the essence of thing-in-itself, if there is, we do not know. Thus, Hegel commented, "Kant gives the name objective to what is thought, to the universal and necessary, while he describes as subjective whatever is merely felt". "But after all, objectivity of thought, in Kant's sense, is again to a certain extent subjective. Thoughts, according to Kant, although universal and necessary categories, are *only our* thoughts—separated by an impassable gulf from the thing, as it exists apart from our knowledge." Hegel maintained that, "But the true objectivity of thinking means that the thoughts, far from being merely ours, must at the same time be the real essence of the things, and of whatever is an object to us."¹³ Though there is some difference between Kant and Hegel, both agree that universality is a character of a certain sort of knowledge. Among universal knowledge there is pure universal knowledge which, as the core or cause of the rest universal knowledge, is the object of philosophy.

FROM UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE TO UNIVERSALISM

Universal knowledge itself is not universalism. To hold universal knowledge and to advocate the importance of universal knowledge is not universalism either. But corresponding to universal knowledge is a way of human being's own existence. Universalism comes when extending the way of dealing with universal knowledge beyond the area of universal knowledge

The point here is that, by phenomenology, corresponding to the object intended, there must be a certain kind of conscious intending. Universal knowledge as revealed to us must be accompanied by a certain way of consciousness, in which, as Kant explained, human being uses

¹² *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 137.

¹³ Hegel: *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, §41.

categories on empirical data. One could understand universal knowledge only when he has admitted the way of using categories logically. Indeed, to understand universal knowledge requires that people admit the way of logical thinking. That is, only by thinking logically, could one understand universal knowledge. Whether this way of conscious is *a priori*, as Kant suggested, or is gained by learning and training, it is the human being's own way of existence.

There are various ways of dealing with things. The way dealing with universal knowledge is different from that of dealing with other things. For instance, in enjoying music, one is different from when doing a math problem. With universal knowledge one is knowing something, searching the truth or investigating into the essence of things. Each way of dealing with things is the human being's own way of existence.

However it is likely that for the most part the way of doing universal knowledge is always trying to stretch beyond its area. That is to say, it is possible to put everything into knowing or investigating. For instance, music is for human being's enjoyment, but one might also ask what the essence of music is. In asking such questions, one gets to know the theory of music by analyzing melody, rhythm, tone etc. Anyway, enjoyment and investigating are different ways of human being's dealing with music.

The human being is apt to deal with things with the question 'what is it?' This question could be answered in different levels. One of the levels is to search into the essence of things, in which human being sets himself aside as subject opposed to the things as object. Furthermore, the essence of things, as Plato suggested, is supposed to be viewed by the eyes of the soul and represented by ideas. At bottom, the so-called universal knowledge, such as mathematics and physics, results from logical operation of those ideas. Together with the notion of essence, there stands the notion of reality, definition, principle, law, and absolute truth. The usual form of universal knowledge is formulated by definition, judgment, and inference, which is called theory. Universalism uses this form on areas other than universal knowledge. For instance, to put music under investigation, and ask the question, as it did in math and physics, of the essence of music. In this way, music enjoyed by people is not the same thing as the object of knowing in which the pleasure of enjoying music disappears.

The point here is that, we see in universal knowledge a corresponding way of the human being's own existence. In this existentiality, man is in the situation of logically operating concepts, and reveals to the conscious an object characterized as universality. It is the human being's creativity to dig out something universal, at the same time to open a sort of corresponding capacity in consciousness, which marks the rich meaning of life and reveals the variety of the world. In

this way we have formulated the universal knowledge (mathematics and physics), which greatly favors the life of human beings.

However, the existentiality corresponding to universal knowledge is only one of the possible ways of human beings. Whatever achievements it has got, it cannot substitute or obliterate the other possible ways of existence. For the human being needs all possible ways of existence to answer the challenges of his life. In another sense, the more possible ways the human being has, the richer is the meaning of life.

But the existentiality corresponding to universal knowledge is so attractive that it is frequently used beyond its own area. To cite some instances, in ethics, people raise the question what is good; in aesthetics, what is beauty; and in axiology, the essence of value. Usually such questions are answered by definition. Definition is in turn used to determine whether something is good or evil, beautiful or ugly, of value or valueless. Even where no definition is found, it is wildly believed that there has to be such a universal notion and it is effective everywhere. On the other hand, people are gradually aware that the abuse of such notion leads to no effects. For instance, people can never convince others to accept some value according to an axiological definition. For people always choose something as valuable according to their practical interest, not according to a concept. Just because in reality, there is pressure from a so-called universal concept of value forcing people to do this or that against their will, the term universalism is formulated to denote that bias. Universalism is not a positive term from the very beginning.

THE LIMITATION OF UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE

It is wrong to think that universal knowledge is the knowledge covering all things and all sorts of knowledge. Not all that we know is universal knowledge. Therefore the so-called universal knowledge is not knowledge without limitation.

The problem of universalism is that it depreciates, or what is more, even excludes, non-universal knowledge. What is the most serious is that, as one of human being's existentiality, the dominating universalism has the bias to cover the human beings' other possible ways of life. However as universalism pervades everywhere, its limitation are exposed as well.

We can see the limitation of universalism in many aspects. The most auspicious could be viewed in ethics, aesthetics and the theory of value. According to universalism, there should be established the universal concepts of good, beauty, and value. But up to this date, we still have no definition about these three notions. Yes, there might be some descriptive definition. But a descriptive definition is not universal.

The reason why these three notions could not have universal definition lies in that: to know things conceptually differs from the feeling of good, beauty and value. In conceptual knowing, there is a figuration that the things to be known as object on the one hand and the man as subject on the other hand. But good, beauty and value cannot separate from the men feeling them. Rather, they are generated from the human being's action of morality, enjoyment and evaluation. In short, they are different aspects accompanied with respect to existentialities. The proper meaning of good, beauty, and value cannot be established as universal knowledge.

The western scholars have recognized the limitation of universal knowledge. Universalism praises the advantage of universal knowledge, takes universal knowledge as the real knowledge or absolute truth. Therefore it is necessary for Lyotard (*The Postmodern Condition*) to remind us that the original meaning of 'knowledge' is broader than that of 'universal knowledge'. It includes the technique of how to operate, how to exist. He maintains that knowledge is an issue of capacity, the operation of such capacity is far beyond simply knowing truth. Furthermore, it extends to recognize and operate the standard of efficacy, justice and joy, the beauty of sound and color, etc. If there were no dictatorship of universal knowledge there would be no necessity for Lyotard to do this. Another philosopher Polanyi (1891-1976) put tacit knowledge opposite to explicit knowledge. I think this is also an example of resisting the domination of universal knowledge. Literally, tacit knowledge is the knowledge that is understood but difficult to articulate. It belongs to personal experience. Yu Zhenhua, professor of East China Normal University, thus describes the background of tacit knowledge "Since Socrates, in western philosophy there occurred a bias to praise universality and look down particularity, which was noted by Wittgenstein to be 'the search for universality' and 'the neglect of individual event'. One of the tasks for tacit knowledge rising in twentieth century is to challenge the above theoretical bias on the relation between universality and particularity"¹⁴.

Because universalism originated in the west, the western scholars know more about the true meaning of universalism. Today few would claim to be a universalist. But the condition in China is different. Influenced by the western culture, some scholars highly praise universal knowledge to the neglect of other sorts of knowledge. One conspicuous example concerns traditional Chinese medicine. It is said that the Chinese traditional medicine is not science, and hence should be given up. To be sure, measured by universal knowledge, Chinese traditional medicine is indeed not a universal science. Facilitated by physics and

¹⁴ Yu Zhenhua, "Judgment from Perspective of Epistemology," *Philosophy Studies*, 2005, No.6

chemistry, modern medicine goes to the level of molecule and atom, and exposes the code of genetic genes. Modern medicine plays a great part in keeping human being's healthy. But this is not a reason to deny Chinese traditional medicine. It is unbelievable that Chinese people with so large a populations can survive to this day without their own effective way of medicine. Of course, Chinese traditional medicine is a sort of knowledge. As to what sort of knowledge Chinese traditional medicine is, needs to be compared with the modern western medicine. The Chinese traditional medicine does not view human being as sheer object. A healthy person should be so in both body and mind. Therefore, Chinese medicine maintains that a healthy person should be balanced in all aspects, that is, between Yin and Yang. To cure disease requires not only the doctor's responsibility, but also the co-work of the patients. These ideas are still useful.

Another example concerns Chinese philosophy. Though there is a variety of schools and notions about philosophy, it is sure that the dominant stream in the western tradition took universal knowledge as its main task. In this way, philosophy investigates the essential knowledge of things, the form of that knowledge, the relation of universality and particularity, how to achieve universal propositions, their features, etc. Even moral problem would be discussed in that manner. To do philosophy in the west might be said to be training in thinking, i.e., to learn conceptual thinking. Compared to the western philosophy, traditional Chinese philosophy aims at being a sage. The way of doing Chinese traditional philosophy is to do self-cultivation in both body and mind. To be a sage is to live in the proper way. The relevant knowledge is necessary, but such knowledge is always connected with one's living situation, including one's own condition and the condition of the natural and social environment. What is important is to adjust one's behavior in harmony with the environment, as Confucius said, to follow what one desires without transgressing what is right. This sort of knowledge is never apart from one's own life. It is not in the form of universal knowledge, not to say the conceptual knowledge. Rather it is a technique or art of life. Confucianism of the Soon dynasty usually called it "Gong-fu". To do philosophy for ancient Chinese is to be self-conscious in order to answer properly the challenge of life. This way has been maintained by the Chinese people through the length of history, and I believe it still works in the present. For instance, when some person concludes his accomplishment in whatever career, usually he would say "I wish to put being a person first", or, as an actor would say, "to learn performance, one needs to learn being a person in life". But measured by western philosophy with the standard of universal knowledge, traditional Chinese philosophy would not even be qualified as philosophy. Indeed, a couple of years ago in China there was the discussion about the

legitimacy of Chinese philosophy. What is worse is that for the 'legitimacy' the history of Chinese philosophy was formulated according to the notion and framework of western philosophy. In that way the real face of traditional Chinese philosophy was obscured.

The above examples show the limitation of universal knowledge. By its measure, other sorts of knowledge such as the Chinese traditional philosophy and medicine would be neglected and dismissed, though they played so great a role in the history of China. They may logically be ineffective, but effective practically. What is more serious is to extend the corresponding existentiality beyond its area, which is what we mean by universalism. We can observe this on the issue of value.

THE ILLUSION OF THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL VALUE

Currently the hottest topic of universalism is the problem of value. Along with universalism, there is supposed to be a universal concept of value. Since it is universal, it determines and effects on any particular value. It is also considered the highest aim of all value. But in practice, people feel totally confused in following that concept. People even cannot clearly express the idea of universal value. I see this so-called universal value as an illusion, to search for it is typically universalism.

Indeed, a universal concept of value is very attractive, if we could really formulate it. For we could use it to judge whether a particular thing is or is not valuable. Furthermore we could use it to unify people's idea so as to eliminate the conflict among different values. To reach that goal we would need first of all a definition of value, but unfortunately we could never get such a definition.

The usual way of making a definition is species plus genus difference. For instance, for the biological definition of human being, there must be the concept of animal to which human being logically belongs. The difference between human beings and other animals gives the definition: A human being is a rational animal. But in the problem of value, we cannot find a concept to which the concept of value logically belongs. Though this is the typical way of making a definition for universal knowledge, no such definition of value has been formulated up to this day.

Another possible way to formulate the definition of value is to generalize some commonality from concrete value. There are many difficulties in this way. One is that, people cannot exhaust all of concrete value, though a universal concept of value is supposed to be effective for all sorts of value without exception. A concept by empirical generalization cannot meet such a requirement. Another is that value is something related to the human being's desire, will, etc. But these are so different that, for some people, one sort of value might be not valuable.

It is clear that either we cannot generalize a unique concept of value from various sorts of values conflicting and negating each other, or we establish such a concept as an idea, but without its identity.

A definition of value might be developed in a descriptive and genetic way. In this way, a certain value is confirmed according to the circumstances and the evaluation of some people based on their desire and will. Indeed, for the most part people understand value in this way. But this idea of value cannot be a universal concept of value. That is to say, it is not a prescriptive concept, as universalism demands, because it is always related to some concrete circumstances, it is limited by time and space.

Suppose a universal concept of value will be found some day, it could not be used to resolve the practical conflict in practical life. It is an illusion that a universal concept can help to resolve the conflict among people. This is because a universal concept of value is supposed to be coherent and therefore able to decide what is valuable and what is not. But, just as the existence of god reached by ontological proof differs from the existence of the 100 dollars in a pocket; the former is a logical determination not concerned with the real existence in time and space. The coherence of the idea of value also is a logical determination. The dictum: "do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" is logically coherent. But practically, to follow this discipline would not be moral in all the cases, and to act against this discipline would not always be immoral. What is needed here is to be in accord with the concrete situation. A universal concept cannot resolve the conflict based on different or opposite interests. What we see in history is that, to avoid greater loss, people reach a compromise. This is the usual way to resolve conflict.

Perhaps some people would say that what they meant by universal value is not a logical determination, but an idea accepted by a great majority of people, or "an idea universally accepted". Indeed, some scholars in China today do use the term universal value to denote the value accepted by the majority. But the problem here is whether they want to impose their own value to format other's value. Indeed, as we see, when people claim a certain sort of value, they want others to accept it. The term universal is used for them with an imperative force.

Yes, people in a society or community certainly share some basic common value; otherwise the society or community would collapse. But common value is different from universal value. Common value changes along with the time. That is to say, only when people face the same problem and share a common interest may they hold the same view of value. Even within a group which shares some common value concerning some different issues, they may have different values when they face the other issues. As to the problem of what is a basic common

value, it depends on the concrete situation concerning to a human being's survival and flourishing. These have different meanings according to the varied stages of different people's development. Here what is important is to know the concrete conditions of development, instead of appealing to some abstract idea of value.

OVERCOMING UNIVERSALISM

There is no universal value in reality. The illusion that there is comes from universalism, which is to apply the way of dealing with universal knowledge to the issue of value. To give up that illusion, it is necessary to destroy the idea of universalism. There are mainly two reasons to fight against universalism. First, since not all sorts of knowledge are universal, it is improper to extend the attitude of universal knowledge to the other sorts of knowledge. Secondly, since the dominating of universalism would suppress or even neglect the other possible ways of existence, it is harmful to the full development of human life.

It is easy to see that not all that we know is universal knowledge. As Kant showed, universal knowledge has the characteristic of universality and necessity; it is formulated by imposing categories *a priori* on empirical data. The typical universal knowledge for Kant is mathematics and physics, and perhaps a future metaphysics as well. Of course, we have knowledge other than mathematics and physics. But due to the great success of the two disciplines, we are biased to establish the other sorts of knowledge in the same rigorously scientific way. This bias is so strong that it stretches everywhere. If there were anything cannot be subjected into this way, it would be rejected as non-science despite whether or not it is effective in practical life. Why are mathematics and natural science (physics) chosen as typical universal knowledge? They have the characteristics of strict universality and necessity, and hence the logical power of coherence. For other sorts of knowledge to have that power, one needs to force them into the same form as math and physics, but that is impossible.

Universal knowledge is not knowledge that universally covers all the areas of life. This has been exposed from the beginning of the classification of disciplines by Plato and Aristotle. Because metaphysics as pure philosophy does not cover the humanities, a separate discipline ethics was established. Not until modern times did aesthetics and axiology emerge. The rise of humanities in the present day shows the limitation of traditional philosophy as universal knowledge. Humanities, together with ethics, aesthetics, and axiology, were supposed to break through the limitations of traditional philosophy, but unfortunately, they are still under the sway of universalism. People talk about the definition

of good, beauty, and value, about whether such a definition is logically coherent, about the features of those objects, whether objective, subjective, or the relation between the two. In this way, the good is not the true good, beauty is not what we enjoy ready at hand, and value is not what we hold in daily life., for these become objects of theory.

The classification of disciplines under the framework of traditional philosophy is a matter of universalism, since it has in its core metaphysics and takes ethics, aesthetics and axiology as practical philosophy governed by the pure principle of metaphysics. In this way people cannot grasp things appropriately, and, what is worse, universalism blocks off the human being's way of existence.

Human beings have various ways by which they survive and expose the meaning of life, that is, human being are such that they can exist this or that way. In short, in various ways, human beings realize who they are. The various ways are needed because the challenges to life from the environment are multiple. Human beings have survived in answering these challenges successfully. Though we do not know how many possible ways altogether a human being has, which can show only in responding to the challenges to life, it is important to retain all the possible ways for living in this world, for we do not know beforehand what kinds of challenge we may have in the future. But if universalism, one of our possible ways of existence, dominates the way of life, the other possible ways of life would be suppressed.

It is no fiction that universalism would suppress the other ways of life. We can see that universalism has strengthened since modern times along with the triumph of natural sciences. The more successful is the way doing natural sciences the more popular it becomes. This made us treat everything by investigating the "essence" of things. This way is all the more attractive as it is called searching the truth of things. At the beginning, this way was for grasping a certain sort of knowledge; it is one of our possible ways of life. But universalism has turned it into a "universal" way of life so that in universalism it is used to investigate the human being's own affairs. As a result, universal consciousness, in which universal knowledge is grasped, is supposed to be the essence of being human, or the highest stage of the development of the human beings. The universal consciousness here means the capacity of inference to pure conception. Hence, reasoning is said to be the essence of being human.

The situation of human beings has been greatly changed since the end of the 2nd World War. Out of many changes, the most conspicuous change we have today is that human beings have become more powerful than ever before. It does not reduce the challenge towards life; on the contrary, this made us face more serious dangers which the human being never had before. For instance, the huge amount of energy could be used

to favor the people, it could also be used to make weapons of mass destruction. The modern city offers better life, but concealed in it also are new threats, such as environmental pollution, traffic, food safety, epidemic disease, etc. Some of the challenges are caused by our way of life. Therefore, we need to adjust our own way of life. For this we need to be aware that there is a variety possible ways of life, not to be restricted by universalism.

We are clearly aware that it is not easy to get rid of universalism. The history of western philosophy shows that the criticism of universalism is always accused of relativism if it places emphasis on the side of experience. Relativism cannot resist universalism, for it is within the framework of the universal-particular and is itself a weak sort of universalism. To get rid of universalism, there is need to thoroughly break through the framework of universal-particular. This means to restrict the way for universal knowledge to its own sphere (mathematics and relevant natural sciences) without extending beyond its sphere.

Here I would like to introduce very briefly Chinese philosophy to show the possibility of being outside the framework of universalism. First, the relevant issue.

Traditional Chinese philosophy never knew the distinction between essence and phenomenon. In traditional Chinese philosophy, to live in this world is the main content of life. Therefore doing philosophy means to be a man of self-awareness. Because no one tells the human being beforehand how to live in the world, man should detect cautiously and respond properly to all the possible challenges which arise in life. In this direction, Chinese traditional philosophy developed in all aspects the way to be a sage, such as, why should human beings be self-aware? What is the reason for man to be in harmony with the living environment? Is it possible for everyone to be a sage? And how to live in a difficult condition? With regard to the relevant issue concerned in this paper, Chinese traditional philosophy cares much about the possible challenges in life instead of the essence of things, which is the pre-condition for dealing with the challenge properly.

There are many evidences in the classics about being aware of the very moment when things begin to change¹⁵. This moment in Chinese is called “Ji” (几, meaning, incipience). There is a proverb: “(being able to) aware clearly the ‘Ji’ and to respond to the change properly (知几通变)”. This is a description of a wise man. Since the things are so different as to their sorts and style, the ways of dealing with them should also be varied. To be sensitive to the “ji” (incipience), a sage would put

¹⁵ To cite, for instance, from *The Book of Changes*, it says, “Yi Jing is the method by which the sages searched out exhaustively what was deep, and investigated the minutest springs (of things)” translated by James Legge.

himself in the situation of stillness or nothingness, in order to get rid of the previous engagement and the corresponding way. So we can see that all depends on the situation, for no way is certain. Standing firmly on this cultural ground, universalism is due to fail.

Quoted from Professor Wolfgang Welsch's E-mail of nov.4. 2009:

Aristotle uses the term "katholou", which literally means "according to the whole", and which is usually translated as "in general". Please also look into the beginning of Nichomachean Ethics, especially into I 4, in order to see that Aristotle is on your side and not on the Platonic side which you rightly attack. In I 4 he states that there is no universal idea of "good".

Your attack on universalism raised the problem since when philosophers do talk of "universal" things. To my surprise the "Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie" does not have an entry on "universal", but only on universalism etc. My hunch was that using the new term `universal` instead of the well-accustomed term `general` presupposes a specific challenge.

This could be

a) The concrete experience that the European model (or way of thinking) does not apply world-wide. This could be brought about by discoveries in the wake of Columbus, by encountering very different societies—in America, and also, later on, in Asia. Or

b) The fiction of other types of intellect in the universe— which indeed became a huge issue in the wake of the Copernican Revolution.

At present I suppose that b) is the origin. Because the first usage of `universal` (I can remember) is Descartes' concept of mathesis universalis, which clearly answers to the Copernicean challenge. Descartes' mathesis universalis is meant to apply not only to all fields of knowledge but also to all kinds of intellect (including God's intellect).

These remarks are meant to provide a preliminary answer to your questions. I would indeed like to continue our discussion, maybe in Shanghai next year?

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PART II
CULTURAL DIVERSITY

CHAPTER V

**THE WORLD SYSTEM IN
CIVILISATIONAL CRISIS**

KARIM DOUGLAS CROW

It is impossible to be sanguine amidst the continuing large scale global recession proliferating since September 2008. To expect a return to *business as usual* is dangerously naïve.¹ Rather than grasping at ‘green shoots’ we require historically informed critical perspectives on the deep roots and actual real significance of ongoing events with their implications for the future. Increasingly it is recognized that “the financial crisis is only the visible tip of the structural crisis of the globalized capitalism today”² since it demonstrates that “the ‘disembedded’ capitalist economy has reached its economic, political, social and ethical limits. It poses a threat to our societies, as well as to nature; it endangers both the present and the future of our world.”³

While the global crisis flows out of financialized globalization in its Neoliberal⁴ phase, it is simultaneously an organic structural crisis of

¹ Susan George (Fellow, Transnational Institute, Amsterdam) observes: “The world’s leaders and their advisors, particularly economists, largely remain in a state of denial. First they denied that the crisis would go beyond the housing sector; then they denied that it could spread beyond the borders of the United States; then, as the crisis did rapidly spread to the rest of the developed world and to the global South as well, they pretended that finance capitalism could somehow be ‘decoupled’ from the real economy. Then they pretended that throwing more and more money at the banks will somehow jump start the world economy. They act as if modest measures regulating capitalism around the edges will suffice and that the crisis will quietly go away;” *The World Crisis*, p. 5. George authored *The Lugano Report: On Preserving Capitalism in the Twenty-first Century* (London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 1999) where as devil’s advocate she extrapolated the fatal logic of financial-market profits.

² Mamdouh Habashi (Arab Research Centre, Cairo), *ibid.*, p. 3.

³ Ali El Kenz (professor of sociology, Nantes University, France), “An Anthropological View on the Crisis,” *ibid.*, pp. 126-138, on p. 128.

⁴ *Neoliberalism* refers to the post-Keynesian doctrine that market exchange is an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, built on the assumption that individual freedoms are guaranteed by freedom of the global market and free trade. Since the 1970’s it became the international economic policy predominant in policy-making circles and university economics departments. For a well-documented analysis of the devastating impact of neoliberal capitalism on the environment and labour conditions

planetary scope—economic, social, ecological, political, geopolitical, and ethical—and intimately linked to the accelerating food and energy crises. Arno Tausch, the Austrian Ministerial Counselor (Ministry of Social Security and Generations) observes:⁵

Conventional wisdom of the ‘Washington Consensus’ has it that it is always the periphery or semi-periphery country that got it all wrong during a crisis, like in East Asia, Russia or recently in Turkey and that a good combination of economic freedom, privatization, tight monetary policies and above all private foreign direct investment will “fix” it, once the forces of the market are properly at work.... The counter-position, advanced by globalization critics, environmentalists, liberation theologians of all denominations, and—most recently—dissidents from the once homogeneous neo-liberal camp would hold that unfettered globalization increases the social gaps between rich and poor both within countries as well as on a global scale. Most of the adherents of this camp would share the view...that income distribution in the world system has worsened during the period of globalization.

Furthermore, as Samir Amin (Director, Third World Forum, Dakar) stresses: “This crisis is also at the same time a crisis of US hegemony...the militarization of globalization in the service of ‘oligopoles’,⁶ the decline of democracy, plundering of the planet’s resources, and the abandoning of development for the South.”⁷

(especially on women), and how it enforces uneven geographical development, restores class power, flirts openly with authoritarianism, and undermines democratic impulses, consult the work by the influential neo-Marxian globalization development theorist David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁵ Arno Tausch, “Social Cohesion, Sustainable Development and Turkey’s Accession to the European Union: Implications from a Global Model,” in *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 2/1 Spring 2003; accessible at <http://www.alternativesjournal.net/volume2/number1/tausch.htm>.

⁶ An *oligopoly* (Greek *oligoi* ‘few’ + *poleein* ‘to sell’) is an economic term denoting a market or industry dominated by a small number of sellers (oligopolists). Because there are few sellers, each oligopole is most likely aware of the actions of the others; their decisions are influenced by others’ decisions and their strategic planning takes into account the likely responses of other market participants (collusion, market sharing...). As employed by Amin, it

Here our concern is with global historical and civilisational trajectories functioning as the buried movement of forces provoking surface currents. Uninformed opinion by unreflective observers sees only the obvious outward convulsions and tremors, while gradual shifting of tectonic plates over decades and centuries unexpectedly throws up a violent quake or destructive tsunami. Apprehending their broader significance and implications requires dispassionate comprehension of the world system of late modernity and how it has unfolded fueled by the efficacy of master ideas and 'myths'. Chief among these are the ideas of reason and progress inherited from the thinkers of the eighteenth century European Enlightenment, coupled with the corollary rise of scientism,⁸ the dissemination of technological advances, imperialism, and the neoliberal transformation of capitalism into the prevailing world system. These comprise the underlying basis for the recent spread of financialised capitalist globalization with its 'marketization'⁹ of societies advancing the political agenda of today's financial and ruling elites. Market societies exhibit "destructive dimensions that have now grown so extensive that they constitute a real threat to the future of humanity; the resulting crisis is thus a veritable crisis of civilization."¹⁰

often denotes Transnational Corporations of the North abetted by government policies.

⁷ S. Amin, "Exiting the Crisis of Capitalism or Capitalism in Crisis?" in *The World Crisis*, pp. 68-74, cited from p. 5. This Egyptian developmental economist, world system analyst and trenchant Marxian critic of peripheral capitalism has directed TWF in Dakar since 1980.

⁸ *Scientism* arises from exaggerated trust in the efficacy of the quantitative methods of natural science, and denotes the omnipotence of scientific techniques and empirical knowledge derived from physical sciences applied to all areas of investigation (physicalism), whether philosophy, social sciences or the humanities. Social sciences such as economics or sociology are deemed to be 'science' when they embody empirical methods and quantifiable measurements used in natural sciences. Central to scientism is a reductionist understanding of 'instrumental reason'. The spread of scientism signifies the rationalization of modern Euro-American culture, whereby scientific thought became akin to an ideology or a faith.

⁹ *Marketization* is an economic notion for *unlimited market expansion* and *commodification of all aspects of existence*. Market society subordinates social life to the logic of accumulation and profitability benefitting only the dominant capital.

¹⁰ Samir Amin, *Obsolescent Capitalism: Contemporary Politics and Global Disorder*, trans. P. Camillar (London and New York: Zed Books, 2003), p. 155; also consult his remarks on pp. 154-158 'The destructive dimensions of capitalist accumulation', and pp. 92-120 'Obsolescent capitalism and the new world disorder'.

Our simplified concise overview only aims to arouse thought and prompt reflection upon wider civilisational implications of recent trends. The reader should not uncritically imagine that by presenting the ideas of certain thinkers we are blessing them with unqualified approval. **A.** We first review the legacy of the Enlightenment project and its exhaustion in late modernity. **B.** Theories of Dependency development, with ensuing global spread of capitalism as the World System ('center' and 'periphery') are summarized. **C.** Then the 'Rise of Europe' is reviewed in the light of World System theory demonstrating the fallacy of European exceptionalism. What should follow is a presentation of negative impacts of Neoliberal financial-market capitalism, with a critique of its understanding of human motives and goals in the light of civilisational dimensions of social and democratic human needs. All these may together provide the necessary framework for contemplating possible real alternatives to the predominant world system. The latter two topics we reserve for a succeeding study. On the basis of such a conceptual historical platform and depth of socio-economic-political understanding, it may then become possible to elaborate a viable Islamic alternative.

The primary intent is to prompt *critical reflection* on the formation of ideas which government officials, official media and policy institutions frequently ignore or marginalize. (The emphasis on critical reason was an essential Enlightenment motivation that helped prepare the way for the advent of modernity.) It is especially the painful awareness of the paucity of well-informed Muslim reflections and the dearth of intelligent efforts to elaborate an authentic Islamic alternative to our contemporary civilisational predicament, which motivates our effort.

Significant questions about our emerging pluralist multi-polar era should be addressed from what Andre Gunder Frank termed "a more humanocentric global paradigm."¹¹ It is imperative to listen to cogent alternatives dissenting from reigning Euro-American schools of thought (the dominant discourse). Differing societies realize their own distinctive

¹¹ A. G. Frank, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998; 4th printing 2002), p. 4. Frank's seminal work has been translated into Chinese (1999, 4th pr. 2002), Japanese (2000, 4th pr. 2002), and Korean (2003). This prolific German-American iconoclastic economic historian and sociologist during the 1960s helped establish Dependency theory, and (in collaboration with Samir Amin) World Systems theory. While critiqued in the North as a heterodox economist whose ideas were deemed dangerous by authorities, East Asian policy makers and thinkers are clearly absorbing lessons from Frank. See his obituary by Barry K. Gills, "Andre Gunder Frank: 'Prophet in the Wilderness' (1929-2005)" at <http://www.networkideas.org/>.

modes of modernity by drawing on civilisational values and experiences deeply embedded within their own cultures. This reality mandates toleration of a variety of economic patterns and cultural preferences addressing genuine human needs. If people cannot learn from misplaced hopes and delusions, it will only compound our difficulty in advancing effective pragmatic policies, particularly for meeting the human needs of developing Asian societies.

ENLIGHTENMENT AND MODERNITY

Modernity is based on the principle that human beings individually and collectively as societies are alone responsible for their history and for shaping their futures [S. Amin]. Modernity arose in Western Europe about three centuries ago with the rise of new social classes of intellectuals who sought to free themselves from the grip which traditional Christian churches (primarily the Roman Catholic) exercised over minds. There emerged an audience of educated readers eager to absorb new ideas promising an egalitarian social order through ending feudal monarchic privileges, and replacing authoritarian dogmas of the Church with rational principles in harmony with the uniformity of nature displayed by the rising tide of scientific discoveries. A new ethos (existential stance toward reality) united diverse participants into a broader intellectual movement sharing similar political ideals and social aims in a common cosmopolitan spirit spreading throughout the cities of Europe and extending to North America.¹² This so-called ‘republic of letters’ was an inevitable consequence of rising public literacy augmented by the spread of popular literature, along with the growing popularity of public coffee houses,¹³ debating societies, and literary

¹² For basic orientation on *Enlightenment* values at the basis of modernity, see e.g. Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Thomas Munck, *The Enlightenment: A Comparative Social History 1721-1794* (London: Arnold, 2000); Lewis Hackett, “The Age of Enlightenment: The European Dream of Progress and Enlightenment” (1992, http://history-world.org/age_of_enlightenment.htm); Isaiah Berlin (ed.), *The Age of Enlightenment: the 18th Century Philosophers* (London: Plume, 1984). An influential yet oft-critiqued study of socio-cultural change inaugurated by the Enlightenment is Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, transl. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989).

¹³ On the importance of coffee in the social process of the Enlightenment, see Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). Coffee as a popular beverage spread to Western Europe from Ottoman Arab territories where the

salons where thinkers of various tendencies gathered to converse on fashionable and pressing issues. These public intellectuals—the self-styled ‘philosophists’ (French: *philosophes*, with France at first being the social and intellectual heart of this tendency)—highlighted the rule of law and the need to introduce constraints upon arbitrary exercise of institutional power by kings, nobility, or priests. They taught democracy and equality, revolution and reform, cosmopolitanism and internationalism, skepticism and science, all in a heady mix of rationalist and social-political agendas that captured the imagination of both the leisured class and of the growing public middle class.

The basic components of various tendencies jostling together under the umbrella of this ‘Enlightenment’ (German *Aufklärung*, French *Les lumières*, Italian *Illuminismo*) or ‘Age of Reason’ were grounded on unbounded faith in the primacy of critical reflection, confidence in the demonstrable physical laws of nature, and an optimistic utopianism in material progress by means of controlling nature and history. They embraced the following: ♦The universe is fundamentally *rational* and can be understood through the use of reason alone. ♦Truth can be attained by *empirical observation*, the use of innate human reason, and systematic doubt, while traditional authority (of monarchs, or the Church) was not to be preferred over experience. ♦All social and individual human life may be understood in the same way that *physical laws of the natural world* are understood—they are subject to manipulation or engineering in the same manner that the natural world is subjected to human use—namely, by the use of instrumental reason.¹⁴ ♦Human history is largely a history of *ascending material and rational progress*: by developing scientific knowledge of the natural world along with the ability to manipulate the physical world through technology, by overcoming ignorance bred of superstitions and religions, and by mitigating human cruelty and violence through social improvements and government structures. ♦Human beings may be improved by education and developing their rational facilities. ♦Religious and metaphysical teachings on transcendent values as the source and goal of human existence have no intrinsic place in the understanding of the physical as well as human realms [secularism]. ♦The greatest human crimes were perpetrated in the name of religion and of God; so a fair, just, and

coffeehouse first appeared. For the Islamic background, see the excellent study by Ralph S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeeshouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

¹⁴ Instrumental rationality refers to *employing human reason as a tool to reach goals*, instead of using reason to critically assess the *value* or *end* of goals. In the natural sciences, it denotes empirical knowledge of natural processes with the potential for *technically harnessing natural laws* or manipulating physical properties and conditions of nature.

productive society requires religious *tolerance* between differing Christian sects, or even (in the view of some) towards non-Christian religions.

These newly-formed ‘philosophists’ of the Enlightenment sought to deliver individuals from political and religious restraints so that they could act freely in accordance with human nature. They were convinced they had discovered a sure formula for perpetual human happiness. In their theories of human personality and development, social dynamics, and of political and economic organization, the Enlightenment thinkers departed from older religious and moral explanations of human behavior and interactions towards an empirical analysis and mechanistic explanation of the laws of human activity and motives. Material reality was accepted as the only reality, and natural laws affecting human society were deemed to be basically mechanistic. The formula promised that pursuit of *unfettered self-interest* would benefit society as a whole; while it also promised that unfettered human reason would produce sound moral judgments [Deism], liberated from the dogmatism and superstition of organized religion. The *laissez-faire* notion of the Scottish economist Adam Smith (d. 1790) held that if mankind were given the freedom to act out of self-interest and pursue maximum personal gain, the consequences would be “most agreeable to the interests of the whole of society.” Autonomous individual freedom encouraged the application of natural physical laws in shaping human activity and organization. Believing they now understood these scientific laws, many of the eighteenth-century rationalists were convinced they had found the secret of never-ending *progress*.¹⁵

The noted British political philosopher and critic of Neoliberalism John Gray bluntly labels such belief in progress as a utopian ‘myth’—portraying it as an inverted or sublimated act of faith deriving (unconsciously) from older Christian salvational teachings that were recast in a secular mold. He depicts secular culture as a “*mutation of religious faith*” being “*a hidden re-birth of apocalyptic religious myth that is repressed in thought and emotion and shut off from conscious scrutiny*.”¹⁶ Gray has carefully explored this repressed dimension of modern politics as “*a chapter in the history of religion*” with pernicious consequences, and which remains largely ignored by contemporary

¹⁵ In his *Voltaire and Enlightenment* (London: Orion, 1998; New York: Routledge, 1999) John Gray pointed out that not all the Enlightenment *philosophes* unequivocally adhered to belief in inevitable universal progress.

¹⁶ Gray, *Al Qaeda and what it means to be Modern* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003; 2nd ed. 2007), p. 116; see his essay “The Myth of Progress” in *New Statesman* 9th April 1999.

establishment thought.¹⁷ The consequences of this displacement from salvation in the *Hereafter* toward a perfect social and economic order in the *Here and Now*, continues to reverberate in our lives today.

Among the social sciences elaborated by Enlightenment thinkers, pure Economics well exemplifies the conception of ‘instrumental reason’. Economics investigates how economic ‘laws’ constrain human activity and it seeks to manipulate such rules or conditions, presenting these rules to be as empirically valid as the physical laws of nature. Economic life was viewed as governed by principles expressing the demands of ‘Reason’ (synonymous with human nature): private property, freedom of enterprise, and market competition. This has led to a separation between the economic and the political spheres of social life. Samir Amin observes:¹⁸

Taking their concept of ‘Reason’ as the common denominator of both political and economic management, Enlightenment thinkers argued that if humans were rational then their political choices could not but have the effect of strengthening the economic results produced by the market, so long as the exercise of democratic rights was withheld from women (notoriously emotional rather than rational), as well as from slaves, the poor and the destitute (proletarians), who merely obeyed their instincts. Democracy therefore had to be based on a tax qualification, so that it was reserved only for males who were at once citizens and entrepreneurs....But this meant that politics lost its autonomy in the convergence of the political and the economic, not to say the subordination of the former to the latter.

Understanding the natural world and humanity’s place in it solely on the basis of instrumental rationality—while trivializing the experience of religious faith and relevance of transcendent values for human existence—was perhaps the outstanding feature of the Enlightenment project. Unfettered innate reason was promoted as the primary source and legitimacy for ethics, political authority, economic

¹⁷ John Gray in *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2007; and New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), p. 2. Previously certain thinkers including Heinz Heimsoeth, *The Six Great Themes of Western Metaphysics and the End of the Middle Ages*, transl. R.J. Betanzos (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994; German original 1922) reached parallel conclusions regarding the origin of secularism.

¹⁸ *Obsolescent Capitalism* p. 33.

“science” and social organization. This set the stage for the emergence of the contemporary ‘physicalist’ notion of reason as a brain function or ‘mental event’ at the basis of scientism.¹⁹ An assumed correlation in the uniformity of natural laws with the principles governing human social and political activity—a chief feature of Enlightenment thought and of its approach to instrumental reason—has been rightly critiqued as a totally gratuitous assumption.²⁰

The signatories of the *French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, the *American Declaration of Independence*, and the *United States Bill of Rights* were all motivated by these Enlightenment principles. The French Revolution in 1789 was experienced in Europe as the most profound spiritual and intellectual crisis, when the sense of common purpose originally fostered by the Enlightenment gave way to divisive conflict. The assault undertaken by the philosophists against the old feudal order led to the long international battle fought by means of revolutions and dissenting political movements—from 1789 until 1939 and into the present—between both liberal and socialist forces imbued with the Enlightenment heritage, and those forces of religious reaction, conservative prejudice or landed feudal privilege whose inspiration derived from what Isaiah Berlin termed the ‘Counter-Enlightenment’.²¹ The triumphalist *Eurocentric* view of history which maintains not only that the scientific and technological changes emanating from Europe resulting in the Industrial Revolution brought economic change throughout the world, but also gifted ‘civilisation’ to the rest of the world (thanks to Colonialism), was not effectively challenged until the mid-twentieth century.²²

The foundation of modern Western political, economic, scientific and intellectual culture rests upon the Enlightenment, with its general hostility towards religion, promotion of secularity (separation of State from Church), and the privileging of applied reason for securing human

¹⁹ For details, see K.D. Crow, “Islam and Reason,” *Al-Shajarah* (ISTAC, Kuala Lumpur) vol. 8 No.1 (2003), pp. 109-137.

²⁰ Consult esp. Paul Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason* (London and New York: Verso, 1987), ch. 3 for the relations of theoretical knowledge with historical traditions on the development of modern science (thanks to the late Professor Syed Hussein Alattas for this reference); further see Gray, *Al Qaeda* p. 109.

²¹ Darrin M. McMahaon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: The French Counter Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²² See Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism* (1988; English trans. by Russel Moore, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989); A.G. Frank, *ReOrient*; and Immanuel Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: New Press, 2006).

freedom and material progress. The “grand narratives” which enshrined those sweeping principles continued to hold sway during the 19th century with its attempts to reconstitute a continuum of gradual progress in the new scientific paradigms of Positivism, Evolutionism (Darwinism), and of Socialism as well as Historical Materialism, taken to be truly ‘modern’. In a certain sense all of us moderns are the *children* of the Enlightenment—or its orphans.

Twilight of Enlightenment. The devastating critique by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (of the Frankfurt philosophical school) in their seminal study *Dialectic of Enlightenment*,²³ highlighted the ‘dark’ side of the Enlightenment project which fed into the revolutionary Reign of Terror of the Jacobins (1793-94) during the French Revolution, and appeared in the 20th century in the cruel totalitarian excesses of Fascism, as well as of Marxist socialism in Russia and then of Maoist China. Furthermore, by facilitating the dramatic spread of mercantile and industrial Capitalism, there is the undeniable impetus which the Enlightenment endowed to European Imperialism with all its injustice and oppression. Thus, from the French Revolution of 1789 through two centuries of exploitation, war and imperial conquest, ‘modernity’ has remained entangled with bloodshed and terror.²⁴

Contemporary debates assessing the Enlightenment legacy have recently been magnified by conflicting evaluations issuing from the political left and from the fundamentalist as well as conservative right in Euro-American thought. The German social theorist Jürgen Habermas, one of the most eloquent defenders of the contemporary relevance of the Enlightenment project, pointedly asked:²⁵

Enlightenment thinkers still had the extravagant expectation that the arts and sciences would promote not only the control of natural forces, but would also further understanding of the world and of the self, would promote moral progress, the justice of institutions, and even the happiness of human beings. The 20th century has shattered this optimism...Should we try to hold on to the intentions

²³ *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Amsterdam: 1947), English trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). This work, contextualized in a reaction to National Socialism, has had a major effect on 20th century Euro-American philosophy, sociology, culture, and politics, and is still being actively discussed today.

²⁴ Consult especially J. Gray, *Black Mass*, ch. 2, pp. 36-73 “Enlightenment and Terror in the Twentieth Century”.

²⁵ Habermas, “Modernity versus Postmodernity,” in *New Left Critique* vol. 22 (Winter 1981).

of the Enlightenment, feeble as they may be, or should we declare the entire project of modernity a lost cause?

However, the view of Horkheimer and Adorno argues that:²⁶

the scientific method of the Enlightenment may have originally intended to serve the ideals of human liberation in an assault upon religious dogma. Yet the power of scientific reason ultimately wound up being directed not merely against the gods, but all metaphysical ideas—including conscience and freedom—as well. “Knowledge” became divorced from “information,” norms from facts, and the *scientific method*, increasingly freed from any commitment to liberation, transformed nature into an object of domination, and itself into a whore employed by the highest bidder.

In the more charitable positive evaluation: “the Enlightenment was always a movement of protest against the exercise of arbitrary power, the force of custom and ingrained prejudices, and the justification of social misery,”²⁷ and it remains essentially relevant to democratic and liberal impulses for Western thought today.

But in the more radically negative evaluation:²⁸

...all schools of contemporary political thought are variations on the Enlightenment project...That project, though irreversible in its cultural effects, was self-undermining and is *now exhausted*. Fresh thought is needed on the dilemmas of the late modern age which does not simply run the changes on intellectual traditions whose matrix is that of the Enlightenment. This is so...because some of our dilemmas issue from aspects of the

²⁶ Citing here the paraphrase by Stephen E. Bronner, “Interpreting the Enlightenment: Metaphysics, Critique, and Politics,” in *Logos* 3/3 (Summer 2004), who reviews post-9/11 contestations of the Enlightenment legacy by both the fundamentalist right and radical left.

²⁷ *Ibid.* Bronner himself seeks to salvage the Enlightenment legacy as a necessary precondition for progressive politics today. / In contrast, see the forceful radical critique offered by John Gray, *Enlightenment’s Wake* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995; rpr. 2007 in the series ‘Routledge Classics’, with a new introduction by the author), whose very title posits the eclipse or obsolescence of the Enlightenment project.

²⁸ *Enlightenment’s Wake* p. ix; + ch.10 “Enlightenment’s Wake”, pp. 215-276.

Enlightenment itself—in particular its assault on cultural difference, its embodiment of Western cultural imperialism as the project of a universal civilization, and its humanist conception of humankind’s relations with the natural world. This last element of the Enlightenment has been transmitted even to cultures which have modernized without Westernizing, and constitutes the West’s only truly universal inheritance to humankind, which is nihilism [i.e., ecological suicide].

This is indeed an unsparingly harsh critique of Enlightenment legacy. Over the past several decades three “world-historical events” have occurred: the collapse of the Soviet Union with ensuing economic and political transformations; the September 11th 2001 Jihadist attacks with its corollary US-led ‘War on Terror’ and military interventions into the heart of Asia; and the ongoing crisis of financial-market Capitalism. Gray perceives their structural connectedness as collectively suggesting the exhaustion of the Enlightenment project that initiated the present era of late Modernity. But Professor Gray goes even further in his unrelenting unsentimental analysis, stripping naked the harmful delusions and arrogant hubris inflicted on our planet over the past several decades including the crisis of neoliberal financial capitalism, and asking what path the *orphans of the Enlightenment* should now take?

DEPENDENCY AND ‘WORLD SYSTEM’

In the early post-World War II period the dominant ‘Modernization Theory’ ascribed the “underdevelopment” of the Third World or global South to the retarded and incomplete formation of its capitalist institutions. This developmental thesis held that all societies progress through similar stages of development, and thus underdeveloped areas are in a similar situation to where today’s developed areas [primarily European and North America] were at some point in the past. Therefore, the task of bringing underdeveloped areas out of poverty was to accelerate them along this supposed common path of development through investment, technology transfers, and closer integration into the world trade market.

Dependency Theory. Marxian inspired thinkers elaborated a countervailing ‘Dependency Theory’ where resources are seen to flow from a “periphery” of poor and underdeveloped states to a “core” of wealthy industrialized states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former. Dependency theory posits that poor states are impoverished and

wealthy states are enriched by the way poor states are integrated into the 'world system'—since poor states provide cheap raw materials, cheap labor, terms of trade and the markets to absorb manufactured exports without which wealthy nations could not enjoy their standard of living. Wealthy states actively counter attempts by dependent nations to resist their influence, and maintain world economic disparity by means of economic and financial constraints and/or coercion (including military force).²⁹ The great number of empirical studies on peripheral capitalism and development on a world level income point out that inequality, and thereby relative poverty in the nations of the world system, is linked to trade partner concentration of the peripheral country and a trade structure that relies on the exports of raw materials and the imports of finished products.

Dependency theory perceived that "underdeveloped" countries are not merely primitive versions of developed countries but have unique features and structures of their own. Above all, they are the weaker members in the world market economy and almost all are former colonies of the "developed" states (who had never existed in relation to a bloc of countries more powerful than themselves). Basic to the dependency relation between 'center' and 'periphery' was the inability of peripheral states to develop an autonomous dynamic process of technological innovation, given that the center states controlled technology and systems for generating technology. In the 1960s and 1970s dependency theorists argued—against establishment free market economists—that "underdeveloped" countries must *reduce their connectedness* with the world market, for only such 'de-linking' enables them to pursue a path more in keeping with their own self-sustainable development. Otherwise there occur forms of "dependent" development where the ruling class and wealthy circles in 'peripheral' countries serve the interests and needs of the 'center' while pursuing conspicuous consumption of foreign produced luxury items, perpetuating social and

²⁹ For an overview of *Dependency Theory* in its two main forms, as elaborated by the Argentinian structural economist Raúl Prebisch, and by the Marxian Paul A. Baran with Andre Gunder Frank; see Matias Vernengo, "Technology, Finance and Dependency: Latin American Radical Political Economy in Retrospect," Working Paper No. 2004-06 (University of Utah Department of Economics, 2004). For the literature, see Samir Amin, *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976); and especially G. Köhler and Arno Tausch, *Global Keynesianism: Unequal Exchange and Global Exploitation* (Huntington, NY: Nova Science, 2002).

economic disparities, and delaying or suppressing democratic reform of society. They constitute the ‘comprador’³⁰ classes of the periphery.

More recent refinements by neo-dependency theory authors emphasize that the dependency relationship no longer reflects the difference in technological sophistication, but rather the difference in financial strength between core and peripheral countries—particularly the inability of peripheral countries to borrow in their own currency. They assert that the hegemonic position of the United States became very strong due to the importance of its financial markets and its control of the international reserve currency (US \$).³¹ Their leading spokesperson in the francophone Islamic world today is the Egyptian political economist Samir Amin.

World System. Thus, the evolution of the capitalist world system has been marked by a distinction of dependency between the nations of the center and the nations of the periphery. Originating with the writings of the great Austro-Hungarian socialist Karl Polanyi,³² World System analyses tended to confirm and expand this dependency argument. Immanuel Wallerstein, the American social historian and theorist of global capitalist economy who anticipated the importance of the North-South conflict, helped develop World System theory through actively collaborating with the likes of Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi³³ and Andre Gunder Frank. This theory holds there exists only one world

³⁰ ‘Comprador’ (from Portuguese for ‘buyer’, c.f. Latin *comparare* ‘to procure’; as well as Chinese *jāngbǎidù*): originally used in East Asia for the native servant in European households who went to market to barter their employer’s wares. It evolved to mean the native contract suppliers working for foreign companies in East Asia, or native managers of European firms in East Asia buying and selling or working in banks. / In current international relations and world-system usage (e.g. by S. Amin), comprador denotes the bourgeoisie trading class of wheeler-dealers in Peripheral countries who serve, or are subordinate to, the capitalist interests of Transnational Corporations in the Center.

³¹ M. Vernengo, “Technology, Finance and Dependency”, p. 13.

³² Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (1944; 2nd ed., Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

³³ G. Arrighi, late professor of sociology at John Hopkins University, was a noted political economist and authority in world systems analysis. His classic trilogy on the origins and transformations of global capitalism began with *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (1994; 2nd ed. 2009); [with Beverly Silver], *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System* (1999); and *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century* (2007). In May 2009 a major international conference ‘Dynamics of the Global Crisis: Anti-Systemic Movements and New Models of Hegemony’ was convened in his honor in Madrid.

connected by a complex network of economic exchange relationships—one *world-economy* or *world-system*. Wallerstein places the origin of the “modern world-system” in sixteenth century Western Europe linked to the Americas, which led to a process of gradual expansion resulting in the contemporary global network or system of economic exchange. By the nineteenth century virtually every area on earth was incorporated into this capitalist world-economy.

Wallerstein expanded on dependency arguments by postulating a third category of countries intermediate between the core and periphery, the shifting *semi-periphery* realm acting as a periphery to the core, and a core to the periphery.³⁴ The semi-periphery is industrialised (e.g., Eastern Europe, China, Brazil) but with less sophistication of technology than in the core, nor does it control finances. Capitalism in the periphery, just as with the center, is characterized by severe cyclical fluctuations, structural imbalances in political and social relationships (it includes a strong comprador presence), and the rising importance of state capitalism. A lasting division of the world into *core*, *semi-periphery* and *periphery* is thus an inherent feature of the capitalist world-system which, unlike the global empires of the past, today has no political centre. Instead the capitalist world system is integrated on the world market, and is divided into core, semi-periphery and periphery. Generally, Dependency and World System theory views poverty and backwardness in poor countries (e.g. as with the Muslim world) to be caused by the peripheral position these nations have in the international division of labor.

Authors from the World System approach maintain that today’s conflicts are determined by relative world economic position provoked by the inherent logic of capitalist accumulation—not by culture clash (as with Samuel Huntington). It is the dichotomy of capital and labour and the endless accumulation of capital by competing agents and nation-states that account for frictions. The expansion of the world-system means increasing commodification of things including human labour.

³⁴ I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, in three vols. (New York and London: Academic Press, 1974, 1980, 1989). Consult further his *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004). He was distinguished professor of sociology at SUNY Binghamton University (1976-1999) where he headed its *Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems and Civilization* until 2005. He also served as Directeur d’études associé at *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (Paris), and in 2000 joined Yale University’s Sociology department as Senior Research Scholar. Wallerstein is a prime mover in the World Social Forum, since 2001 the annual global gathering offering an alternative to the neoliberalism of the World Economic Forum; see: <http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/>.

Natural resources, land, labour and human relationships are gradually being stripped of their 'intrinsic' value and turned into commodities by means of marketization which dictates their exchange value. Wallerstein comes out clearly against the demonizing of the Arab/Islamic world, arguing that opposing forces against the present world order will inevitably increase.³⁵

Wallerstein later focused more on the intellectual foundations of the modern world system whose "structures of knowledge" are seen to be fundamentally Eurocentric, as well as the pursuit of universal theories of human behavior.³⁶ He consistently argues that the modern world system has now reached its endpoint, and asserts that the next fifty years will be a chaotic period of instability resulting in a new system, one which might be more or less egalitarian than the present one.³⁷ The World System analytical approach advanced by associated thinkers including Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi (d. 2009), Christopher Chase-Dunn³⁸ and others has made a significant impact and established an institutional base devoted to this general approach at University of California at Riverside. It has also attracted strong interest from the 'alter-globalization' movement (also known as the anti-globalization or global justice movement) which seeks an alternative mode of globalization with public policies grounded in solidarity, justice, peace and social democratization.

Michael Brie, Director of the Institute for Critical Social Analysis, reinforces this increasingly accepted perception when he states:³⁹

³⁵ Wallerstein, 1997: <http://fbc.binghamton.edu/iwislam.htm>.

³⁶ Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: New Press, 2006).

³⁷ See e.g. the discussion by Christopher K. Chase-Dunn and B. Podobnik, "The Next World War: World-System Cycles and Trends" in *Journal of World Systems Research* 1/6 (1995); available at website of the World System Network: <http://jwsr.ucr.edu/>.

³⁸ C. Chase-Dunn, professor of sociology at University of California at Riverside, founded the Institute for Research on World-Systems at U.C.Riverside (<http://irows.ucr.edu>), and is founding editor of *Journal of World-Systems Research* (<http://jwsr.ucr.edu>) the official journal of the 'Political Economy of the World-System' section of the American Sociological Association. His major synthesis-restatement, *Global Formation: Structures of The World-Economy* (London, Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1991) is a standard reference for thinkers interested in world-systems research and social change.

³⁹ Michael Brie, "Five Theses for the Conference on Alternatives and Transformation Paths to Overcome the Regime of Crisis Capitalism," in *The World Crisis and Beyond* (2nd ed. Brussels: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, 2009), pp. 79-84, cited from p. 3.

Neoliberal financial-market capitalism has dragged the world into a crisis which threatens human civilisation as such. It is characterised by an extreme form of the combination of the expansion of production, transport and life-style, with on the other hand the destruction of its own foundations, and suffers from a crisis of social reproduction, societal integration, democratic identification and security. Climate destruction, resource wars, terror, the transformation of democracy into oligarchy, class divides, a new racism and fundamentalism are unavoidable. It therefore leads to a crisis of civilization, and produces ever stronger elements of barbarism and authoritarian power, which can only be contained at ever greater expense.

RISE OF EUROPE

Why did sustained industrial growth begin in Northwestern Europe but not East Asia, and how did 'Western European' societies after the Enlightenment make the leap into industrialization and world domination? Was European hegemony inevitable? Previous theories explaining the ascent of early modern Europe over Asia emphasized issues of population growth, property rights, freer labor in Europe, proto-industrialization as handicraft production for trade spread into the countryside, and rise of large scale mechanized industry. Europeans were held to have been the first to develop free markets, while the consumption of key luxury goods was higher than in Asia, and primed the pump for international trade.⁴⁰ The triumphalist Eurocentric view of history which maintains that technological changes emanating from Europe resulting in the Industrial Revolution and mercantile capitalism, brought economic change throughout the world and also gifted 'civilisation' to the rest of the world.

In a dissenting model the World System thinkers have produced an important body of work demonstrating how in the early modern period the 'Decline of the East' and the 'Ascent of the West' were systemically related and mutually promoted. A basic insight shared by this approach is that: "*It is simply not true that capitalism as a historical system has represented progress over the various previous historical systems that it destroyed or transformed.*"⁴¹ Andre G. Frank and Samir

⁴⁰ See the review of such ideas by Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (revised ed., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 3-67.

⁴¹ I. Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism, with Capitalist Civilization* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 98.

Amin emphasized the importance of overseas colonial extraction and exploitation of non-Europeans, through what Marx had called the “primitive accumulation” of capital by means of the forcible and brutal dispossession of Amerindians, enslaved Africans, as well as many members of the European lower classes—namely, as the beginning step in large-scale capital accumulation. In his *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, Frank gives a sweeping historical perspective to account for the ascent of the West from 1400 forward in world economic and demographic terms, placing it in clear conjunction with the decline of the East around 1800. He provides an essential corrective to Max Weber’s view that the Protestant work-ethic was the ultimate energy for western prosperity, and to those who adhere to the myth of Euro-American ‘exceptionalism’ bolstered by rationality, secularism, and the free market. Frank undermines the Eurocentric model of world development that viewed capitalism emerging in Europe and then enmeshing the whole world in a Europe-centered world economy. Instead, he emphasizes the vigor of a well-established Afro-Asian capitalist economy that Western Europe was able to participate in only belatedly and only by extracting precious metals from the Western Hemisphere. He shows convincingly that up until the threshold of the Industrial Revolution, Afro-Asian trade remained the greater part of the world economy.

Europe was ahead neither in technological development nor in wealth nor in military power in the days of Latin conquests of the Americas. Contrary to this popular belief, Europe was for the most part behind in all these factors until roughly 1750-1800, and its ascent was predicated on American silver and Asian markets. Asia in general and China in particular was the center of global economy until the 19th century. China, India, Central Asia, South-East Asia, and the Middle East were the main players of the global trade spanning from 1500 BCE through 1800 CE. These five regions had the world’s highest standards of living, most advanced technology, greatest industrial and commercial enterprises, best art forms, literature, philosophy, and musical styles, and also the most sophisticated government and best infrastructure in roads, bridges, canals, river and seaborne transportation from 5000 BCE until 1800 CE.

In other words, Asians were more productive and competitive than Europeans, and Asia remained at the center of global economy, until the industrial revolution. Frank convincingly shows in detail that throughout this period European nations constantly had trade deficits with Asian nations—particularly with China and India; thus, the European trade deficit was that gold and silver were never less than two-thirds of total European exports. New World silver for this reason became very important for the Europeans, for it helped them cover their

trade deficits with the Asians and to become a more active player in the Asian economy.⁴² He remarks: "...Europe did not pull itself up by its own economic bootstraps, and certainly not thanks to any kind of European "exceptionalism" of rationality, institutions, entrepreneurship, technology, geniality, in a word—of race...early modern Europe was neither more important in the world economy nor more advanced in any way than other regions of the world."⁴³

Furthermore, Frank argues that such important critics of the capitalist world economy as Karl Marx, F. Braudel, and I. Wallerstein could not themselves escape the Eurocentrism embedded in the theories which they criticized either. Europe did not create a world system and incorporate more and more of the rest of the world (as Wallerstein argued); rather it integrated itself to the Asian market and "*climbed up on the back of Asia*."⁴⁴ Frank concludes that the Europeans did not 'create' the world economic system but 'purchased' an existing one with New World bullion. He thereby asserts that "the rise of the West" must be derived from the prior and contemporaneous development of "The rest".⁴⁵ In offering this "structural, functional, dynamic, and transformational global analysis and theory of the single world political economy and social system in which we all have to live together" Frank makes a passionate plea for "a more humanocentric perspective and understanding," reminding us that "...we need a global perspective to appreciate, understand, account for, explain the 'Rise of the West,' 'the development of capitalism,' 'the hegemony of Europe, the rise and fall of great powers,' ... 'the East Asian miracle'." In his view "the relevant geographical and historical unit is really Afro-Eurasia;"⁴⁶ and he speculates that East Asia's present economic growth and potential will eventually allow it regain economic hegemony in the not too distant future.⁴⁷

Others have deduced further evidence as well as corrective refinements in support of Frank's basic thesis that China, Japan, and Western Europe became economically equivalent only by the 18th century. K. Pomeranz acknowledges the role of colonialism in Europe's growth, while emphasizing Europe's access to American resources as

⁴² *ReORIENT*, pp. 74ff., 115ff.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ *ReORIENT*, p. 224.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2 and 5.

⁴⁷ U.S.-bound shipments today are full of manufactured goods, while Asia-bound ships are filled with wastepaper or largely empty. In times past, most Asian-bound shipments from England and the Netherlands were boats filled with silver and gold; today the 'West' "ships silver" to Asia in the form of electronic fund transfers, and huge U.S. trade and debt deficits.

one of two contributing factors to industrial growth, the second being the widespread availability within Europe of coal as a fuel. Yet he also stresses that Western Europe possessed unique internal features allowing European societies to seize these opportunities. Pomeranz takes particular pains to attack the triumphalist notion that ‘free markets’ lead inexorably to modernization; rather European capitalism is a key to development of industrialization but only a very particular form of capitalism unique to Europe. This is the *state sponsored* or *directed capitalism* that drove overseas expansion. This peculiar form of capitalism—not the untrammelled free market—became the key to European imperialism and the development of key capitalist institutions such as joint stock companies. The success of this peculiar capitalism was contingent on a series of external factors beyond European control: access to coerced labour made possible by African slavery, conquest of the Western Hemisphere made possible by the epidemiologic advantages of Europeans, and the establishment of trans-global trading networks created by the thirst in China for American silver. The specifically European feature is the existence of state sponsored and directed overseas expansion, itself a function of dynastic and nascent state competition within Europe.⁴⁸

Amiya Kumar Bagchi in his *Perilous Passage*⁴⁹ confirms the work of Frank and Pomeranz. Bagchi reiterates that “in terms of the most fundamental aspect of human development, human survival, the two most populous countries of the world, India and China, seem to have been doing no worse than the best performing regions of Europe down to the middle of the 19th century. In terms of commercialisation, craft production, and agricultural growth also, China, India and Japan were performing no worse than major European countries during that period.” He echoes the assertion that: “Capitalism was from the beginning a system fomenting wars and conflicts for new markets and colonies.” In actuality, observes Bagchi, it was in warfare that the non-European world was inferior to the rising capitalist world, and it was through wars—not by trade or economic superiority *per se*—that capitalism established dominion over the world. He reminds us the same is true today with the United States employing wars in different parts of

⁴⁸ Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*.

⁴⁹ A.K. Bagchi, *Perilous Passage: Mankind and the Global Ascendancy of Capital* (London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005). An eminent Indian developmental economist, Bagchi is Founder-Director of the Institute of Development Studies in Kolkata, West Bengal. See also the papers in Bagchi and Gary A. Dymski (eds.), *Capture and Exclude: Developing Economies and the Poor in Global Finance* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2007).

Asia to protect and promote its intertwined geopolitical-financial interests.

The New Imperialism. Ellen M. Wood has contributed a thought provoking study of capitalist imperialism.⁵⁰ The medieval Islamic, Venetian and later Dutch *empires of commerce* were dedicated to the protection of trade routes and market dominance; while the British *empire of capital* was marked by the imposition of market imperatives on conquered territories. Today we are witnessing the “*new imperialism we call globalization.*” As currently experienced, globalization⁵¹ is very much a product of a multi-state system, led by American capital and the capacity to maintain financial and military hegemony. Challenging those critics of globalization who emphasize the role of trans-national corporations and international institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, Wood holds that the capitalist system is more than ever reliant on nation-states to maintain order, with the United States acting as the great imperial enforcer. The economic power of financial-market capitalism requires the support of extra-economic force supplied primarily by the state.

Wood dismisses the common wisdom that increasingly irrelevant states have become subordinated to a new type of ‘global sovereignty’—the ‘marketized state’ or state without boundaries—advanced by those who envision global capitalism as displacing the nation states system through promoting forms of “stateless sovereignty” without borders. Although an essential component of contemporary global order is the capacity of trans-national capitalism’s economic power to outstrip any existing or conceivable political and military power by creating a de-territorialized invisible empire of capital, nevertheless “...the state is more essential than ever to capital...especially in its global form. The political form of globalization is not a global state but a global system of multiple states, and the new imperialism takes its specific shape from the complex and contradictory relationship between capital’s expansive economic power and the more limited reach of the extra-economic force that sustains it.”⁵² Thus global capitalism today cannot be seen to have marginalized the significance of territorial states, and Wood maintains that the only possible outcome of globalization must be a multi-state

⁵⁰ E. M. Wood, *Empire of Capital* (London: Verso, 2003). She is professor of economics, York University, Toronto.

⁵¹ *Globalization* is generally understood to be the proliferating transborder flow of goods, services, capital and labour. Proponents of ‘alter-globalization’ tend to understand that “globalization is just another word for U.S. dominance,” as Henry Kissinger remarked.

⁵² *Empire of Capital*, pp. 5-6.

system. She also holds that the inevitable end of a system of universal capitalism is a system of universal war (e.g. the ‘endless war’ or Global War on Terror).⁵³ A very similar position was reached by Samir Amin who understands the new imperialism to be the permanent stage of the global expansion of capitalism.⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

A lack of awareness of the past undermines our ability to make sense of the present and chart a future course. In sighting a way beyond the current impasse, seeking sound alternatives to the civilisational crisis we find our planet in, we must keep in mind both the weight of historical unfolding and the notions of what human motives and fulfillment truly comprise. Neoliberal marketization of societies may be understood as serving a political project whose concern is the profits of a narrow elite not possessed of any binding obligation to states or to societies, let alone to humanity. Economic systems and orders arise out of specific social relations and mirror a definite image of what the human is—an anthropology.⁵⁵ Alternatives spell choices, and many alternatives are being offered with the dawning realization of the severity of the world system crisis. Many of these proposals complement and converge with one another, others contradict or oppose. What is not evident is how successfully Muslim thinkers have elaborated coherent alternatives that convey a veritable Islamic position.

The shifts and realignments that the global market turmoil triggers has given wiseacres and pundits cause for alarm over the close, or the opening, of a stage in history. The historian Niall Ferguson is ambivalent and questions the viability of the neo-liberal capitalist model of market institutions: “*The question really is whether an alternative model will take the place of the Western financial model.*” This mandates toleration of a variety of economic patterns and cultural modes, and opens the way towards addressing genuine human needs within an emergent multipolar era. John Gray in his thought-provoking manner gives one pause for thought:⁵⁶

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-168 ‘Surplus Imperialism’: War without End’.

⁵⁴ *Beyond US Hegemony? Assessing the Prospects for a Multipolar World*, transl. Patrick Camiller (London and New York: Zed Books, 2006).

⁵⁵ See in particular Ali El Kenz, “An Anthropological View on the Crisis,” in *The World Crisis and Beyond*, pp. 126-138; and Wendy Brown [Professor of political science, University of California Berkley], “Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy,” in her *Edgework: Critical Essays in Knowledge and Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁵⁶ “Enlightenment’s Wake,” pp. 216-218, in *Enlightenment’s Wake*.

We live today amid the dim ruins of the Enlightenment project, which was the ruling project of the modern period....Contrary to the hopes which buoyed up Enlightenment thinkers throughout the modern period, we find at the close of the modern age a renaissance of particularisms, ethnic and religious...within Western cultures, the Enlightenment project of promoting autonomous human reason and of according to science a privileged status in relation to all other forms of understanding has successfully eroded and destroyed local and traditional forms of moral and social knowledge; it has not issued in anything resembling a new civilization...

Where modernization has been achieved without the destruction of the traditional culture, and without the incursion of the illusions of the Enlightenment...it is reasonable, and in fact imperative, to resist Western demands for the development of social and economic institutions on a bankrupt Western model.

For as A. G. Frank observes:⁵⁷

We can neither understand nor appreciate the world's diversity without perceiving how unity itself generates and continually changes diversity. We all have to live in this one world in which diversity must be tolerated and could be appreciated in unity.

Policy makers, officials, economic and financial advisors, and all thinking persons seeking to understand what drives the present, must give intelligent and sustained attention to the search for viable alternatives which effectively meet human needs and serve timeless values—whether they be Chinese or Islamic or Socialist. They must pay serious attention to:

- exposing and training mid-level economic, planning and social system officials in the history and theory of capitalist World System development;
- paying close attention to advancing informed and intelligent formulations of social and economic institutions for sustainable development that mirror their own specific cultural legacy and values;

⁵⁷ *ReORIENT*, pp. 1-2.

- devoting meaningful material and human resources to forging networks with neighboring nations and societies whose experience and assets can provide real help and assistance in these tasks, and thereby promote regional solidarity, self-reliance, de-linkage from the dominant Center, and genuine democratic reform and progress.

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CHAPTER VI

RADICAL HERMENEUTICS AND THE SEARCH FOR AUTHENTIC UNDERSTANDING

TRAN VAN DOAN

INTRODUCTION

This paper argues that it is the human search for authentic understanding that gives birth to radical hermeneutics. More than exegesis and traditional hermeneutics, which aim at a “correct” understanding, or a “true” knowledge in the sense of mathematical truth or, at least, of “common sense,” radical hermeneutics displays a permanent search for authentic understanding, i.e. an understanding in its genetic process. The subject’s relentless quest for truth motivates the dynamics that generates understanding. Interpretation itself is the active participation of the subject in the process of coming into understanding, of understanding renewal, understanding enrichment, and even of understanding negation (as seen in the case of Nietzsche’s nihilism, and Derrida’s deconstruction).

Radical hermeneutics in the “contemporary” sense¹ begins with Heidegger’s critical reinterpretation of Kant’s answer to the question of “What is man?” and continues with his reflection on Being as the foundation of hermeneutics. His interpretation of the principle of identity, truth, etc. is, in fact, his indirect demonstration of the thesis about hermeneutics as Being’s essential activity, and about ontological hermeneutics as the new foundation of metaphysics. Gadamer has developed Heidegger’s thesis into what he termed philosophical hermeneutics, while Derrida seized Heidegger’s *Kehre* as the momentum to launch a typical Nietzschean interpretation, i.e. to “return” to understanding in its genetic stage. “Différance” and “deconstruction” (*Abbau* and *Destruktion* in Heidegger’s language) are taken as both strategy and tactics to prove the “impotence” of Hegel’s dialectic, to push the Husserlian “eidetic reduction” to its limit, and to force Heidegger’s hidden “authenticity” to reveal itself.

¹ I have argued elsewhere that radical hermeneutics had been practiced even at the Homer’s times in Greece, and Confucius’ times in China. Matteo Ricci a Jesuit missionary in China at the 17th century had developed this kind of hermeneutics to a kind of “acculturation” and “in-culturation.” See Tran Van Doan, “The Radical Hermeneutics of Matteo Ricci.” In *Theology and Philosophy*, Vol. XXII (Seoul, 2013), pp. 199-228.

HEIDEGGER ON KANT' QUESTION OF "WAS IST DER MENSCH?"

Immanuel Kant is perhaps one of the most optimistic philosophers ever. Unlike most philosophers who never found peace with themselves, even in their final stage, Kant was convinced of his "accomplished mission" and satisfied with his meaningful life.² And, no doubt, Kant deserved it.

What made him satisfied is his conviction of the adequacy of his solution to the thorny and until then unanswered question of "What is man? / Was ist der Mensch?" With a meticulous analysis of the human faculties of knowing, moral reasoning and human quest for the meaning of life, he believed that he had, finally, found solutions to the questions of "What can I know?", "What should I do?" and "What may I hope?" His main works, especially his three *Critiques* and the *Grundlegung*, have been designed for this purpose.³

Almost all Neo-Kantians at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century continued Kant's project. As fervent believers, they rarely questioned the correctness of the solutions offered by their master. What they did was an attempt to apply Kant's main doctrines in different fields of knowledge, especially, the social sciences.⁴ Martin Heidegger was an exception. Trying to step over the limit of "transcendentalism," he tried very hard to fulfill Kant's critical project by turning upside down the Kantian system. In fact, the allegation of violent interpretation of Kant leveled against Heidegger by

² Kant died on February 12, 1804, and his final softly uttered word is "Genug" (Enough). On the grab-stone of his tomb is carved the passage once printed in the *Critique of Practical Reason*: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

³ Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Introduction to Logic* (T.K. Abbott, Trans.) (London: Longmans, Green 1885), p. 15. And in Kant, *Correspondence* (A. Zweig, Trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 458 (*Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Koeniglich Prussischen Academie der Wissenschaft, 1910-, 11:429)

⁴ The revival of Kantianism was initiated by philosophers who were unhappy with Hegelianism. Hermann Cohen in the 19th century, and then the Marburg School and the Southwest School in the beginning of the 20th century. While the Marburg School (with P. Natorp, E. Cassirer, and others) concentrated on Kant's epistemology and logic, the Southwest School (with W. Windelband, H. Rickert, E. Troeltsch, and others) explored Kant's view of culture, values, etc. To the field of social sciences, Georg Simmel and Max Weber made great contributions.

the Neo-Kantians of his times⁵ did not stop him from claiming for himself the role of the former's inheritor. A controversial but thoughtful claim! One may say, Heidegger, a "prodigal" son (in the eyes of Neo-Kantians) has ventured to demonstrate himself as the true heir of Kantianism, so heretical, so blasphemous is Heidegger in the eyes of Neo-Kantians! And so is Jacques Derrida's attitude towards Heidegger, and Derrida's "nonchalant" claim⁶ that the "illegitimate pupil"⁷ has developed the master's insight of the constitution of metaphysics as *difference* by "deconstructing" the master himself.⁸

Indeed, Heidegger's opponents had to concede that he had developed the Kantian heritage to the maximum, by "deforming" it, making it more Heideggerian and less Kantian, as Ernst Cassirer once rightly accused. His *Being and Time* (1927) could be seen as his attempt to overcome Kant's metaphysics and to lay a foundation for ontology. *Being and Time* can be seen as Heidegger's own answer to Kant's question of "What is man?". By objecting to Kant's understanding of the human based on transcendental categories, Heidegger had "overthrown"—"deconstructed" in Jacques Derrida's language—Kant's transcendental system. He constructed the so-called "existential categories" just in order to get a truthful, or an authentic picture of man. His "revolt" against Kant took a path similar to that once adopted by Karl Marx against Hegel's dialectic: that is, a revolution that aims at correcting the direction toward the true final end (history). Similarly, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929) has been designed as a

⁵ Ernst Cassirer, "Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik, Bemerkungen zu Martin Heideggers Kant-Interpretation," in *Kant-Studien*, XXXVI, No. 1/2 (1931), p. 17.

⁶ D. Michelfelder and R. Palmer noted: "In seeking to find a source for the divergence of these two powerful currents of contemporary European thought (hermeneutics and deconstruction), one immediately runs up against the body of thought and texts bearing the signature of Heidegger.", in *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*, eds. Diane Michelfelder and Richard Palmer, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 1. Followings as *Dialogue and Deconstruction*.

⁷ John Caputo in an essay "Gadamer's Close Existentialism: A Derridean Critique" has placed Gadamer in the camp of the "right wing," while Derrida in the "left wing" of Heidegger. *Dialogue and Deconstruction*, pp. 258-64. The left wing Hegelians have never been direct pupils of Hegel, but they developed Hegelianism to a new stage beyond their master. Karl Marx, just as Ludwig Feuerbach, David Strauss, Max Stirner, and others are rightly considered as the "illegitimate pupils" of Hegel,

⁸ Robert Bernasconi in his "Seeing Double: *Destruktion and Deconstruction*," even argued that Derrida has misinterpreted Heidegger's "Destruktion," by putting in Heidegger's mouth what the latter did not intend. *Dialogue and Deconstruction*, op. cit., pp. 233-250.

more radical revolution, turning Kant's metaphysics into an ontology. In Heidegger's view, not metaphysics (either in Aristotelian or in Kantian sense) but only ontology can serve as the foundation of an authentic "anthropology."

The violence of Heidegger's hermeneutics is its radical character. No compromise, no middle way is tolerated! Radical means to deepen itself to the root, to go to the extreme; and to go to the extreme means to return back to the origin. Heidegger's relentless question of "Why are there beings rather than Nothing?" clearly indicated his stubbornness in his search for the last answer. For him, the last is also the first, the deepest, the widest, the greatest, etc., and that is the question of Being itself.⁹ In this sense, a true and rigorous science (phenomenology) is not allowed to be content with a phenomenal reduction, or even an eidetic reduction as Husserl insisted (and here is the sign of rift between Heidegger and his master). Kant's defiant insistence on the "unknowable-ness" of the thing-in-itself prevents him from going farther and deeper beyond the sphere of phenomena, and consequently, his answer is only halfway to the final one. No true and exact answer can be found on the surface, because the true answer lies deeply at the bottom; it can be retrieved only if it is unearthed from and out of the world of phenomena. Here is the reason why Heidegger would chide Kant for the latter's wrong direction. The latter scratches where it does not itch!¹⁰

Of course, Kant, relying on the strength of Newton's science, was certain of his approach, and confident in its effect, as seen in his attack on traditional metaphysics (*Prolegomena for Any Future Metaphysics*). But he was also wondering about the real effectiveness of his solutions, as seen in his later writings in which he tried to critique his deontology. Kant's prescriptions could be best applied to the fixed, unchangeable and isolated world, but they would not work effectively in practice.¹¹

The main problem of Kant, Heidegger argued, is that Kant did not deal more thoroughly with the question of "What is man?" since Kant was convinced of the identical essence of natural laws (of Newton) and human laws and, consequently, he treated man as an object. Evidently, Kant is "enchained" (to use Rousseau's language) by the principle of

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Ralph Manheim trans.), (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 1-4 ff.

¹⁰ Heidegger echoed Nietzsche's critique and depicted the whole Western philosophy as Platonism. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. 2, (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961).

¹¹ Kant indirectly "confessed" his doubt about the practical validity of his moral principles in a small work, published much later in his old age "Ueber den Gemeinspruch: Das mag richtig in der Theorie sein, taugt aber nicht fuer die Praxis." Immanuel Kant: *Werke in zwoelf Baenden*. Band 11 (Frankfurt a. M., 1977), pp. 127-130.

identity. His designed categorical imperatives are “soulless,” and “senseless” just as his categories are transcendental, i.e. fully objective, independent from experiences and other human factors. If being moral requires an abdication from any inclination (towards happiness, interests, pleasure, and even God’s love), and only for the sake of duty, then categorical imperatives are, in a certain sense, not human, or even inhuman. Indeed, his transcendental categories are constructed from such a non-human world.

Kant’s view that the thing must be forced to appear in conformity to the transcendental rules, as conceived by the subject, contradicts the fact that the human in particular, may appear, grow, change, disappear, transform, and so on, in accordance with its own nature. Kant’s hasty identification of the world of phenomena with the human world, of natural laws with human laws, in accordance with the logical formula of $A=A$, forces him to pay a dear price: the false reduction of the human world. Long before Heidegger, Nietzsche had already discovered this grave mistake of Kant. Any reduction of the human and the human world would result in a certain “oblivion of Being” (*Seinsvergessenheit*), and any equation of Being with beings (entities) would impoverish Being itself. In Heidegger’s view, Kant had clearly headed toward a wrong direction.¹² His stubborn “loyalty” to the idea of “unknowable-ness” of the thing-in-itself, and his treatment of human beings as objects prevent him from the right direction. Being content with an analysis of the phenomenal world, Kant may see no need to penetrate deeper in the root of humanity, and to discover its kernel.

By not recognizing the kernel, i.e. the source and the force generating phenomena, Kant acted in contrast to his claim of restoring the subject’s power of subjugating, arranging, or ordering the phenomena in accordance with laws (discovered by the subject), by restraining the potential growth of human faculty. The human is unable to go beyond the border of the world of phenomena. Excluded from his “rational discourse” are the world of *noumena*, and the most fundamental questions determining human nature, namely those about God, freedom and the immortality of the soul.

To remedy Kant’s difficulty, Heidegger proved in *Being and Time* that the “what-ness” (*Was-sein*) can be known only by the “how-ness” (*Wie-sein*) and the “why-ness” (*Warum-sein*) Therefore, to deal thoroughly with the question of “what is” one has to inquire into the core of the question of why and of how. That means, any rigorous

¹² Actually, Johannes G. Fichte, Wilhelm F. Schelling and then Georg F. Hegel had raised their objection to Kant’s view of *Ding-an-sich* that they regarded as the obstacle for the advancement of knowledge, and hence, philosophy.

phenomenology cannot be possible without being grounded in an ontology. Furthermore, in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929), Heidegger made clear that he has to find an answer to such question, the answer that he had already explored in *Being and Time*, namely about the nature of human development and its reason. Man, in the philosophical concept of *Sein* (Being), is not and cannot be treated as an object, the way Kant did. Neither the impersonal, a-temporal and non-spatial categories nor the transcendental conditions determine man, but it is man as the active subject which decides man himself. Acting means living, and living is a permanent process of acquiring experiences (*erleben*) and generating new knowledge about man. Anthropology thus means not a system of static knowledge about man, but the study of how man lives, i.e. how man acts, generates, forms, and transforms oneself.

KNOWLEDGE OR KNOWING—HEIDEGGER’S APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

Ever since Plato, knowing is conceived of as a static state of knowledge of universal and necessary nature. Plato’s insight of *eidos* as the fixed and eternal origin of knowledge had been “uncritically” taken for granted, and so was the idea of science. Science is defined as a kind of knowledge of universal and necessary nature. Since Descartes, such view of science was intensified and cemented with mathematical (and logical) proofs, and by the force of reason. Descartes’ merit, his discovery of method, however, is also his burden. There is less critical question about his insistence on the intuition and deduction, actually and primarily, used in mathematics, as the correct method, but more about his claim of them as the sole means to search for truth and to warrant it. Worse is his extravagant claim of the uniqueness and the power of the method in warranting all truths, and hence, in laying foundation to all sciences. Methodology, even against Descartes’ wish, took the place of metaphysics.

If knowledge is founded on truth, and if there is only one truth, then such knowledge must be unique. It could not be true and untrue at the same time. It must be true since truth is the essence of the true. Furthermore, if truth can be known and be warranted only by the most effective method, then not metaphysics but methodology must be the most noble and fundamental science. Metaphysics is, logically, reduced to epistemology, and epistemology is, in turn, reduced to methodology. Now, the one who has the best means possesses truth, i.e. true knowledge.

Needless to say, such a view has been endorsed by rationalists and empiricists alike. Truth takes the form of either common sense (Locke), or most certain idea, i.e. universal (*distincta*) and necessary (*clara*) idea

(Descartes), of either indubitable or evident fact (the early Wittgenstein) or verified fact (Popper). It can be attained either by an *a priori* method (intuition and deduction) or by *a posteriori* means of observing, experiencing, inducing, synthesizing and systematizing. Since truth is implicit in the world of phenomena, and since the thing-in-itself cannot be known, what can be observed, justified and verified are phenomena themselves, i.e. external facts or data. Truth is hence defined as the correspondence between fact and concept, or in St. Thomas Aquinas' expression *adaequatio intellectus et rei*. Theory of reference and theory of correspondence, once regarded as the foundation of knowledge, are therefore logical products of the belief in the evidence of the phenomenal world and in science as universal and necessary knowledge.

Nietzsche has been the first modern philosopher who waged a merciless assault on such truism. In the *Froehliche Wissenschaft* (1887-8) and especially in the posthumous *Der Wille zur Macht*, Nietzsche attempted to reject the whole edifice of the traditional view of truth based on reality, and consequently, traditional sciences. He argued quite differently that it is not truth which is based on reality but reality on truth; and that truth can be possible only in relation to the will-to-power.¹³ Will-to-power is the driving force in man, underlying all reality, which pushes man towards a self-mastering and self-overcoming. It is the foundation of truth and knowledge.

But Heidegger was the most eloquent and tenacious fighter for a "non-modern" view of science. He succeeded in turning the tide, putting on defense the camp of traditional truth. His war against the view of truth in terms of the equation of A=A, i.e. in terms of the principle of identity is carried further by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1947). It reached its climax with postmodernism, and ended with the extravagant claim about the end of modernity.¹⁴ Michel Foucault (*Archéologie du savoir*, 1966) first, and then Derrida (*La voix et le phénomène*, 1967), among others, fired their deadly bullets into the body of modernity, arguing for a "new" science in the spirit of Giambattista Vico's *La scienza nuova (Principi di scienza nuova d'intorno alla comune natura delle nazioni 1725)*, i.e. all sciences,

¹³ "Der wahrhaftige versteht sich gewissermassen als Personification des Willens zur Wahrheit." (*Wille zur Macht*, XVI, 48); and "Wille zur Wahrheit selber nur "ein Mittel" dieses Willens zur Macht sein. (*Wille zur Macht*, XV, 411). See also Wolfgang Mueller-Lauter, *Nietzsche: Seine Philosophie der Gegensätze und die Gegensätze seiner Philosophie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), pp. 97-99.

¹⁴ Gianni Vattimo, *La fine della modernità* (Garzanti, 1985). Translated and with an Introduction by Jon R. Snyder as the *End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

including mathematics, are constructed on human life and not the reverse. Life with its main activities such as copulation (marriage), death and religion must be the foundation of all sciences.

If science is closely associated with human life-activity, and if life is in a permanent process of growing and declining, or of being born and dying, then any idea of “transcendental” knowledge, aloof from human life, seems to be, at least, impractical. Heidegger’s criticism of traditional interpretation of truth as the *adaequatio intellectus et rei* or as the identity of idea and thing, and his reinterpretation of Parmenides’ $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\tau\omicron$ (the sameness) clearly indicated his strong objection to the positivist approach to truth, and also to the rationalist method of deduction. Authentic knowledge cannot be retrieved from the act of examining phenomena, i.e. of cutting them in pieces, and rearranging them in a certain (transcendental) system. That means knowing cannot be reduced to a simple act of fitting itself to a certain framework or a schema, or to the act of constructing a (static) state of knowledge in accordance with an artificial model, or structure. Paradigms are constructed from knowing, and not the reverse. If knowing is an act of Being in full freedom then truth must reflect this free knowing: “The Essence of truth is freedom” (Das Wesen der Wahrheit ist die Freiheit) as Heidegger more than often repeated in his small but very thoughtful *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (1930).¹⁵ As such, truth cannot be the same in terms of mathematical identity that excludes the possibility of any freedom, be that freedom-from or the freedom-to (Isaiah Berlin).¹⁶ Nor can factual knowledge represent truth *in toto* (die volle Wahrheit). In short, no fixed state of knowing can truthfully represent truth. It is a mistake to identify static knowledge as science, and the act of knowing as understanding. The illusion of having truth in the form of mathematical beauty is born from the false conception of perfection as the most universal and necessary thing or element.

Compatibly with his view of truth as Being’s self-disclosure, Heidegger in his *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* offers a new understanding of science, not in terms of static, universal and necessary knowledge, but rather in terms of the free act of self-disclosure.¹⁷ Science (Wissenschaft) is grounded on truth, but truth is grounded on Being, and as Being freely acts, i.e. freely reveals itself, and not restricted by transcendental

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1967), pp. 71 ff.

¹⁶ Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, op.cit. “Die Offenstaendigkeit des Verhaltens als innere Ermoeglichung der Richtigkeit gruended in der Freiheit.” Or: “das volle Wesen der Wahrheit das Unwesen einschliesst und vor allem zuvor als Verbergung waltet,” p. 94.

conditions. Such science can be possible if the hurdles limiting its growth are dispelled. Openness and unrestricted growth are then the essences of true science.

HEIDEGGER'S VIEW OF IDENTITY DIFFERENCE: THE BEGINNING OF THE RIGHT WING AND THE LEFT WING OF HERMENEUTICS

The search for authentic understanding does not end with a revolution against traditional metaphysics and modern epistemology. Actually, such revolution has never taken place. Thus, to Heidegger, the battle must be carried on with an attack on all fronts. Traditional logic on which traditional sciences relied must be put on trial, and its principles, namely the principle of identity, the principle of non-contradiction and the principle of the third excluded must be tested with fire. Since, the last two principles are actually deduced from the first, namely, the principle of identity, Heidegger concentrated his attack on this principle. The principle of identity must be reinterpreted, no more in terms of the logical principle of $A=A$, but rather in the light of the essence of truth.

Against the interpretation of identity in terms of the sameness, and of the equation of $A=A$ as a tautology, Heidegger suggests: (1) Identity does not mean the same, since it suggests at least two elements "One A is equal to another" (ID, 23) and not only an element. Hence, "the formula $A=A$ speaks of the equality of two elements. It does not define A as the same." (ID, 24). Taking Plato's saying "Each one of them is different from the (other) two, but itself the same for itself" (*The Sophist*, 254d / ID, 24),¹⁸ Heidegger argued that identity is actually not the principle but the very act of self-presenting of Being. As self-presenting, or self-disclosing, identity refers to the act of self-appropriating, the act of belonging together and the act of synthesis. It refers also to the act of departing and the act of returning.¹⁹

Appropriation (Ereignis)

Appropriation is first an event,²⁰ a peculiar event that happens only once, and for someone only: "What it indicates happens only in the

¹⁸ *Sophist*, 254d.) Quotation from Heidegger in *Identity and Difference*, p. 24.

¹⁹ *Identity and Difference*, p. 24: "The dative *he auto* means: each thing itself is returned to itself, each itself is the same for itself within itself."

²⁰ *Identity and Difference*, p. 36: "The words event of appropriation, thought of in terms of the matter indicate, should now speak as a key term in the

singular, no, not in any number, but uniquely.” (ID, 36). But this uniqueness would not be known if it is excluded from the “frame,” i.e. from the constellation of Being. (ID, 36). But at the same time, uniqueness would resist any temptation of being sucked into the frame. Uniqueness remains only if it keeps its origin. Any authentic appropriation must be original. (ID, 37). In a word, it is not the origin, or the uniqueness that changes, but it is the frame that is transformed: “Such a transformation of the frame into the event of appropriation, by virtue of that event, would bring the appropriate recovery—appropriate, hence never to be produced by man alone—of the world of technology from its dominance back to servitude in the realm by which man reaches more truly into the event of appropriation.” (ID, 37). In short, appropriation is the act of Being, expressing its uniqueness and originality, and as such, a peculiar aspect of identity: “The appropriation appropriates man and Being to the essential togetherness.”²¹

Belonging Together (Suzammengehoeren)

The peculiar act of appropriating “appropriates” all other activities and aspects of Being, making them “unique.” This uniqueness or this particularity does not refer to the same one, but expresses rather all characteristics constituting its uniqueness. Thus, the key element is the force that relates all elements and unifies them in one. This force is identified by Heidegger as the act of “belonging together.” All elements bear in themselves the “togetherness” that internally and dynamically forces them to be unified: “However, belonging together can also be thought of as *belonging* together. This means: the “together” is now determined by the belonging.” (ID, 29).

Togetherness, which is interpreted by Gadamer as the common horizon, *sensus communis*, or tradition, is the nature of Being. It is in this sense that Heidegger had interpreted Parmenides’ view of Being in its most authentic nature: Being both in its holistic and genetic nature: “For the same perceiving (thinking) as well as being” (ID, 27). That means, diversity is not contradicting uniqueness. In contrast, it rather enriches it, and makes it more unique: Being reveals itself as the same in its diversity. The act of self-revealing of Being shows the same as the

service of thinking. As such a key term, it can no more be translated than the Greek Logos and the Chinese Tao. The term event of appropriation here no longer means what we would otherwise call a happening, an occurrence. It now is used as a “*singulare tantum*.” What it indicates happens only in the singular, no, not in any number, but uniquely.”

²¹ *Identity and Difference*, p. 38. Also in p. 39: “The essence of identity is a property of the event of appropriation.”

same by virtue of its difference, and the difference as different by virtue of its sameness: “Different things, thinking and Being, are here thought of as the Same” (ID, 27).²²

Even the act of *belonging* does mean more than belonging in the ordinary sense. *Belonging, gehoeren...* already suggests the source to which it is belonging. And this source is Being itself from which beings are appearing, and to which beings are orienting. Revealing in diversity and remaining the same, that is the very essence of Being: “The question of the meaning of this Same is the question of the active nature of identity.” (ID, 38-39) Or: “Now it becomes clear that Being belongs with thinking to an identity whose active essence stems from that letting belong together which we call appropriation. The essence of identity is a property of the event of appropriation.” (ID, 39).

CONCLUSION: THE CLAIM OF AUTHENTIC UNDERSTANDING OR THE BATTLE OF HERMENEUTICS AND DECONSTRUCTION

As I have argued, contemporary hermeneutics has been rooted in Heidegger’s radically ontological “reduction” (in the sense of *epoche*) back to the most original beginning, or the root of life in which identity and difference are its “constituting” parts. His reflection on the onto-theological constitution of Being gave impetus to further development of radical hermeneutics, either from the standpoint of identity in the sense of belonging together (Gadamer), or from that of appropriation in the sense of *Ereignis*. (Derrida).

Inspired by Heidegger’s thesis of identity as belonging together, of beings as the *multi facie* of Being in its self-disclosure, Gadamer develops further the process of coming into understanding as the process of Being’s self-disclosing. If *Dasein* means Being’s existence in the state of *hic-et-nunc*, then “Being-in-the-world,” “being-with” are, actually, the activities of Being’s self-disclosing in the spatial and temporal dimension. In each stage is born a new form of understanding, or a new horizon, common to and accepted by those who are actively engaging in such a world. The existing horizon represents commonality. For this reason, Gadamer is stressing on human temporal conditions, human “transcendental” knowledge and morals, etc. as the conditions and mediums for understanding. His objection to Kant’s absolute and

²² Such view is repeatedly “chanted” by Heidegger as a refrain in the song of Being: “thinking and Being belong together in the same and by virtue of the Same” (ID, 27), or “For the same are thinking as well as Being” (Parmenides, ID, 38).

universal categories, just as his critique of the abuse of any application of scientific criteria to human sciences reflect his attempt to rebuild a *Wissenschaft* in the context of the process of coming into understanding. It is in this sense that his reinterpretation of “tradition,” “prejudice,” “*sensus communis*,” “*Bildung*” (culture), “common taste,” etc. must be understood as different forms of commonality, and not just the criteria in the sense of Kant’s categories.

From another angle, Derrida emphasizes not commonality, but rather authenticity. His strong request for the uniqueness of human act and human knowing is rooted in his belief that each event (*Ereignis*), each moment is a unique moment of Being’s self-revelation. It cannot be repeated. And if it “repeats” itself, in the widest sense, then it would not repeat in the same way or in the same form. Consequently, any form of identity in the sense of $A=A$, or even “belonging together” is unacceptable; any form of commonality (common sense, *sensus communis*, culture, etc.) would endanger authenticity. His strategy and tactics of “deconstruction” (or *différance*) and his insistence on difference as the essence of understanding are carefully choreographed just in order to show that authenticity and not commonality is the essence of Being. Here he follows Heidegger to the letter. The latter once wrote: “What differs shows itself as the Being of beings as such as a whole, it represents beings in respect of what differs in the difference, and without heeding the difference as difference.”²³ Or more explicitly: “The onto-theological constitution of metaphysics stems from the prevalence of that difference which keeps Being as the ground, and beings as what is grounded and what gives account, apart from and related to each other; and by this keeping perdurance is achieved.”²⁴

But, of course, one can hardly deny the fact that these two directions of radical hermeneutics come from the same source, Heidegger’s ambiguity. But one would be unable to explain the opposite, almost un-reconciliation between Gadamer’s and Derrida’s hermeneutics, without the Hegelian factor. The ghost of Hegel is visible in Heidegger’s *Destruktion*, and even more visible in Derrida’s deconstruction. And equally visible is Hegel’s spirit in Gadamer’s attempt to build the new horizon in which emerges a more encompassing and “original” vision. “Original” in the sense of being the first appearing vision, and authentic in the sense of uniqueness. To Derrida, it is the second stage of dialectics, i.e. negation, the decisive force to preserve authenticity. Authenticity means the not yet alienated essence, the intact uniqueness.

²³ Martin Heidegger, *The Onto-Theological Constitution of Metaphysics*, Joan Stambaugh translated, p. 70.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Despite their difference, Gadamer and Derrida are still regarded as the most brilliant followers of Heidegger: they jealously preserve the insistence on radical reduction, the insight of creative force and the stubborn loyalty to the humanness of their master. Like Nietzsche, the main “inspiration” of Heidegger, Gadamer and Derrida believe that an authentic understanding can be possible only if one is motivated by creative force and, at the same time, loyal to humanness.

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CHAPTER VII

KANT ON FREEDOM AND ITS CONTEMPORARY REVALUATION

ANATOLIJ KARAS

Kant distinctly formulated the theoretical problem of relations between the private/individual and the universal/social in terms of the value of freedom and the role and nature of mind. He was attempting to remain in the context of an ethical understanding of society in the Scottish intellectual tradition. At heart, his approach raises the problem of freedom and thence of equality. His work "What is Enlightenment" (1784) is an educational program for people's growth and significance therein of the role of reason in human life. In this the role of courage as the ability to live by their own wits and to seek help in their state of immaturity is central. This requires "only freedom, namely, the freedom to use their own minds." Kant emphasizes the proper use of understanding as public, and not just private, "can lead to an Enlightenment among the general public" and positively affect "the global civil society".

In another work "The Idea of Universal History in Terms of a World Civil Plan" (1781) Kant asserts that maximum freedom can be achieved only in the "unity of legal civil society" based on a civil equitable arrangement. This social condition can be achieved by the means of the personal mind, acting freely from instincts, with a "natural ability for viable development." This is associated with the use of reason, which is fully developed not in the individual, but in human kind. In so far as people are recognized as having equal capabilities, Kant believed that all people are equally autonomous and that moral responsibility and human dignity also are based on this ability. Thence he formulated the idea that individuals should enjoy equal respect due to their autonomy.

The idea of individual autonomy was not new. Its traces are lost in the ancient commitment to a free man capable of self-direction. In the modern times this idea had been argued by Rousseau and others on new Enlightenment grounds, but Kant went much further in theoretical terms. He described autonomy as the value of individual freedom and ability of man to free himself not only from external coercion, violence, slavery or manipulation, but also from internal motivations, passionate desires and prejudice. Freedom then is the absence of conditionality in nature operative as deterministic relationships or laws. The free human being is mediated by choice which is based in the mind with its universal

maxims. Thus, Kant draws special attention to mind or reason in all his works.

In articles, written in response to his main critics, Kant emphasizes that “the mind is created not for isolation, but for including itself in the community. It prevents all selfish principles of judgments, and thus the principles based at the most only in feeling”¹

Behaviour, if it depends on the object of will or a deep longing, may not be truly free. Instead of the object of will, one needs to understand the law, which acts a priori to determine that very freedom. According to Kant, we cannot understand this law empirically. The condition of understanding “law,” which regulates human will and directs her/his choice of truth and justice, can only be a subject which precedes any experience. His main ability is the ability to combine into a single picture the various sensations and to keep them in mind. The entity with its own source provides the principle of unity, or transcendental apperception; without perception the world would be a stream of loose and changing empirical representations.

Freedom, therefore, is above all through reason, which could realize the dependence of man on sensual experience but agrees not to perceive oneself as an entirely empirical reality. To be free means to be independent from that causal impulse of behaviour that is stipulated by wishes and their objects. Freedom can exist only when persons can have their own intentions to act.

For Kant, a purely empirical basis for understanding that appears as caused only by outside influences eliminates the moral base of the individual and cannot serve as an explanation of human freedom. As sensual human experience is always limited and incomplete, the universality of laws constituted by scientific thinking can only have a mental nature. This approach introduced a revolutionary shift in the interpretation of the role of the human spirit and especially the productive imagination as constitutive of the conditions of social life. But the point is that the mind, for Kant, functions on the basis of concepts and categories that are universal and necessary and cannot depend on the will of the subject. In this aspect categories and concepts remain an instrument of progress for Physics and are the features of material interactions. Consequently, on the level of pure reason, freedom is not an accomplished phenomenon, but only in the sphere of practical reason; where there is the reality of human responsibility is there the reality of freedom. At the practical level of understanding, the notion of universal physical law turns into a concept of moral law. From these

¹ Quote from the Ukrainian translation (only one in the world) book, prepared with Kant’s handwritten notes made by Beno Erdman in 1884 and called “Reflection on critique of pure reason” (citation # 32).

Kantian thoughts we can trace the ideas of contemporary communicative philosophy and its ethical concern.

Freedom is not chaotic action and not an accident, which would carry devastating consequences. To be free means to be willing, as I ought, to be under moral universality. Only autonomy, which has a moral nature, can be the basis for actions of free people in a practical sense. Kant writes: "Autonomy of the will is that property by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition). The principle of autonomy then is: "Always so to choose that the same volition shall comprehend the maxims of our choice as a universal law" (Kant 1952: 277). Then I. Kant emphasizes that "The concept of freedom is the key that explains the autonomy of the will" (Kant 1952: 279).

The individual as an autonomous moral being becomes free because it is the legislator of its own behaviour in terms of its moral values. The human not only bears the burden of liberty—he or she becomes their sole objective. Freedom should promote the autonomy of each individual and not limit one. In this freedom is related to reason, as Kant notes: "reason would overstep all its bounds if it undertook to explain how pure reason can be practical, which would be exactly the same problem as to explain how freedom is possible (Kant 1952: 285).

Thus, Kant's interpretation of freedom brings a new level of understanding. The world of objects or our surroundings is not the main factor in free behaviour of individuals. That is, the notion of freedom goes beyond the physical context, which is composed by reference to the phenomena of nature (things) and needs approval or denial of a certain objective state of affairs.

Kant introduces a new basis for understanding the freedom he specified in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and experience as insufficient grounds for the activity of a person and society. Man, as an active being, for Kant, is guided by theoretical and practical reason, and the moral ideal connected with free will. This means an ability to overcome what is attributable empirically to facts and things. To be human is to be unaffected by mental imagination of moral ideals and personal goals. Freedom is not just a fact of natural free will, but rather a substance that appears in the context of a mind: it is "a property of the will of all rational beings." The idea of freedom entails intelligible value. To act as well as someone wants (some person or governor or ruler) is not yet a manifestation of the transcendental essence of freedom in a society filled with value marks. True freedom has moral value when a person is independent of others approving of his or her action. Actually this phenomenon of freedom testifies to individual autonomy of behaviour, and mutual recognition of autonomy is a prerequisite for the legal regulation of public relations. Therefore, the subject as an active force is

involved in creating a Human Umwelt in the two dimensions of empirically-physical and socio-cultural values. Freedom, for Kant, is man's faculty to initiate action or make changes in the social world.

We come to an important turn made by Kant in the interpretation of freedom from empirical to axiological value. Further, we need to recall the role of "creative imagination," which has special significance in Kant. Imagination is not a blind game of sensual images but has a productive dimension which allows it to integrate diversity and achieve a certain unity. This explains the ability of the imagination for the "unity of apperception"—one of the central concepts of Kant's philosophy. The bonds and unity of apperception cannot be derived empirically or from past experience. "The conjunction (*conjunctio*) of a manifold in intuition can never be given us by the senses;...for it is a spontaneous act of the faculty of representation. And, as to distinguish it from sensibility, we must entitle this faculty understanding; so all conjunction...is an act of the understanding." We mark it by the term: synthesis. "Of all mental notions, that of conjunction is the only one which cannot be given through objects, but can be originated only by the subject itself because it is an act of one's purely spontaneous activity" (Kant 1952: 49).

The nature of understanding Kant interprets as "the ability for knowledge." Knowledge relates to a certain representation between imagination and object. An object is that which occurs when concept combines a variety of contemplation. It is important to emphasize that Kant established the relation between the object and imagination, consciousness and the process of learning in a quite new way for Modern times. This outlined new aspects of the problem of object and objectivity. Its full coverage is possible if you move away from the paradoxes of Kant's Epistemology and apply the semiotic variant of interpretation. This, of course, will engage the views of Kant, but also will be meaningful as regards the potential opportunities of his theory and of the undervaluation of Kant's and hence of Enlightenment's philosophy.

Distinction of objects and physical things in the aspect of freedom as conflicting with Kant's theory, this problem was considered primarily on the epistemological plane. But if we put emphasis on relation as a spontaneous precondition of reunifying the imagination with its subject or thing, then the axiological nuance appears first because of the context of consciousness. For Kant, the objective value or object of anything is a result of a relation, in which an active subject expresses its interest. That is, outside of human relations a world of unknown things does exist; an interested (in any sense) relation indicates the ratio of, say, a physical thing by means of imagination and it is transformed into an object, giving to the later a certain value and meaning. The central role belongs to categories, which coordinate the person (subject) and is related to the

world. Hence Kant speaks about a transcendental unity of apperception, “by which all given in contemplative variety unites itself in the concept.” Phenomena are not themselves things, but only imaginations which cannot exist outside of our soul. Imagination stretches further than just the external (time-space) location of things and combines phenomenological objects so that signs may be included in the context of perception. In the language of contemporary semiotics, a physical thing (or the ideal image) is converted to an object (becomes meaning) if and only if the thing becomes marked by a human’s sign perception. Outside of that relation the object (and so-called objective world) does not exist, at least for humans.

Thus, for example, we can observe and examine the phenomena in any order, regardless of their relations. But we can think about and understand phenomena only in a certain order which is accepted as some kind of objectivity of reason and intelligence. Although imagination has a creative, productive capacity, it is not entirely free. It can be influential concepts of understanding the basic characteristics of which are determined by necessity and—what I want especially to emphasize—by relationships or interests associated with all human’s souls. The last feature added is emphasis on the axiological interpretation of freedom. Thus Kant does not actually do the same physical things with objects. He was very close to distinguishing them not only on the basis of a differentiation of reason and understanding, but on a basis of the interaction of images operated by a free creative imagination.

The subjective dimension of human personality acquires new value: it becomes richer in the free activity of a man or woman. Objective reality is not identical to the physical reality. The last is a set of “things in themselves”, while objectivity may arise only in relation to subjectivity. According to Kant, it is possible to think about the existence of a thing by itself without regard to perception and experience, but then we know nothing about it. By the logic of Kant’s interpretation of reality, objective reality becomes rather the value of the reality of objects that occurs exclusively through humans. Man as a subject has subjective ability to differentiate oneself from the world of things and from the reality created by others. Everyone aims at one’s own subjectivity, which constitutes especially one’s own autonomy and independence, and exercises one’s own subjectivity. It is in terms of this that we speak of human communication or shared, common or universal interest. The reality of objects, therefore, concerns not just experience, but what subjectively is acquired by practical reason. The reality of objects is equal to human actuality.

It is also worth noting that the philosophy of Kant became the basis for understanding human freedom in modern society and is significant for research in our time. Thus, the distinction between society

and government (separation of public areas) was interpreted on the basis of the *a priori* ability to reason and man's moral responsibility for man. Responsibility belongs in the public sphere of interpersonal relationships and applies among people in the context of discursive practices. Here the modern German philosopher Manfred Riedel believes that "responsibility" is a matter of communicative practice, where language and a real relationship of persons exist together. In other words, freedom in the public sphere has the value of responsibility proper to practical reason, which has both a personal and social basis.

Thus, the Kantian products of the Enlightenment return with the possibility of developing the ethical responsibility of the person and of humankind.

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CHAPTER VIII

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: THE CLUE TO THE AGE-OLD PROBLEMS

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If we were to tabulate the main problems of philosophy in terms of their relative significance in the history of ideas, very few could be on a par with that of Unity and its relationship with multiplicity or diversity. Great schools of philosophy have vied with the great world religions on this issue. Eminent philosophers and sages both from east and west have made it the starting point of their philosophy. The problem, no doubt, is a metaphysical one, but we should not forget that metaphysical problems have their repercussions and corollaries, not only on the cosmic plane, but more concretely on our down-to earth worldly concerns in social, political and cultural problems. Moreover, this problem, due to its universal nature, can be the best theme for mutual understanding and the dialogue among civilizations; to borrow an expression from the late Henri Corbin, “un dialogue dans la metahistoire.”

Let's begin our discussion about unity and diversity from the great Chinese sages, who in my opinion are among the outstanding representatives of the so-called *Philosophia Perennis*, which has a metaphysical validity for all ages and nations. Lao Tzu, no doubt, is one of the greatest sages, who, being one of the eminent exponents of sapiential wisdom, have treated this crucial problem in a masterly fashion. His *Tao Te Ching (The Classic of the Way and Virtue)* is the most concise and precise formulation and articulation of the problem of unity and its relation to multiplicity. As indicated by this title, Lao Tzu sets out to delineate for us the contours of the Way (Tao). He starts the treatise by mentioning the negative attributes of the Way,

*The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao;
The name that can be defined is not the Unchanging name.*¹

The above statement is one of the most profound and terse articulations of metaphysical unity ever uttered by the great metaphysicians and sages, east or west. The Way, to begin with, is nameless, and being nameless, cannot be expressed in human language.

¹ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. Ch'u Ta Kao, Allen and Unwin (January 13, 1977), Originally Published in 1904, Ch.1.

If we were able to express it in words it would no longer be said to be eternal and unchanging. We might ask here the question, ‘Why is it that the Tao cannot be named?’ Its namelessness is due to the fact that as the unique principle, it is the most simple, undetermined, absolute unity. To name it is to hint at it, to make an insinuation or allusion to it and hence to determine it. Nothing is named by us except that it is determined by us by our very act of naming, by giving it this name rather than another.

Tao while hidden is nameless²
The Way in its absolute reality has no name. It is (comparable to)
uncarved wood...
Only When it is carved are there “names.”³

To say that the Way in its aspect of absoluteness is “nameless” is to say that it transcends all linguistic comprehension. This is to say that it is beyond the grasp of thought and sense perception. The Way is such that neither reason can conceive of it, nor can the senses perceive it. The Way, from this point of view is absolutely transcendent,

That which we look at but cannot see is called plainness.
That which we listen to but cannot hear is called rareness.
That which we grope for but cannot get is called minuteness.
These three cannot be closely examined; So they blend into One
Revealed, it is not dazzling.
Hidden it is not dark.
Infinite, it cannot be defined.
It goes back to non-existence.
It is called the form of the formless,
And the image of non-existence.
It is called mystery
Meet it, you cannot see its face.
Follow it, you cannot see its back.
By adhering to the Tao of the past
You will master the existence of the present
And be able to know the origin of the past,
This is called the clue of Tao.⁴

Thus the namelessness of the Tao is equivalent to saying that it is Non-being, for whatever is, is either perceptible or conceivable and that

² Ibid., Ch 41.

³ *Tao Te Ching*, Ch 32 as translated in Izutsu, Toshihiko, *Sufism and Taoism*, (University of California Press, 1984).

⁴ *Tao Te Ching*, trans. Ch'u Ta Kao, Ch. 14.

which is neither perceptible nor conceivable, that which has no image at all is nothing. It is nothing in the sense that it is no-thing, because to be a thing is to be ontologically determined and capable of being conceived. For the ordinary human consciousness, the Way is nothing.

But it is not nothing in a purely negative sense; it is not a passive nothing. It is nothing in a positive sense, that is, it is Non-being pregnant with the plenitude of Existence. It is a non-being or emptiness (*wu*) from which the reality of existence (*yu*) issues forth

*Tao is a thing that is both invisible
And intangible
Intangible and indistinct, yet there is
In the midst of it something
utterly profound, utterly dark
And yet there is in the midst of it
A Reality
This Pure Reality is indeed eternal
And unchanging
Eternal and unchanging
Of old
Its Name has never left it
Through this Name it governs
the principles of all existents
How do I know that it is so with
the origin of all things?
by this (Tao)?*

But there the question arises that if Tao is unnamable, why do we name it and call it Tao or the Way? The answer might be that since we wish to speak about that ineffable Nothing, we have no choice but to give it a name or some sort of designation. We therefore call it Tao which is no name at all. To call it Tao is not to give it any determinate attributes. Tao in other words is a name which is no name. "From the past to the present, Tao's name has never ceased to be. It has been the beginning of all things, that through which everything has come to be. Since there are always things, Tao never ceases to be and the name of Tao never ceases to be." In other words this nameless something in its eternal and everlasting creativeness may be provisionally named 'the Way'.

From Nothing, there comes something, from formlessness there arises indefinite forms, and from the non-being (*wu*) there emanates perfect existence and from existence the myriads of existents (ten thousand things, the world of multiplicity).

*Deep and bottomless, it is like the origin and
And principle of ten thousand things
There is nothing, and yet there seems to be
Something
I know not whose offspring it is
It would seem to be antecedent
Even to Nature*

The Tao, having no name, can take on every name. Being nameless, it can be named in various ways. Having no attributes, it can be conditioned by many attributes. It can be called by different and even opposite attributes. Being conditioned by these attributes, the absolute becomes determinate, relative and partial. Being nothing, it is reified into the thingness of things. Now it is great. Now it is small. And yet is beyond being great and small. Now it is in this direction and now it is in that direction, and yet is beyond all direction. In this respect the way is comparable to a water plant adrift, now going hither and then going thither

*The great Tao pervades everywhere,
It may go left, it may go right
By it, the ten thousand things come into
Being and yet it does not boast of them.
Having accomplished things, it does not
Claim merit
Loving and nourishing all things, it does
Not dominate over them
Being always non-existent, therefore
It can be named as small
All things return home to it, yet
It does not claim mastery over them,
Hence it can be named as great
As it never assumes greatness,
It may also be called small.*

In the metaphysical horizon of Lao Tzu, the Way is something nameless and as such transcends all things, but when it becomes Named, it becomes the mother of ten thousand things (the world of multiplicity).

*The Nameless is the beginning
Of Heaven and Earth
The Named is the mother of
ten thousand things (I)*

In the metaphysical system of Lao Tzu, the Nameless is synonymous with Non-being (*wu*), while the named is the same as Being (*yu*). The former (Non-being) is essentially prior to the latter (Being). Being, in this metaphysical scheme, is the self-manifestation of Non-being.

*The ten thousand things under
Heaven are born out of being (yu)
And Being itself is born out
Of non-being (XL)*

Lao Tzu expresses the relationship between non-being and being in the following way,

*From eternal non-existence,
Therefore, we serenely observe the
Mysterious beginning of the universe
From eternal existence we
Clearly see the apparent distinctions
These two are the same in source
and become different when manifested
In the original state of sameness
(The Way) is to be called the Mystery
The Mystery of Mysteries it really is
And it is the gateway of the
Myriad wonders.*

So it is clear that according to Lao Tzu, Non-being and being are the two aspects of the same Reality which we call the Way. In its aspect of non-differentiation, non-distinction, utter simplicity and absolute identity, we call it non-being or the Mystery of Mysteries, while in its aspect of differentiation, limitation, manifestation and externalization we call it Being, which itself is the mother of ten thousand things or the world of phenomenal things.

HUMAN CONDUCT

The best conduct for a human being is what Taoists call *Wu-Wei* which can be translated as 'non-action'. It does not mean the complete lack of activity, but rather, that one's activities should always be in conformity with the universal principles of the Tao. Oftentimes it is better to do or to act less, and even not to act at all. Many of our activities in other words are against the exigencies of the Way. If our

actions are not in accord with the universal norms of the Tao, they become harmful and even dangerous.

*Therefore the sage keeps to
One (Tao) and becomes the standard of
The world
He does not display himself,
Therefore he shines
He does not approve himself,
Therefore he is rated
He does not praise himself,
Therefore he has merit.
He does not glory in himself.
Therefore he excels.
And because he does not compete;
Therefore no one in the world can
Compete with him*

Tao is best manifested in Nature. So a sage is one who lives according to the universal principles of Nature.

*The highest goodness is like
Water
Water is beneficent to all things
But does not contend
It stays in places which others
Despise
Therefore it is near Tao*

From the unique unicity of the Tao, there has come into being the world of multiplicity or the variegated manifoldness of phenomena, each of which is a manifestation or a peculiar immanent aspect of the transcendent Tao. One should behold the Unity of Tao in every one of its manifested aspects. One attains spiritual integrity through the realization of such unity.

*Of old the things that have
Acquired Unity are these:
Heaven by Unity has become clear
Earth by Unity has become steady
The Spirit by Unity has become
Spiritual
The valley by Unity has become
Full*

*All things by Unity have come
 Into existence
 Princes and kings by Unity
 Have become rulers of the world.*

THE PRESOCRATICS

Most of the Presocratics were contemporaries of Lao Tzu and presented worldviews in many ways similar to that of this great sage of China. If meticulously considered, they show especially glaring resemblances to his views with regard to the problem at issue, i.e. the intrinsic connection between multiplicity and Unity.

It might be objected that what we read about pre-Socratic philosophers in the classical works on the history of philosophy, shows no resemblance to the ideas expressed by Lao Tzu and elaborated and expounded by his followers such as Chuang Tzu. The answer to this objection lies in the fact that there has been a gross misunderstanding of the Presocratics which can be traced back to Aristotle, whose interpretation of the development of the history of ideas was destined to affect the course of the historiography of philosophy in the West. To start with, Aristotle considers them as *physilogoi*, or philosophers of nature, rather than *theologoi* or the adepts of Divine Science or in our philosophical jargon, metaphysicians. Second Aristotle considered them as primitive, crude and simple-minded dilettantes in the science of nature, whose naïve theories were rough approximations leading to the well-developed theories of his own philosophical system. Treating the four causes for example, he categorically stated that the Presocratics had been able to discover only one cause, that is, the material cause. Aristotle believed that their primary question was about the prime matter which constituted the *Urstoff* of all things. Aristotle was perhaps mistaken in this interpretation. The foundational question which they addressed was not about the prime matter but about the first principle (*arche*). All of them asked this fundamental question '*ti esti he archè?*' (What is the first principle of all things?). The question, as we see, is the most basic question in metaphysics and relates to the problem at issue, that is, the reduction of multiplicity to the primal unity. The two presocratic philosophers which we shall briefly discuss here (Heraclitus and Parmenides), if sapientially understood, are very close in outlook to Lao Tzu.

HERACLITUS

1. *To hen panta* (The absolutely simple one is everything). *To hen* in Greek means 'the one', 'the absolutely simple'. It is comparable to the

Tao, in its aspect of namelessness, which gives rise to the world of multiplicity and phenomena (referred to as *panta* = all things). In other words the Tao, which in its transcendent aspect is No-Thing, becomes in its immanent aspect everything. Without doubt, in Heraclitus to *hen* or the absolutely unique one, which is the Logos, and which is Non-Being, becomes beings (*logoi*) through its determination of Being.

2.a. «Of the Logos which is as I describe it, men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once they have heard it. For although all things happen according to this Logos, men are like people of no experience, even when they experience such words and deeds as I explain».

2.b. «But although the *Logos* is common, the many live as though they had a private understanding».

2.c. «Listening not to me, but to the Logos, it is wise to agree that all things are one».

To understand the language of Logos, or for that matter the Tao, is the token of the higher wisdom. It is only the sage who is able to comprehend such a language. True philosophy according to Heraclitus is *homolegein*, that is 'to enter into a mutual dialogue with the universal *Logos*'. The sage, who is in a sort of perpetual discourse with the Logos, is like a wakeful person among those asleep. The language of the Logos is universal, but people make it a private language such that communication becomes impossible. Finally Heraclitus advises us not to listen to him but to the Logos. After this mutual dialogue with the Logos is established and we become the mouthpiece of the Logos, we come to know that all things are one, that is they can all be traced back to the ineffable Logos (Tao).

3. «The way up and down is one and the same.»

This is a metaphysical simile which is not to be construed as an Aristotelian analogy, but as an instantiation or rather an exemplification of a universal principle. As a geometer proves the propositions about a triangle as such by proving it in a single triangle, because this particular triangle is the exemplification (hence an example) of the universal triangle, so too we can take perceptual phenomena as exemplifications of the universal laws governed by the Logos.

This terse apothegm embodies a universal law that the way of «analysis» (from Logos to phenomena) and the way of «synthesis» (from phenomena to Logos) are identical. Or it is an admonition to the sage that he should ascend by spiritual and intellectual exertion, the way The Logos has descended and has become embodied in our very being.

4.a: «Disease makes health pleasant and good, hunger satiety, weariness, rest».

4.b: «And, as the same thing, there exists in us living and dead and the waking and the sleeping and young and old; for these things having changed round, are those, and those having changed round are these».

4.c: «God is day, night, winter, summer, war, peace, satiety hunger».

The Logos, the one, absolutely unique and simple, has no opposite but in its manifestation in the world of phenomena, manifests itself, and hence is best known, through the opposites.

What we call opposites from an external and an exoteric point of view, are indeed not opposites at all, but are complementary entities manifesting a single Reality (Logos) by which it becomes known to us. Or it might be that which is harmful and detrimental from one point of view becomes beneficial and salutary from another point of view. (For example cutting and burning which are normally bad, call for a fee when done by a surgeon.) All opposites can be transcended to their unique ultimate source.

There are again many passages in the *Tao Te Ching* to the effect that the great Tao, manifests itself in this world through the opposites.

*Be humble and you will remain entire
Be bent and you will remain straight
Be vacant and you will remain full
Be warm and you will remain new
He who has little will receive
He who has much will be embarrassed
Therefore the sage keeps to one
And becomes the standard to the world*

*When all in the world understand Beauty to be beautiful,
then ugliness exists
When all understand goodness to Be good,
then evil exists
Thus existence suggests non-existence
Easy gives rise to difficult
Short is derived from long by comparison
Low is distinguished from high by position*

5. « Everything is in Flux» (*Panta rhei*).

Change, according to Heraclitus is the most conspicuous reality in our world. We see things moving and the rivers flowing. The reality of constant change is expressed by Heraclitus by the precept that, “You

cannot step into the same river twice.” The river changes because “fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you.” This principle of change and movement is not haphazard and fortuitous, but must apply to all things.

According to Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus and other ancient doxographers, the river image was cited by Heraclitus to emphasize the absolute continuing of change in every single thing: everything is in perpetual flux like a river. Change and becoming” (*gignesthai*) are the intrinsic properties of all existents in our world. For Cratylus, the disciple of Heraclitus, change was so real that he even tried to amend his teacher’s statement by saying that, “You could not step into the same river even once.” But nonetheless the river remains the same even if the water is in perpetual flux; otherwise you could not say that the water in the *river* has changed. There is such a thing as the same river, but it is also different in a way. It is the same river but not exactly the same. There is a contrast here between “the same” and “different” which is one of Heraclitus’s concrete examples of the coincidence of opposites. This is how the nobleman from Ephesus described the process of change and becoming as a unity in diversity or an identity in difference.

PARMENIDES

Parmenides was a near contemporary of Lao Tzu, and, although they lived continents apart, their metaphysical foundations are so close that one can have recourse to one of them in order to better understand the other. One helps to decipher the obscure points in the other, which have puzzled many commentators to the point of reducing metaphysical allusions to poetical imagery or to interpretations which are based on misunderstanding. I found my interpretation very close, if not identical, to that of Plato in his book, *The Parmenides*.

The starting point of Parmenides, as reiterated in various forms in his fragments and as quoted by Plato, is the famous statement, “*tauto gar estin to noein te kai einai*” (“for it is the same thing to think and to be”). That is to say, the object of intellection and being are one and the same; or conversely, whatever is, can be made the object of reasoning and intellection. Contrapositively stated, non-being cannot be thought of or made the object of intellection; conversely what is not intelligible, is not, period.

Now, there are two senses to non-being: a) non-being which is, and b) a non being which *is not*. The first is non-being in the positive sense in Lao Tzu, and the second is non-being in the negative sense. Non-being in the positive sense, as the No-Thing in Taoism, is beyond being and hence above any distinction and determination. It can never become the object of thought, being absolutely simple and without any attributes whatsoever. From the unknowable-ness of what does not exist,

Parmenides concludes directly that the negative way is indiscernible, i.e., it can never be expressed in thought or predicated of in existential statements.

Non-being in the second or negative sense, on the other hand, is the opposite of being and hence *it is not*, nor can it ever be. It does not have any kind of independent reality of its own. Being by definition is the contradictory (and hence the opposite) of non-being and they can never be found together. Parmenides is very precise in his definitions and the metaphysical usages of his terms. Is not that 'being' the contradictory of 'non-being'? And do not contradictories never coincide? If we are ever committed to the proper use of our well-defined terms, in all honesty we are not entitled to apply the word 'being' to whatever accepts non-being. Are not things we see in our universe subject to destruction, corruption and annihilation? Are they not subject to becoming? Parmenides is not ready to make any reconciliation in metaphysics. He is not ready to change his definitions to suit his desired purposes. So in order not to compromise the definitions, he simply states that things we behold in our ordinary experience are not; they came to be after they were not, but true being always is and never comes into being. *Ergo* things perceived in ordinary experience *are not* in the true sense of the word.

In other words, the things of ordinary experience are not sheer illusions; they are phenomenally real, but they are metaphysical illusions in the sense that they appear to us to be absolutely real and *to be* in the true sense of the word, while, as we saw, they are not. In other words, we should not take appearances to be the reality. What is really real is being, not change, motion and becoming, which *are not* in the Parmenidian definition of being. Moreover, a clear-cut distinction is made in Parmenides between being and becoming. In fact, Xenodorus, Parmenides' favorite disciple devised his ingenious paradoxes to prove his master's thesis about the phenomenal reality and the metaphysical illusoriness of change and motion.

Parmenides enumerates the following attributes of being: it is intelligible; it cannot not be, or in other words, being necessarily is (Parmenides is the first philosopher we know of in the history of philosophy who, by considering the nature of the reality of being, proved, *a priori*, the existence of a necessary being. He is, in other words, the first philosopher to propose the ontological argument); being is identical with itself (the metaphysical justification of the principle of identity rests on the identity of the reality of being with itself); being is identical with intellection; being is not subject to non-being; being is uncreated and imperishable; "it is whole and of a single kind and unshaken and perfect;" being is eternal in the sense that "it never was, nor will be, since it is now; being is "altogether one and continuous;" it is infinite and total (it

must either be completely or not at all); it is just and harmonious; it never comes to be, for if it comes into being it *is not*; nor does it perish; it is never divided; it is not susceptible of augmentation or diminution; it is full of being; it is changeless, without beginning or ceasing; it always remains the same and on its own, and thus fixed will it remain strong; necessity holds it within the bounds of a limit; it is not deficient in anything, otherwise it would be deficient in everything; the same thing which is there is to be thought; you will not find thinking without what is; fate fettered it (being) to be whole and changeless; therefore it has been named as the mortals have laid down, believing them to be true; being is like the bulk of a sphere, well-rounded on every side and equally balanced in every direction from the centre, not to be somewhere more or somewhat less here or there; the way of being is the way of truth, but objects of sense give us sheer opinion....

PLATO AND THE PROBLEM OF UNITY AND MULTIPLICITY

Plato's metaphysical system, unlike that of Aristotle, is not based on the problem of being *qua* being, because being according to Plato is equal to determination, and hence "the one" is beyond determination, and hence beyond being (*hyper tes ousias*). Hence Plato's metaphysical mansion is based on the pillar of unity which bifurcates into plurality.

Plato has dealt with this problem in his book, *The Parmenides*, which is the *locus classicus* of this problem. There Plato poses the following questions:

1. If the real is one, what can be asserted about this one real?
2. If the real is one, what can be said about many?
3. If the real is not one, what can be said about the one?
4. If the real is not one, what can be said about the many?

Plato, that ingenious mind, proposes eight formal hypotheses which are, logically speaking, mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive:

- I. If the real is one, nothing whatever can be asserted of it.
- II. If the real is one, everything can be asserted of it.
- III. If the real is one, everything can be asserted of "things other than the one."
- IV. If the real is one, nothing can be asserted of "things other than the one."
- V. If the one is unreal, everything can be asserted of it.
- VI. If the one is unreal, nothing at all can be asserted of it.
- VII. If the one is unreal, everything can be asserted about "things other than the one."

VIII. If the one is unreal, nothing can be asserted about anything.

Now we will briefly analyze the first four hypotheses about the possibility, "if the real is one."

First Hypothesis

"If the real is one, nothing whatever can be asserted of it." This is equivalent to the hypothesis, "if the one is not," or to the one as non-existent, or No-thing of Lao Tzu, which cannot be known and of which nothing can be asserted or predicated. It is "*to hen*" or "the one" of the Neoplatonists, which is "*aleptos*" or ineffable.

Concerning "the one" construed in this way, Plato says that it is not many; it is not a whole and has no parts; it has neither beginning, middle nor end; it is infinite and has no figure or form; it has no place; it cannot change; it cannot move; it is neither identical nor different (identity and difference are attributes of being); it can neither be like or unlike; it is neither equal nor unequal; it has no temporal predicates such as "it was," "it became," or "it will come to be," hence no past or future.

The Second Hypothesis

"If the one is real, every thing can be asserted of it." In other words if "the one is," it partakes of being and can be analyzed into parts: unity and existence are parts of "the one." Therefore it is a whole, and, on inspection, each of the parts is found to have two parts; each constituent "exists" and is "one"; so there ensues an "infinite manifold". Here we have the metaphysical foundation for the possibility of there being a multiplicity and hence the existence of numbers. By addition and multiplication, we can establish the existence of the series of integers.

Since parts are parts of wholes, each part has a boundary. So the "existing one" is not only indefinitely many or boundless, it is bounded too; it has a form of some kind. By considering the attributes of being, Plato deduces all the categories of being such as identity and difference, equality and inequality, eternity and temporality, unity and multiplicity and so on.

The Third Hypothesis

If the one is real, what about other things? This hypothesis concerns the things (*alla*) other than the one. Since they are things other than the one, their unity is not an essential unity, but a participated unity. They "partake of" it (*metexis*). They must have parts (otherwise they would be the same as the "one"). The things other than the one must

therefore be a manifold or aggregate. They must be numerically infinite and manifold, and *participate* in unity. Participating in unity, they are nevertheless bounded. Each of the parts is like every other.

The Fourth Hypothesis

“If the one is real, nothing can be asserted of things other than the real.” In other words, “the one” and “the others” form a complete disjunction. They (the others) cannot participate in any kind of unity and therefore they are not even manifold and have no number.

In the four hypotheses above, Plato moves from utter unity (hypothesis I) to sheer multiplicity (hypothesis IV), with analogical grades of unity in between (hypotheses II and III). In II as in III, the emphasis is on the “existent one” (*on hen*). In II, the unity of the existent is not participated unity, and hence unity is real and multiplicity is ideal or rational. In III, the unity, being by participation, is not real whereas the multiplicity is real.

The total result of the four hypotheses is summed up by Plato in the following statement, “If the one is, the one is everything and nothing at all, relatively alike to itself and to ‘the others’.”

CONCLUSION

I began this discussion about the relationship of unity and multiplicity with the great sage of China, Lao Tzu, and continued by going over the same problem in the Presocratics, with due emphasis on Heraclitus and Parmenides. I then briefly treated the same problem in Plato with reference to his book, *The Parmenides*. I have also prepared some material about the problem at issue in Confucius, especially with reference to his practical philosophy, such as ethics, family life and politics, which I defer to another occasion. In addition, I had intended to write about the issue at hand in the thought of Muslim sages such as Ibn ‘Arabi and Mulla Sadra. The fact that these sages are very close in spirit and meaning to those sages discussed in this paper goes to prove that there has been so much unity and unanimity of opinion in traditional cultures, which makes a trans-historical dialogue among these great sages belonging to different times and climes possible.

It is very unfortunate that one must say that the problem at issue is missing in modern philosophy. There is no modern philosopher who has taken seriously such a profound problem. This fault is either due to some negligence in attending to grave issues in metaphysics, or to the rejection of metaphysical problems as genuine problems, or due to philosophers’ presuppositions, such as that the problems belong to Western Metaphysics which has come to a deadlock or that they belong

to the horde of grand narratives which must be deconstructed. The catastrophic result has ensured that everywhere there is plurality of every kind without the underlying unity. Diversity without unity ends in clash, misunderstanding and relativism.

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CHAPTER IX

**OPTIMAL HARMONY,
COMMUNICATION AND WAITUI (外推)**

VINCENT SHEN

BUILD UP A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

“Build up a Harmonious Society” is the political program recently proposed by China’s President Hu Jintao 胡錦濤 as the major political guideline for today’s Chinese society in an amazing economic boom where people are competing for economic profits on the one hand and falling into a demoralizing space of ideological and ethical void on the other. President Hu defines his concept of harmonious society as “a society with socialist democracy and rule of law, fairness and justice, integrity and friendly love, fullness of vitality, social stability and orderliness, and harmonious interaction between humans and nature.”¹ Since it targets both social cohesion and ecological harmony with Nature, it could be read as a Confucian Program with a certain Daoist overtone. From the vehement and hostile class struggle during the cultural revolution period to today’s political program for a harmonious society, China seems to be fulfilling the historical process predicted in Zhang Zai’s (張載 1020-1077)) saying “when there are struggles there are hostilities, while all hostilities are at the end to be solved in harmony.”²

More than this, China’s harmonious society program might also be useful on the international level to dissolve or at least to sooth the anxiety or irrational feeling against the so-called “China’s menace to the World”³. Harmony should be meaningful for a China that is rising up

¹ My English translation of the Chinese original:”民主法治、公平正義、誠信友愛、充滿活力、安定有序、人與自然和諧相處的社會”See: www.china.org.cn/chinese/news/789914.htm

² The complete saying of Zhang Zai is “有象斯有對，對必反其為；有反斯有仇，仇必和而解” “When there are concrete manifestations, there are oppositions, while all oppositions will struggle against what others do. When there are struggles there are hostilities, while all hostilities are to be solved in harmony” (Zhang Zai 1972:10).

³This feeling was articulated since an essay with that title by Thomas Magee published in the Forum in 1890 (though hand written in 1878), to which Sun yat-sen answered, in 1904 in New York in his talk on “The Real Solution to China's Problems (中國問題之真解決)”, by the peace-loving nature of Chinese

now to one of the world's great powers, in which China is facing a contrasting situation of abundant possibilities of mutual enrichment as well as antagonist conflict on the global level. As China is insisting on its own mode of development proper, the so-called "socialism with Chinese characteristics", its actual practice of economic decentralization with stronger political control is not orienting itself toward a democratic country in a western sense, such as democracy in the form of a parliamentary system or opposition party politics. In fact, the diversity of all kinds released by the process of democratization, such as differences in gender, family background, profession, scientific discipline, ethnic group, value and belief system, etc., though holding potential for a better mutual enrichment, in reality might burst into more vehement conflict, especially when provoked by dualistic and antagonistic political confrontation.

For me democracy in the form of opposition party politics and parliamentary system is now under serious question. In its origin, both party and the representatives in the parliament were conceived and organized to represent the people. However this idea of representation is now in serious question because of the fact that the political parties and parliamentary representatives are looking for their own interests instead of representing the people. The violence of the majority happens all the time to the detriment of real common good. Also the hostile opposition between parties sometimes goes so far as to compromise social cohesion. Nevertheless, there is one essential component of democracy that should never be denied: the process of communication and conversation that bring different people to a certain level of consensus as to the making of policy related to the common good of all people. I would say that deliberative democracy with free and responsible communication and conversation of all kinds of people is still a must for today even when party politics and the parliamentary system are in serious question.

Generally speaking, difference and otherness are everywhere today. We are living in a world where there is no place without the presence of Multiple Others or Many Others, with different perspective of otherness: in gender, in family and education background, in profession, in scientific discipline, in ethnic group, in value and belief system, in cultural traditions, in ways of life, etc. Especially in today's globalization process, in contrast with localization, homogenization in contrast with diversification, we are now in a moment of human history that people in the world feel so close to each other on the one hand, and so vulnerable and susceptible to conflicts of all kinds on the other. In

nation, its contribution to world peace, and replaced the concept of China's Menace (*huanghuo* 黃禍) by the concept of "China's Benefit to the World" (*huangfu* 黃福).

responding to today's urgent situation full of conflicts created by the self-enclosure of different parts such as different disciplines, cultures, political parties and religious groups, etc., indeed the ideal of harmony should make an urgent issue, and we humans should be more concerned with one another and look for the possibility of not only peaceful coexistence, but also for an optimal situation of mutual enrichment. Experience tells us that differences of all kinds may lead, in the worse case, to conflict and war; in the normal case, to peaceful co-existence; and in a better case, to mutual enrichment. Peaceful co-existence, kept as such and in itself static, though necessary for further enriching experience of interaction, is only a minimal state and an ideal way of co-existence. What I'm advocating here is a dynamic concept of optimal harmony, not that of perfect and therefore static harmony. We should act for mutual enrichment rather than mere co-existence, not to say conflict and war, especially in a time when this world is in the process of globalization.

As I said, "Building up a Harmonious Society" is a Confucian political program, with some Daoist component as to the human relationship with Nature. This is made conceivable because of the value of harmony developed by Confucianism in the long historical tradition. It is therefore reasonable to discuss here the idea of harmony proposed by Confucianism and Daoism for a deeper understanding of the value of harmony in the Chinese tradition. Though we should understand that, in the political process, as if in a game, the issue is not how to restore the initial state or any particular previous state of the game, but rather the stake at play now resulted from its "historical" process. Even if this does not mean what the dead have thought might not be effective for those still living, nevertheless those ideas and values cherished in the long history of the past might show a core of meaningfulness for the historical being that is properly human. It is in this sense that the values and wisdom proposed and formed by Confucianism and Daoism, repeatedly studied and proclaimed by political leaders and scholars along the pre-democratic history of China, might still have some importance for today's Chinese mind.

Let me recapitulate right from the start the idea of optimal harmony that both Confucianism and Daoism in the best case could agree upon, and what the *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of Changes*) says: "While each one fulfills his/her/its true nature and destiny, all together they achieve an optimal harmony."⁴ For me, what is in stake in the effort for

⁴ My translation. In a language more understandable today: While each attains his/her excellence, all come together in an optimal harmony. Baynes' English rendering of Richard Wilhem's German translation reads "The way of the Creative works through changes and transformation, so that each thing

social cohesion is a dynamic optimal harmony, not an ideology of static harmony as a pretext of political domination. The problem here is: if each and every person is allowed to fulfill his/her own nature, how as an entirety can they come together to achieve an optimal harmony? Here Confucians and Daoists answer differently in the sense that Confucians attempt to achieve harmony by appealing to the ethical ability of humaneness *ren* in each person and to the coordination by *li* the ritual that is to be transcendently founded on it, whereas Daoists refer to a deeper compliance with the Heavenly *dao* (laws of nature) and the spontaneous coordination of all beings by their following *Dao*'s original generosity in working for the goodness of Multiple Others or Many Others⁵.

OPTIMAL HARMONY, RITUAL REGULATION AND RECIPROCITY

Right from its beginning, Confucians understood that human beings were born among many others therefore in the risk of all kinds of conflict, but they would make an ethical effort to obtain an optimal harmony, especially through the mediation and regulation of *li* (the ritual). The concept of harmony is essential in the Confucian understanding of the role of the ritual. As Youzi, a disciple of Confucius, said,

Of the things brought about by the rites, harmony is the most valuable. Of the ways of the Former Kings, this is the most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small, yet this will not always work: to aim always at harmony without regulating it by rites simply because one knows only about harmony will not, in fact, work (Lau 2000: 7).

In this text, the ritual, *li*, as an overall concept of cultural ideal, could be understood as a graceful order of human actions leading to optimal harmony.

receives its true nature and destiny and comes into permanent accord with Great Harmony.” For me this is over-interpeted. Also the word “receives” is too passive.

⁵ I use the term “Multiple Others” or “Many Others” to replace the concept of “the Other” of French philosophers such Levinas, Derrida and Deleuze. For me, we humans are born into Multiple Others and are always living and facing with Multiple Others. There is no simplified case in which the self is living and facing with simply the Other.

From the Confucian view, social cohesion targeted an optimal harmony to be maintained by *li*. The function of *li* as order with beauty leading to harmony depends on the one hand on people's self-awareness to ground *li* in one's sense of rightness, *yi*, and the sense of rightness *yi* in one's humanity *ren*; and, on the other, the moral effort to manifest one's moral ability of *ren* to *yi*, then from *yi* to the harmonizing *li*. Confucian ethics is a dynamic model of back and forth within these two moral movements, extending thereby to larger and larger social units such as family, community, state, and all under heaven. For Confucianism, the dimension of meaningfulness in human existence is to be understood within the context of ethical relations among human beings, nature and the Heaven, in a pattern of life imbued with a sense of beauty in an orderly ensemble that is harmony.

Different from Daoism that tries to obtain harmony by way of coordinating the oppositions in strife, Confucianism tries to obtain optimal harmony by way of extending each person's virtuous life. Besides virtues such as *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, people can extend their existence, by way of *shu*, to larger realms of existence from oneself to many others, to family, to social community, to the state, to all under heaven. Confucius sometimes understood both *ren* and *shu* in the spirit of a negative golden rule, "do not impose on others what you yourself do not want" (Ames and Rosemont 1998: 189). We should note the close relationship between *ren* and *shu*, given the fact they are both defined by a negative golden rule. Also, a positive golden rule was given by Confucius as an answer to the question about the concept of *ren*, "A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes others, wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent" (Chan 1963: 31). Both the negative and positive versions of the golden rule are, in Confucian eyes, based on a reciprocal basis as to the relation between self and Multiple Others. A Confucian existence is an ever-expanding life based on self-cultivation. In this process, authenticity and perfection of self are in priority over dependence on others. That's why Confucius emphasized learning for perfecting oneself.⁶ While self-cultivation and self-perfection are more on the part of the individual, harmonious relation with many others should be achieved in the social context. In short, according to Confucianism, the

⁶ For example: "Do not worry about not being recognized by others; worry about not having any reason for them to recognize you." (*Analects* 14:30, R. Ames and H. Rosemont, p.179) "Exemplary persons are distressed by their own lack of ability, not by the failure of others to acknowledge him." (*Analects* 15.19, R. Ames and H. Rosemont, p.188) "Exemplary persons (*junzi*) make demands on themselves, while petty persons make demands on others." (*Analects* 15.21, R. Ames and H. Rosemont, p. 189)

tension between self and multiple others is to be solved in reference to the golden rule, both negative and positive, based ultimately on the principle of reciprocity. In this sense, we can say that, in the Confucian world, in which human behaviors have to be regulated by *li*, even the act of going outside oneself to the other launched by *shu*, and the original generosity it implied, have to be regulated by reciprocity.

The principle of reciprocity becomes a guiding principle of social and political philosophy in the *Great Learning*, where it is called the principle of measuring square (*Jieju zhidao* 絜矩之道). There we read first a positive version of the principle, followed by a negative version. They are put in the context where is explained the extension from governing the state to making peace within all under heaven, which, in today's term, could be interpreted as "globalization." Confucian major concern here is the governance by *ren* (humanity): when the ruler governs his people by respect and humanity, people will respond with peace and harmony, in the form of filial piety, brotherly respect and harmonious agreement. The positive reciprocity is therefore expressed in terms of virtuous life among many others such as filial piety, brotherly respect and compassion for the young and the helpless, etc., initiated by a political leader. On the other hand, there is also the negative version of the measure of square:

What a man dislikes in his superiors, let him not show in dealing with his inferiors. What he dislikes in those in front of him, let him not show it in preceding with those who are behind; what he dislikes in those behind him, let him not show it in following those in front of him; what he dislikes in those on the right, let him not apply it to those on the left; and what he dislikes in those on the left, let him not apply it to those on the right. This is the principle of the measuring square. (Ibid.)

As is clear in this text, the reciprocity is extended analogically from one side to the opposite side: from superior to inferior, from inferior to superior; from right to left, from left to right; from front to behind, from behind to front, and thereby forming a Confucian cubic relationship with Multiple Others, not merely a square, of reciprocity, though always taken in a negative sense. Within this cubic structure of reciprocal relationship, more attention is paid to the horizontal, that is, from right to left, from left to right; from front to behind, from behind to front, than the vertical relation between superior and inferior, mentioned only once. Nevertheless, the concept of "extended reciprocity" plays a major role in this largest extension of human relation—from the state to all under Heaven, today added as globalization.

OPTIMAL HARMONY AND ORIGINAL GENEROSITY

Confucianism looks for optimal harmony by ritual regulation with the principle of reciprocity, whereas Daoism looks for optimal harmony by letting all beings unfold their being fully and freely with the principle of original generosity prior to reciprocity. Lao Tzu understood well the Confucian project of transcendental derivation of *yi* from *ren* and *li* from *yi*, and had well pinpointed the regressive degeneration of *ren* to *yi* and *yi* to *li* and *li* to social conflict. This does not mean Lao Tzu paid no regard to harmony. Lao Tzu uses the metaphor of sound to represent harmony. First, musical sounds, “Refined notes and raw sounds harmonize with each other” (Chapter 2, Roger Ames, p. 80). Second, the innocent crying of a newborn baby, who “screams through the entire day, and yet his voice does not get hoarse. Such is the height of harmony” (Chapter 55. Ames and Hall 2003: 163). On the ethical and political level, Lao Tzu criticized Confucian values as resulting from the loss of deeper solidarity in human relationship.⁷

For Lao Tzu, there was a deeper solidarity among human beings, even among all things, by the fact that all were given birth by Dao, as the outcome of its original generosity, much more profound than mere filial piety and loyalty to ministers. Lao Tzu’s idea of harmony had its cosmological and ontological foundation. Dao as the original harmony was itself the original generosity that gave birth to all things. “Dao gave birth to One, One gave birth to Two. Two gave birth to Three. Three gave birth to all things. Everything carries *yin* on its shoulders and *yang* in its arms, and blends these vital energies (*qi*) together to make them harmonious” (Chapter 42). On the ontological and cosmological level, Dao as the Origin launches the process of differentiation and complexification that might cause strife and therefore harmony emerges from them only by way of coordinating the rhythmic interaction of contrast or opposition such as *yin* and *yang*, and harmony is the optimal coordination of the opposites.⁸

Optimal harmony is also a political ideal for Lao Tzu :

Governing the nation through intellectual discrimination is harmful to it. Not governing the nation through intellectual discrimination is a blessing to it. Knowing the difference

⁷ Such as “When the six family relationships are disharmonious, that filial piety and parental affection appear. It is when the state has fallen into trouble times that upright ministers appear” (Chapter 18, Ames and Hall 2003: 103).

⁸ In this sense, we can say that Lao Tzu’s cosmology offers a good Chinese example of what K-O Apel calls “harmony through strife” (Liu and Allinson 1988:3-5).

between these two sets a standard. To be aware of this standard is a profound attainment. Profound attainment is deep and far-reaching. It is the reversal of ordinary things, yet it leads to optimal harmony with Tao” (Chapter 65, Chan 1975: 174, my correction in bold).

Not to impose on others, but to let others be themselves, this is the way to optimal harmony. Freedom and creativity are therefore seen as the key to optimal harmony. This idea was further developed by Zhuangzi by his concept of the freedom and equality of all things.

I would like to feature here the Daoist idea of original generosity which was not at all limited to Confucian ethics and the politics of reciprocity. According to my reading, Lao Tzu presented to us an ethics of generosity par excellence, and the Daoist generosity was based on its ontology and cosmology. Lao Tzu showed that Dao, as the unfathomable, inexhaustible Ultimate Reality, took the first initiative to go beyond itself to give birth to myriad things in its act of giving birth. This is textually supported by the recently discovered bamboo slips text named *Heng Xian* 恆先 (The Constant precedes), arguably produced at a time close after *Lao Tzu* and before *Mencius*. There we read, “The Constant precedes *you* (being) and *wu* (non-being). It’s simple, quiet...and, tired of staying in itself, and not tolerating being itself, it rises and creates space....”⁹ Classical Daoism expressed the idea that the *Dao* was generous in taking the initiative to give birth to all things, and this was done by several acts of generosity. In the *Lao Tzu*, the first act of generosity was that by which the *Dao* showed itself in the infinitely marvellous possibilities, which, because of its intangibility, was called *wu* “non-being”. Then, the *Dao* allowed some among the infinite possibilities to take the form of body and be realized as *you* (being). This was the *Dao*’s second act of generosity. Then, with the process of differentiation and complexification, myriad things came to be produced endlessly, which was the *Dao*’s continuous and endless act of generosity within heaven and earth. Here the term “myriad things” represented the Daoist concept of “Multiple Others.” After having produced myriad things, Dao still gave itself to all things, and became *de* in each particular being. *De* was there in each being to be unfolded fully by each so as to bring them to return to the Origin.

On the level of human beings, the sage, taking the generosity of Dao as his/her exemplary model and incarnating the way of Dao in his/her person, was also generous to all things with gratuitous gift and taking generous giving as the way to enrich his own life. “The sage

⁹ In Chinese: 「恆先無有，朴、靜、虛...自厭不自忍，或作。...」 See Ma Chengyuan 2003: 105

never accumulates for himself, he takes it to be more in himself in doing more for others; he takes it to be richer in him in giving more to others” (Chapter 80). Even if it was not excluded that what he did and what he gave are related to material goods, but, since material goods would become less when divided, shared and given, it’s more likely that what the sage did and gave were more of spiritual character, especially by his acts that created and gave all things including human beings their chances of uncovering and unfolding their own *de* and thereby in due course to return to the *Dao*.

Based upon these ontological, cosmological and ethical levels, generosity showed itself also on the level of political philosophy. For Lao Tzu, the highest virtue was incarnated and concretely manifested in the person of a sage, who employed him/herself generously for the world. “The sage has no fixed (personal) ideas. He regards the people’s ideas as his own” (Chapter 49). “Therefore, the sage is always good in saving men and consequently no man is rejected. He is always good in saving things and consequently nothing is rejected” (Chapter 27). The sage, as a paradigmatic individual both in self-cultivation and in political philosophy, was therefore not only an ethical and moral figure as in the eyes of a Confucian sage, but as the incarnation of the *Dao* and its generosity.

COMMUNICATION IN THE FORMS OF RECOGNITION AND DIALOGUE

Taking the Confucian and Daoist concepts of optimal harmony as a background ideal value in pre-democratic Chinese tradition, hopefully with certain understandability and therefore universalizability also for other traditions in the world, now I would like to turn to today’s democratic situation and examine some contemporary western political theories in regard to their possibilities of mutual enrichment and achieving optimal harmony: Charles Taylor’s politics of recognition and dialogue as constituting democratic harmony; Husserl and Habermas’ concepts of communicative actions, and my concept of communication as mutual strangification, as leading to an optimal harmony.

“The politics of recognition”, the title of a paper presented by Charles Taylor, was formulated within the context of the antagonist tension produced by nationalist movement, minority group, feminism and multiculturalism. There Charles Taylor has well analyzed the historical development by which the Western world has arrived at the modern preoccupation with identity and recognition. There was first the collapse of social hierarchy based upon honor, followed by the switch from honor to dignity, which led to a politics of universalism, emphasizing the equal dignity of rights and entitlement (Guttmann 1994:

37). Then came the second change, the development of the notion of dignity depending on individual identity, defined by Charles Taylor as authenticity. Now the ultimate reference is switched from God or the idea of the Good to the fulfillment and realization of one's own true self or originality. This gives rise to a politics of difference, in which we are asked to recognize "the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else" (Ibid.:38).

Therefore, Charles Taylor's politics of recognition plays within the contrasting tension of a politics of universalism and a politics of difference. On the one hand, under the name of recognition, we should be treated all as equals, regardless of our particular ethnic, religious, racial or sexual identities. "Treating as equals" should be concretized in the basic needs such as income, health care, education, freedom of conscience, speech, press, association, due process, right to vote, right to hold public office, religious freedom, etc. On the other hand, the differential originality or distinctiveness of each individual or social/cultural group should be respected and satisfied. We should be recognized in our innermost difference, from which are derived all cultural expressions and ways of life. Recognition plays therefore with the dialectics of equality and difference.

With recognition, there could be dialogue leading to possible harmony or disharmony. Charles Taylor, following M. Bakhtin's model of dialogue, has well emphasized the formation of one's authenticity in the process of dialogue: "Thus my discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relation with others" (Ibid.:34).

As I see it, even if Charles Taylor sees human authenticity as formed through a process of dialogue, still there is no true recognition of the Multiple Others as the unfathomable and irreducible to any mode of my own constitution of it. For me, we humans are born into "Multiple Others," which are not limited only to human beings, given that it refers also to Nature and the transcendent. Multiple Others, in dialogue with me as they might be, are not reducible to my construction. Also there must be an original generosity to go outside of myself to Multiple Others, otherwise there will be no reciprocity and reciprocal recognition, and therefore no dialogue possible at all. If one loses sense of this irreducible Otherness in multiplicity and one's ability of original generosity, there will be no authentic dialogue for the formation of one's authentic self. In short, without a politics of generosity, Charles Taylor's politics of recognition tends to be constrained within the philosophy of subjectivity and the framework of reciprocity, and thereby it could be seen as only an

English version of the Hegelian *Anerkennung* in the context of today's society of differences and multiculturalism. We can say that "recognition" in Charles Taylor's sense is the recognition of a modern subjectivity: human beings as subject of cognitive capacity, moral agent, or agent worthy and creative of values. There is reciprocity in the act of recognition: I recognize you as a subject and you recognize me as a subject, a reciprocal situation in which a subject is recognized in the sense of a pairing subject, a subject capable of responsive return of my act of recognition.

Now, identity and reciprocity, though to be posited as necessary for a minimal politics, does not constitute an optimal politics. For me, an optimal politics should be a politics of generosity that leads to mutual enrichment, which constitute a dynamic concept of harmony. This is to say, based on the recognition of each and everyone's identity and mutual recognition, there must be an original generosity to Multiple Others as well as a process of realization of something beyond, a surplus of mutual enrichment.¹⁰ Every one of us can learn from each other and contribute to the benefit of each other and be mutually enriched thereby. That's why difference is an occasion of creativity rather than an excuse for conflict. Without a virtue of generosity and a process of mutual enrichment, we do not even know what the use of dialogue is and what authenticity means in emphasizing each and everyone's difference.

COMMUNICATIVE ACTION AND CONSENSUS

For me, if there is no recognition of and interaction with Multiple Others, there is no ethics at all. The self-awareness and self-promotion of human subjectivity could have at most only a moral dimension, but not yet any ethical dimension. In ethics, there is always the demand that we go beyond ourselves and go to Multiple Others. Ethics recognizes differences and, through free and responsible communication, searches for the commonly sharable values. Communication is indeed essential for constituting good governance leading to mutual enrichment, in view of an optimal harmony.

¹⁰ We should mention that Charles Taylor proposes also some norms of cross-cultural interactions, such as dialog and overlapping consensus, and deeper mutual understanding on the philosophical and metaphysical levels. He even thinks of the expansion of one's own standard of value, in using Gadamer's term, "fusion of horizons", first applied to relation between a text and a reader, now used by Taylor to cross-cultural interaction. All these are quite sound visions. I just want to point out here only that with its philosophy of self and without the act of original generosity and the act of strangification, there will be no such kind of cross-cultural fusion of horizon and no real mutual enrichment.

Habermas's theory of communicative action is a philosophical proposal, in today's pluralist society, of a feasible way of obtaining consensus, and a considered condition *sine qua non* in a democratic society. The argumentative communication he proposes emphasizes the priority of linguistic communication. Habermas derives his notion of communicative competence from what N. Chomsky calls "linguistic competence." Intersubjectivity is for Habermas to be constituted by linguistic communication in the form of argumentation, in the process of which the opposing sides such as different political parties, different interest groups etc., propose their own reasons and reasons-against by referring to robust facts and justifiable arguments in a process of debate that arrives finally at a certain kind of consensus based on a higher-level proposition both parts could agree upon. The so called "truth" is to be arrived at only by intersubjective consensus obtained through the process of argumentative communication, and not based on any previously accepted ontological foundation, or on any human subjectivity.

Habermas' theory of communicative action uses the linguistic model to replace the consciousness model developed since Descartes. Rationality is not considered now as constituted by the transcendental structure of human subjectivity as in Kant's case. On the contrary, it is considered as the outcome of the act of rendering reason (*Begründung*) through argumentative communication. Only through this process could one legitimately obtain intersubjective recognition of valid statements or propositions.

Is Habermas' model indeed capable of bringing out the consensus urgently needed in today's society full of conflicts? It's hard to say whether people can obtain consensus simply by arguing with each other. There are people indeed very skillful in argumentation, but are still without any ethical concern for Multiple Others, paying no regard to their *liangzhi* 良知 (inborn moral knowledge) in the Confucian term.¹¹ Without a common concern with the pre-linguistic life-world, or in other words, without a tacit consensus based on one's ethical openness and generosity to Multiple Others, and without reference to the life-world in which both oneself and one's opponents are living, there will be no consensus to be obtained by way of argumentation.

My argument here is similar, but adding an ethical dimension, to what M. Heidegger says in the *Being and Time*: Since authentic communication consists in sharing the same *Mit-Befindlichkeit* (common

¹¹ The concept of *liangzhi*, proposed by Mencius (372-289BC) and developed fully by Wang Yangming (1472-1528), represents the moral feeling and knowledge that human being are naturally capable of by being given as born with and defines what is properly human.

situatedness) and *Mit-Verstehen* (common understanding), there could be communication even in silence and harking all ears (Heidegger 1962: 203-208). Sometimes silence is more eloquent than speaking. In some privileged moments, there is complete sharing of meaningfulness without the intervention of language. This is not to say that pre-linguistic, tacit consensus is all that we need to obtain consensus in the pluralistic world today. Indeed, pre-linguistic tacit consensus can be developed through argumentative communication; just be careful not to lose the pre-existing common concern and not to degenerate into argumentation without any ethical ground.

Habermas, in order to safeguard the success of communication, has proposed four claims for the ideal situation of communication: understandability, truth, sincerity and legitimacy. Unfortunately in the actual world of communication, there happens very often either total conflict or compromise, without any real consensus, because of the fact that these four claims just do not work. As to sincerity, I think I'm sincere, but you would think that I am a hypocrite. As to truth, I think that I'm referring to something true, but you may consider that just absurd. As to legitimacy, since a commonly acceptable norm does not exist, or the law necessary, legitimacy is an issue under debate. Also, The Habermasian argumentation tends to fail, if in the process of *Begründung* and in the act of searching for consensus, there is no effort of strangification, that of expressing one's proposal(s) in other's language or in language understandable to others. Without the effort of strangification, there will be no real mutual understanding and no self-reflection in the process of argumentation. In this sense, strangification should be seen as prerequisite for any successful communication and coordination.

Indeed, communication is the most important process for the co-construction of a socially and politically meaningful existence. That's why it should be taken into account in considering the politics of social cohesion. It is true that, critical reflection and responsible communication are needed for a commonly meaningful social life, but in reality quite often they are distorted by ideological dispute and power struggle, if only limited to the level of argumentation such as debate over public issues, while the pre-linguistic and ethical level of communication is neglected. My criticism here of Habermas' theory of communicative act is also applicable to Karl-Otto Apel's idea of argumentative communication, with which Apel radicalizes Heraclitus' principle of arriving at a new harmonious order through strife by what he calls "the strife of arguments" (Liu and Allinson 1988: 18). Apel reformulates Habermas' four ideal claims as the meaning-claim, the truth-claim, the sincerity or veracity claim, and the morally rightness-claim (Ibid.:16). For me these claims would have the same difficulties as those

of Habermas, previously criticized. Even the so-called morally rightness-claim cannot stand without pre-linguistic and pre-argumentative tacit consensus and the act of original generosity and strangification. Apart from these, I would agree with Apel's distinction between "strategical use of language" and a "consensual-communicative one" (Ibid.: 12). This means, for me, the ideal of building up a harmonious society should not be used strategically as a means of social control or social engineering, but should rather be seen as to be resulting from a process of consensual communication, not limited to the one understood by Habermas and Apel, but to be further determined by the following considerations.

We should point out here that, Husserl, much earlier than Habermas, had proposed this idea of "communicative act" in his *Ideen II*, which is not limited to the linguistic and intellectual level, but includes also the evaluative and practical process such as love and counter-love, hate and counter hate, confidence and reciprocal confidence. Husserl says, "In this way relations of mutual understanding are formed: speaking elicits response; the theoretical, valuing, or practical appeal, addressed by the one to the other, elicits, as it were, a response coming back, assent or refusal and perhaps a counter-proposal, etc. In these relations of mutual understanding, there is produced a conscious mutual relation of persons, at the same time a unitary relation of them to a common surrounding world" (Husserl 1989: 202-203). For Husserl, it is by abstracting from mutual understanding and communicative acts that one thinks of a sheer solitary subject and therefore also of his purely egoist surrounding world. For him, the communicative act is situated in the relation of a person to person relationship. This is obviously more ethical for co-constructing a socially meaningful world than Habermas' notion of communicative act. Husserl says, "The persons who belong to the social association are given to each other as 'companion', not as opposed objects but as counter subjects who 'live with' one another, actually or potentially, in act of love and counter love, of hate and counter hate, of confidence and reciprocated confidence...etc." (Husserl 1989: 204). Husserl therefore makes explicit the ethical dimension of communication, not limiting it to argumentative debate as Habermas does. The terms "communicative act" is used by Husserl to express the social co-construction of a meaningful existence. He says:

Sociality is constituted by specifically social, communicative acts, acts in which the ego turns to others and in which the Ego is conscious of these others as ones towards which it is turning, and ones which, furthermore, understand this turning, perhaps adjust their behavior to it

and reciprocate by turning toward that Ego in acts of agreement or disagreement...etc. (Ibid.)

Different from Habermas' four ideal claims of communicative act, somehow too formal to be actually effective, Husserl proposes in *Ideen II* the act of empathy as a substantial condition of communication. Husserl's concept of empathy is the dynamic and somehow transparent overlapping among human minds, similar to the Confucian concept of *ren* and *shu* through which human beings could easily understand the others' mind. Today, when the world in which we communicate with each other is mediated by signs, symbols, languages and technical objects, empathy as a psychic act will not work effectively as mediating different minds. That's why I prefer to reinterpret "empathy" under my concept of strangification, to be developed in next section, as a way of access to the other's mind through speaking the language of or understandable by others. Empathy accomplishes itself in speaking one's mind in others' language in order to understand them and make oneself understood.

Somehow Husserl concept of empathy is comparable with Confucian concept of *ren* and *shu*. In *Ideen II*, empathy, not only constitutes interpersonal relationship, it could also be extended to the relations of marriage, friendship and social community. On this point, Husserl's concept of social co-construction of meaning is quite similar to that of Confucian extension of *ren* by way of *shu* from interpersonal relationship to family, community, states and all under heaven.

Speaking with many others, especially speaking with significant others such as lovers, family members and friends, since they constitute the core of our socially meaningful existence, are essential for restoring the way to sanity on the social level. And the extension of this social construction of meaningful life through the extension of *ren* and *shu* or empathy in larger and larger social circles is the way to fuller fulfillment of one's self in its social and ethical dimensions. We could say that the extension of *ren* and *shu* or empathy prepares the way to strangification in the broader sense. In this sense, the social and ethical dimensions of our existence are not to be considered as external constraints conducive to alienation, but rather as extension and fulfillment of a saner way of life.

STRANGIFICATION AND MUTUAL ENRICHMENT

Now we may ask: by what strategy could a politics of generosity and mutual enrichment be made possible so as to achieve an optimal harmony? Two consecutive strategies could be suggested here: First of all, the strategy of language appropriation, which means more concretely

learning other ways of expression or languages of many others or understandable to many others. Since, Wittgenstein has well suggested, different language games correspond to different life-forms, the appropriation of another language would give us an access to the life-form implied in that specific language. In our childhood, we have appropriated language by the generosity of significant others talking to us and thereby opening to ourselves a world of meaningfulness. When grown up, we learn more by appropriating different kinds of expression and language, such as those of the scientific, or political, or sub-cultural world or of everyday life. By appropriating different ways of expression or languages, we could enter into different worlds and thereby enrich the meaning construction of our own world.

Based on the appropriation of language, we can move on to the strategy of strangification. By “strangification”¹² I mean the act of going outside of oneself and going to many others, from one’s familiarity to the unfamiliar and strangers. There are three types of strangification.

The first is “linguistic strangification”, by which we translate a supposedly true proposition of one’s discipline, research program or a cultural expression or value in one’s culture, social group or even a belief system in one’s religion, into the language/cultural expression/value/religious belief understandable to another discipline/culture/social group/religion, to see whether it works or becomes absurd thereby. If it does work after the translation, it means that this proposition, expression, language, value or religious belief, is commonly sharable to that extent. If it becomes absurd thereby, then its limit should be for that reason recognized and reflection must be made accordingly upon its principle and validity.

The second is “pragmatic strangification”, by which we draw a proposition, a supposed truth or a cultural expression/value or a religious belief out from one’s own social, organizational and religious contexts, to put it into another social, organizational and religious context. If it is still valuable, then it is commonly sharable to that extent. Otherwise reflection and self-critique must be made on one’s own proposition, supposed truth, cultural expression/value or religious belief. This is the process by which one could test and extend their validity in other pragmatic contexts.

The third is ontological strangification, which, for me, is the act by which we enter into other’s scientific micro-world or cultural world

¹² Originally proposed as an epistemological strategy for interdisciplinary research by Fritz Wallner, was extended by myself to serve as a strategy for intercultural exchange and religious dialogue. This term in Chinese could be worded as “外推”, very much related to the Confucian “推己及人” and “恕者善推”.

or religious world through the detour of a direct experience with the Reality Itself, such as a person, a social group, Nature, or different ways of experiencing the Ultimate Reality.¹³

In the politics of generosity and mutual enrichment, there is an incessant openness to Multiple Others. Our search for meaningfulness begins with our act of going outside of ourselves and towards Multiple Others. I understand meaningfulness as the outcome of this act of going to Multiple Others. This act presupposes an original generosity otherwise there will be no reciprocity and dialog at all. Therefore I would not be satisfied with what Marcel Mauss proposes in his *Essai sur le don* that reciprocity is the principle by which society is made possible. I want to point out here that prior to every situation of reciprocity, there must be already the act of going outside of oneself to the other, the act of strangification, as the act of original generosity, which makes the reciprocity possible accordingly.

This is to say that communication should be a process of mutual strangification, so as to form a dialogue leading to mutual enrichment. In the communication, or better, dialogue between A and B, on the level of linguistic strangification, A should translate his propositions or ideas/values/belief system in to the language of B or a language understandable to B. Meanwhile, B should translate his propositions or ideas/values/belief system in the language of A or understandable to A. On the level of pragmatic strangification, A should draw his proposition(s), supposed truth(s)/cultural expression/value/religious belief out from his own social, organizational contexts and put it into the social, organizational context of B. In the meanwhile, B should draw his proposition(s), supposed truth(s)/cultural expression/value/religious belief out from his own social, organizational context and put it into the social, organizational context of A. On the level of ontological strangification, A should make the effort to enter into B's micro-world, cultural world or religious world through the detour of his experience with Reality Itself, such as a person, a social group, Nature, or Ultimate Reality. Meanwhile, B should also make an effort to enter into A's micro-world, cultural world or religious world through the detour of his experience with Reality Itself.

Communication and dialogue shall never be conducted within one's self-enclosure. On the contrary, they start with a mutual act of going outside of one's self-enclosure to the other that I call "a process of mutual *waitui*". I go outside of myself to you and you go outside of

¹³ Shen 1994: 126-129. By different ways of experiencing Ultimate Reality I means for example *ren* (humanity) and *cheng* (sincerity) in Confucianism, the *dao* and *de* in Daoism, or the emptiness in Buddhism, God in Christianity, Allah in Islam...etc.

yourself to me, so as to form a dialogue leading to mutual enrichment. When we conduct mutual *waitui*, we make our own scientific/cultural/religious/life world understandable to each other by translating our languages into the language of each other or understandable to each other, by putting it into another's pragmatic context or by going through the detour of Reality Itself or the other's life-world. This process of mutual *waitui* is to be conducted not only in everyday life, in scientific research, in cultural and religious life, but also in economic and political life, where different political parties, interest groups, government and people, should always commit themselves in the process of communication leading to mutual enrichment, and ultimately to an optimal harmony, rather than conflict and war.

ALERT AGAINST "TOUT AUTRE EST TOUT AUTRE" AND THE RULE OF EXCEPTION

Now I have one last point to consider before my conclusion. The *Yijin*'s saying, "While each one fulfills his/her/its true nature and destiny, all together they achieve an optimal harmony," indeed gives us an ideal image of each being free to develop his talent, while in togetherness an optimal harmony is obtained. Still, there are two radical cases that challenge us by the impossibility of obtaining mutual enrichment. The first is that, especially in the liberal democratic society where each individual's autonomy is honored, the radicalization of individual difference and otherness, which, when pushed to the extreme, will stick to the irreconcilable differences and therefore it is impossible to come up to the practice of strangification and communication for mutual enrichment. The second is in the radical political institution in which the political elites or the ruler(s) have power at hand to decide who and what could be the exception to law and even the suspension of law itself. What Agamben calls "state of exception" is the radical challenge and even a menace to the practice of strangification and communication leading to mutual enrichment.

The first situation could be best illustrated by Derrida's idea that "*Tout autre est tout autre*" (Every other is always other) (Derrida 1992: 79-82). In honoring each and everyone's difference, we could be pushed to a situation where the difference is biasedly emphasized in neglecting their mutual communicability. The irreducibility, the irreplaceability, the unfathomability of each and every person's individual differences are taken not only to be not reduced to my own imagination, understanding and construction, but also treated as absolutely valid in themselves. Derrida even says that it is most ethical that we respect each and every person's irreducibility, irreplaceability, and unfathomability. Each time

we have this sense of respecting the otherness of the other, we will feel as if God is in him/her. Yet, paradoxically, if each and every other is always other, there is no ethical norm applicable to him/her each time in each situation we face him/her. There is a certain truth in the claim that each person in each time and each situation we're dealing with should be dealt with differently, in a unique way and creatively. But, when pushed to the radical extreme, "*tout autre est tout autre*" will make ethic impossible, not even with an unconditional generosity and gift expecting no return. The gap created by the absolutized difference and otherness will refuse any attempt of communication and thereby mutual enrichment not to say optimal harmony will become impossible.

Derrida's position comes from his idea of "différance" which means both difference and deference: that in the process of time each act happens in terms of deference, and each being is different from other beings. The early version of this idea comes from Derrida's critique of Husserl that transcendental reduction is doomed to fail because of the fact that each act of consciousness defers in time and therefore is a different act, and the impossibility to trace back to the original, transcendental ego.

Here is something we should ponder upon. Although each act of consciousness is a different act, as consciousness, there must be a certain degree of transparency by which one act of consciousness could be overlapping with another act of consciousness. Although there is always a certain degree of obscurity, therefore it is impossible for us to grasp as it is the origin of consciousness, nevertheless we're still capable of being conscious of the inner psychic dynamism that pushes incessantly different acts of consciousness into play. By the same analogy, even if each individual has an irreducible and irreplaceable otherness, nevertheless, as human, either by what Confucius calls *ren* or what Husserl calls "empathy", there must be a certain degree of mental transparency and overlapping among human beings. What is needed here is an ethical effort of original generosity that goes beyond one's self to many others, and to extend the space of overlapping by ways of various act of strangification, either linguistic, or pragmatic or ontological.

The concept of "state of exception" is historically and politically much more complicated. It suffices for me to say here that we should be alerted of the extreme case in which governance appeals to any value, realistic or idealistic, to justify the rule of exception. I'm not considering the state of war, civil or international, or state of siege, real or fictive, where it is impossible, at least temporarily, to have any mutual communication whatsoever. I'm thinking of a certain technique of governance by which those who have power (either as individual in the case of a chef-d'état, or as collective in the case of a dominant political

party), that, for the reason of economic necessity, or national security,¹⁴ or any system of ideology (including that of “harmonious society”), to appeal to a state of exception, or in other words, to extend the executive powers into the legislative sphere through the issuance of decrees and measures that could suspend the efficacy of law themselves. In this manner, it becomes impossible to have a communication process leading to mutual enrichment in the policy making process and in the exercise of political power.

The search of overlapping consensus and the act of strangification to be taken at every level and every step of political process are the only solutions to avoid the above two cases of radical extremity and to come up with a dynamic mutual enrichment.

CONCLUSION

The politics of generosity and the strategy of strangification are proposed here to face the challenge of globalization and the novel situation brought to us by the post-modern world. They are applicable to today’s world situation, in particular to Chinese culture. I do trust that the dynamism in Chinese culture is able to go outside of its familiarity and to go to the strangers, to Many Others. But I still cannot say that today’s China is playing a politics of generosity and strangification. One becomes really great only by being generous, to one’s own people and to many other peoples in the world. China should learn more from Many Others and also be more generous towards Many Others.

In the development from a politics of recognition to a politics of generosity and mutual enrichment, I am not denying the principles of identity and reciprocity. On the contrary, I have posited them as minimalist principles, to be promoted by the openness to Many Others and original generosity. The politics of generosity and mutual enrichment, with its principle of unceasing openness to Many Others and the ethical virtue of generosity, should be practiced not only by those in power to those who are governed, by the majority to the minority, by the

¹⁴All these might happen in a totalitarian country as well as a democratic country. Take for example, in the United States, the New Deal delegated to the President, through a series of statutes culminating in the National Recovery Act of June 16th, 1933, an unlimited power to regulate and control every aspect of the country’s economic life. Also the recent US Patriot Act, issued by the US Senate on October 26th, 2001, has allowed the attorney general to “take into custody” any alien suspect of activities that endangered the National Security of the United States,” but within seven days to be under the constraint of other laws (immigration or criminal laws), while Bush Administration’s dealing with the “detainees” seems allowing them no legal status of the individual. Cf. Agamben 2005, 3-4, 22-23.

central to the peripheral, but also by all people in all kinds of differences, such as gender, ethnic groups, language, social class, age, education, profession, religion, nation, cultural tradition, civilization, region, planet, etc., which today are occasions for mutual enrichment and creativity rather than excuses for conflict and war as they unfortunately are in the current world.

Today, we are facing a world marching through the dark valley of nihilism, especially in the economic and political realms in a vehement power struggle, profit competition and under domination by violence. Against nihilism, all cultural traditions should cooperate and synergize for nourishing the human mind with their spiritual values. They should also communicate and dialogue for an optimal harmony and for helping mankind to go through this dark valley of nihilism. The dialogue among civilizations and different cultural traditions needs the strategy of strangification and a new spirit of generosity to Many Others.

I tend to think that communication and mutual enrichment among all kinds of differences, transcending the limit and conflict of each individual's and social group's identity and national sovereignty¹⁵ and national security, putting more emphasis on the sharing of life values and stories, are the hope for future peace and solidarity in the globalizing world. I am not saying that we should sacrifice ourselves or leave aside what we are for the primacy of Many Others. On the contrary, there is a dialectical process of mutual formation and enrichment of the self and Many Others. Starting with each and every individual's and collectivity's identity in the making, and then mediated by the principle of mutual recognition and reciprocity and all kinds of golden rules, we should come up with the politics of generosity and mutual enrichment. Since every individual and social/political group and each cultural tradition have their own positive sides as well as negative sides, all should be always open to Many Others and be generous to them, so that their dynamic complementarity may lead finally to mutual enrichment and optimal harmony.

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¹⁵ National sovereignty emerged in modern times and becomes now somehow questionable, whereas the truth and value of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and other great civilizations were much ancient and will endure much longer.

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PART III
ETHICAL IMPLICATION

CHAPTER X

CHANGES IN THE CHINESE VIEW OF VALUES IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

HE XIRONG

THREE FEATURES OF THE CHINESE VIEW OF VALUES IN THE SOCIALIST MARKET ECONOMY

Chinese modernization is an enterprise in which both material and spiritual civilizations develop mutually whether regarded from the experience of the socialist development in the world, or the new circumstances and problems of Chinese current modernized constructs, socialist is not poor materially or spiritually. If we carry out socialist market economy and a socialist spiritual civilization, when combined organically it should deal with two relations: one is between the transformation of economic system and the construction of spiritual civilization. The transformation from a traditional planned economic system to the socialist market economic system must cause a change in the view of value, morals norm, life style, etc. Conversely, changed morals and values will influence the market economy deeply. The more a market economy is practiced, the greater the civilization of the whole people. The other is the relation between adjusting benefits and strengthening spiritual civilization. When the traditional planned economic system is broken, various economic entities and all kinds of workers can be engaged independently in merchant and economic activities, which will cause beneficial division and reorganization. The economic benefits break the bondage of a planned system flow along with competition. This results in a part of the social member's benefits being lost, and part of one's benefits being increased. Because these are driven by benefits and there are some problems during the transition from an old system to a new one, there result some inequalities in benefits and even polarization. This phenomenon not only directly influences people's approbation and acceptance of the reform, but also directly influences people's judgment of values and pursuits of social improvements, so that extra attention is needed to the coordination and perfection of the relation of benefits.

The Chinese people's view of values, as a spiritual factor, has changed significantly in the process of social and economic transition. These are mainly in the following three aspects:

1. From the trend to collective value toward that of individual value. The trend to collective value was the core of Chinese traditional value as well as the main point of the orthodox value system in the 1950's—1960's. However, the market economy brought to people's consciousness values of exploration, enterprise, innovation, and a spirit of venture and initiative that breaks normal regulations with bold and decisive action. This brought a new attitude of life which is practical and realistic with China's reform and opening up. With the development of market economy, individual enthusiasm becomes more important. People's consciousness of self-worth and enterprising became stronger, and their pursuit of money, wealth and the sense of pleasures of senses became more evident and personal emotional demands and the pursuit of honors or of official rank increased. In a word, as a result, individual value is more and more evident, while value trends that extremely neglected the individual and his (her) benefits in the past especially in 1950-60's were cast off.

While one's independent consciousness is to feel and judge values in terms of oneself, their decrease or increase is predicated on the conditions provided by social circumstance. If people are in a rigid, consubstantial, and unitary position their independent consciousness very rarely opens since the all resources are not only more concentrated but also more limited. Since the initiation of its policy of reform and opening, the occupational flow is much more speedy. On the one hand, this is due to the awakening of individual consciousness, independence, and sense of benefits. On the other and more important aspect, it is due to social economic development having brought people more developmental opportunities. In addition, that the loosening of the whole social atmosphere and changes in the view of values also directly or indirectly influenced people's independent consciousness.

2. From guidance by morality and righteous to guidance by benefits. The socialist market economy system affirms "material benefits", and affirms the value of seeking "material benefits" and being "really effective". It seems that Chinese people are now more practical than before. The customs turned to affirm present pursuits, material enjoyment, and public life. It emphasized the individual, reality and benefits. Thereby it prepared a social mentality for the market economy, democracy, social participations, etc. Now the whole society attaches importance to properly obtain the material benefits and pays more attention to self-fulfillment and development of an all round way as compared with before. What needs to be pointed out is that "going after profit" is not "profit-before-everything", "self-design" is not "individualism", and "benefit emphasized" is not "money worship". The human being as a kind of higher animal, a "righteousness" which is a special dignity on value in being human, besides the general desire for

material benefits, it has various political, economic and legal norms that control human behavior. The Chinese socialist market economy should avoid to be eroded by value of individualism, solipsism, money worship, etc.

3. A transfer from a unique to diverse value trends. The view of values in Chinese society before reform and opening was one of higher concentration on a unified value and the officially approved “revolution” was the unique value orientation; “fight all one’s life for the cause of communism” was the unique value to be believed and followed by all members of society while other values were regarded as “wrong”. Since the reform and opening, market economic reform broke the centralized pattern of Chinese traditional society. With the mind emancipated and socially developed, and the interchange and competition of values in the world, Chinese society gradually negated the way of unique value, and admitted the existence of diverse values, even claiming that the existence of diverse values is the normal social state. But in fact, the values of Chinese society at the present time are neither entirely unitary, nor purely diversified, but unitary and diverse values interact. What is called unitary value is a predominant value which is initiated by the society, and has the role of guiding or leading other values. What is called diverse values are various values in interaction among which are the correct and wrong, the advanced and conservative. Diverse values need to submit to a predominant value, but the predominant value needs to allow and tolerate the existence of diverse values.

TODAY, AFTER 30 YEARS, THE CHINESE VIEW OF VALUES SHOWS SEVERAL ORIENTATIONS AS FOLLOWS

Firstly, traditional values have acquired a new vitality and play an important role in the construction of value. Every reform in history has been accompanied by an attitude on the traditional culture, including denying traditional values. For instance, the Enlightenment opposed traditional standpoints of “divine power of kings” by the slogan of “human rights”; it negated the privilege of grades of nobility by “all are equal before the law”; it opposed the traditional system and customs by “wrecking all shameful things”. More than 100 years ago, Nietzsche’s assertion of the death of God shook Europe. For destroying the old and establishing the new, he claimed to “reassess all values”. Thereby Nietzsche became the creator of post-modern thought in critique of traditional rationalism. The New Cultural Movement of 1915-1923 in China proclaimed “down with Confucius” and “welcome democracy and science” which initiated the May 4th revolutionary movement of 1919. In the 1980’s, China again criticized traditional cultures in order to push the emancipation of the mind as well as to accelerate the reform and

opening. This was an “overcorrection” which exceeded its proper limits in righting a wrong. But after the “overcorrection”, with the deepening development of the reform or revolution and the construction of some new values, traditional values will be reassessed. The traditional values will have opportunities to be reborn in the construction of new values and thus will experience a renaissance. But a renaissance is not mere repetition but integrates new values in order to achieve renovation and development. The reason why tradition is called “tradition” is that it can be spread and accepted; otherwise it can only be history.

In the last 30 years, Chinese traditional values were chosen within the process of criticism and those values renewed within their affirmation. We notice that now the characteristic of paying attention to present life in Chinese traditional culture has returned in the reform and opening. Poverty isn't socialism, Jiang Zemin, the former president of China, said “the material indigence isn't socialism and the spiritual emptiness isn't socialism either. Socialism not only enriches people's material life, but also enriches people's spiritual life.”¹ The proper pursuit of material and spiritual life opened and recovered the desires and aspirations in people's minds and released great energy in this pursuit. New cultural values such as common prosperity, human rights to existence and development, material civilization, spiritual civilization, ethos, the cohesion of cultures, the productivity of cultures and the soft power of cultures, etc. quickly were extensively approved by the broad public. These views of values gave a deeper view of both worldly desires and spiritual pursuits, rising like the sun at high noon to the zenith of one's spiritual power. In the spiritual pursuits, we note that a part of traditional values have already melted into present day values. For instance: honor or disgrace includes advocating honor, having a sense of shame, and cultivating one's morality, etc.; trustworthiness now emphasizes sincerity, reputation, practice, etc.; security includes mutual trust, respect, and peace, etc.; happiness includes people first and wealth adds common prosperity, saving creation, etc. These traditional values are integrated in a new view of values which now become people's values and the norms people abide by. We still notice that some traditional values also appeared in the official documents which became contemporary Chinese value trends in social and cultural development such as: people first, a society with a modest competence, harmonious society, reasonable development, ecospheric civilization, etc. Yet, we noticed that after hypercorrection in 1980's there was a cultural focus upon valuing and discussing the traditional culture and Chinese national culture since the later part of the 1990's. This has already spread from

¹ *Selections from Jiang Zemin*, vol.1, p.621, People's Publishing House, 2006.

intellectuals to the common people in the past decade. Many courses in Chinese national cultures have been launched for young people, for bosses and even for children. This phenomenon shows that Chinese national culture is no longer limited to the “elite”, but has become people’s mental food for public consumption. These Chinese national cultures spread from university campuses to the public media such as newspapers and magazines, popular readers, etc. Some professors go from their classroom in the university to become the stars in media educational circles which teach traditional culture. As stated above, some traditional values have been written into the formal documents of the Party and government so that it can be said that these traditional values have moved from outside to inside the system. At the same time, the traditional values have headed abroad. Confucian colleges were set up in many countries and there are some influences of global worship of Confucius, etc. which become the symbol of Chinese traditional culture facing self-confidently to the world. The traditional values have been becoming an important content that China’s external cultural exchanges and are an embodiment of the Chinese soft power.

Secondly, western values were transplanted reasonably so as to supplement and enrich Chinese values. Along with the development of Chinese socialist market economy, the reform and opening policy, and joining the world trade organization, western cultures and thoughts, theories and values flew into China together with the economic factors. There is no denying the fact that the foreign cultures which came into China with the economic globalization were unavoidably both the good and the bad mixed. But generally speaking, there is very active significance to the fact that foreign cultures entered China, especially those values which orient the market economy such as the ideas of equality, efficiency, consciousness of competition, consciousness of costs and risks, etc. These ideas and consciousness gradually enriched the Chinese view of values which were originally or newly emerged, and became an internal motive force for the development of human beings and of society. In particular, when China got into the new stage of development directed by the scientific outlook along with the depth of reform and opening, such western values emerged with emphasis on the quality of life, the balance of the ecosystem, the elaboration of the individual’s capacities, the corresponding life style, and the social participation with non-utility, etc.; all have deeply affected the Chinese thought and behaviors, thereby becoming new connotations of Chinese values. Some western values transcend Chinese traditional values and directly influenced people’s spiritual life after the reform and opening and effectively pushed the renewal and progress of Chinese values. These values include human rights, rule by law, equity, justice, civil society, and global ethics, etc. Some of these values were neglected in

the past and some of them were criticized as a capitalist ideology. Now some core of the contents such as sustained, scientific and harmonious development have been added to the outlook of development. For instance, there are values such as fairness, justice, ethics, etc. in assignment; transparency, participation and supervision in democracy; reasonableness, health, independence, etc. in consumption; and modern, plural, and inner values in the view of religions.² It isn't difficult to see that China drew values from foreign cultures. Furthermore, even some values which were disputed, such as the individualism, utilitarianism, liberalism and the rationalism, have had the active function of breaking down the rigid collective ideas and closed living manners formed under the planned economic structures. Since the reform and opening up, China continuously accepts the advanced factors in the western values and gradually shapes socialist values with the Chinese characteristics.

Thirdly, the guidance of the general direction of values is more evident and it leads toward the construction of the essential view of value. The contemporary Chinese social system determines that our essential ideology is socialist guided by the theory of scientific socialism founded by Marx and Engels. Therefore, the essential view of value in contemporary China is still the socialist value which occupies predominant position and develops an important leading function in each social realm. But our societies are continuously changing and to adapt to the changed new situation we must simultaneously adjust our essential view of value. At first, we should distinguish the essential view of value and unified value. It is easy for people to regard the unified view of value as the essential view of value in the past. But "unified value" is the idea of "uniform", "single", "pure", "absolute", etc., always in contact with closed ideas. The unified value affected people's thoughts deeply because there was a long rule by feudal absolutists and the so-called "orthodox traditional ideas", "the classic ideology", "looking up to a thought as the highest authority", etc. were its manifestation. With the development of reform and opening, market economy and democracy and rule of law in modern China society, unified value has turned toward the diverse values. On one hand, the diversification of values expands, deepens and enriches original contents of values so as to make the standards of values more complete. Thus, people can value human beings and things from multiple levels and angles. On the other hand, the diversification of values does not stop the general direction of values from existing and playing a predominant role. So, after China's reform and opening, there appeared "four diversifications" in society: the

² There are 11 values pointed out at *The New Trends of Contemporary Chinese Values Research*, edited by Huang Kaifeng, here has consulted its collective summaries (Xuelin Publishing House, 2007).

diversification of economic composition and economic benefits; the diversification of social life styles; the diversification of social organizational forms; the diversification of the post and the way of employment, along with the stratum of social members. Therefore, a diversified tendency in the view of values appeared, where originally the standard to judge things was mostly a unitary and either this or that, the circumstances nowadays are different. The diversification of standards results in the tolerance of the people's state of mind. The approaches or channels of interpersonal comprehension and communication are invisibly increasing and extending. A prominent characteristic of modernization is its dual nature with both positive and negative effects like both sides of a coin. This characteristic of dual nature is more obvious during periods of sharp transformations. That diversification of standards and the tolerance of states of mind will sometimes bring a relativist predicament when people judge what is right or wrong. That there are some indeterminate moral standards in the realm of marriage and family is a representative example. But diversification doesn't mean equalization. The general socialist direction of values is still predominance; it is determined by the nature of, the leadership of Chinese Communist Party, the orientation of public opinion, the goal of education, etc. Secondly, since the reform and opening, a new turn was based on the discussion of the standard of truth. And then there was the movement of the emancipated mind as practical and realistic, excluding interference both from the "left" and the right. A series of important adjustments to the ideology were carried through against the background of social transformations, for instance, from class struggle to harmonious society, from the planned economy to the market economy, from criticizing of the theory of production as deciding everything to the innovation as the first step towards development, from the "four modernizations"³ which gave priority to material civilization to the scientific outlook of development which put people first and an all-round, coordinated and sustainable view of development, etc. In the past 30 year there have been a series of huge creative changes in guiding the thinking and ideology of the Chinese Communist Party. However, in the changes it was not that the latter negated or replaced the former but rather a re-explaining of the former under the precondition of "four basic principles"⁴ inheriting the former general direction of values. Moreover,

³ "Four modernizations" includes industrial, agricultural, national, defensive, scientific and technical modernization which was first put forward at 1964.

⁴ "four basic principles" includes 1, must insist on the way of socialism; 2, must insist on people's democratic dictatorship; 3, must insist on the leadership

it is important to stress new focal points, to introduce new ideas, and to create a new general direction of ideology according to the “four basic principles”. In this way, it embodies both tracing to the same origin and advancing with the times.

Hence, under the lead of new guidance by the general view of values, the people’s view of values increasingly approaches general values. We can see these values particularly in a series of affairs that China experienced in 2008, such as the Olympic games, earthquake relief, actions against the separatist activities of Tibet, the Shenzhou 7 spacecraft, etc. From these affairs, we have seen the spirit of patriotism, collectivism, self-dependent and self-motivated, mutual help, friendly affection, etc. in the Chinese people. We also noticed that some subjects about the army were highly popular in the last years in which the spirit of idealism, heroism, and lofty pursuits were favored by the public. Some activities such as choosing through public appraisal “10 fine persons”, “persons who touched China”, “moral models”, etc. raised a new round of learning from good examples. The public’s sympathy and centrifugal force has arisen from this. Furthermore, the affairs and persons above-mentioned caused a great deal of unprompted discussion. Then the academic circle, the media, the CPC, and educators were all participating and played a leading role. The approval of a general view of values shaped by interactions is no longer an imposition but the people’s voluntary choice and has great vitality.

Some issues in recent years have corroborated the above-mentioned value trend in contemporary China. The report on trends in citizens’ moral values in Beijing of 2007 concluded that “the citizens have basically set up a correct social orientation, and the occupational moral values that keep forging ahead and pay attention to self-realization have been formed. And the citizens’ view of family ethics has changed from the traditional to the modern”.⁵ Youth are a “weatherglass” of social changes whose thoughts, behaviors, and values reflect from different angles the steps of the whole social progress. Someone analyzed three stages of youth’s values since the reform and opening. They just experienced oscillation and confusion, and they persevered till the third stage, namely from the 1990’s to now, “the increase of subjective awareness promoted contemporary youth’s thinking toward maturity, their living structures are becoming reasonable day by day, their life is becoming orderly, the contents of these life are becoming gradually abundant, their space of life is gradually expanding with a

of Chinese Communist Party; 4, must insist on Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought which was put forward by Deng Xiaoping in 1979.

⁵ “A Research Report on the Trend of Citizens’ Moral Values in the Capital”, *Beijing Administrative College Journal*, 2008/3.

consciousness of a social participation, a sense of responsibility, self-independence, self-support, self-improvement, self-respect, and a consciousness of law, competition, justice, efficiency, and thirst for knowledge, and as spirit of development, etc. Such modern standards of behavior and value trends are manifestly more conspicuous.”⁶ “An Investigation and Research on Contemporary Chinese Spiritual Life” that was a key item designed by the Ministry of Education. The topic was spot checked in the summer of 2005 throughout the country, and the spiritual effects since the reform and opening was one of its contents. The investigation was mainly in four aspects, namely people’s feeling and evaluation of modern life, their memory and comprehension of the past life, their expectation and confidence in the future life, the situation of their values, etc. The data of investigation was very complicated but it showed the facts that the Chinese spiritual life includes the general trend of values.⁷

The above generalized value trends certainly do not mean that there are no problems in the contemporary Chinese view of values. In fact, the diverse values have some influence and even conflicts to the above-mentioned values. Even in the inner general direction of values there also are some antinomies and differences which need to be continuously adjusted. For instance, to affirm the reasonableness of people’s secular pursuits we should guide, refine, and sublimate, then lest they descend to the vulgar and selfish, or do not keep forging ahead. While foreign cultures bring active enterprising, competitive and innovative values, it is also probable that they cause values of extreme egoism, a deluge of desires, individualism, money worship, absolute utilitarianism, etc. In addition, in the general direction of values, if not well done, the relations between political infusion and the cultivation of values, between general values and diverse values, between public education and ideological work, etc., will produce a rigid unified value or will turn the general values into mere formalities unable to play a guiding role.

So, on the one hand, we have noted that the trend of the contemporary Chinese view of values embodies a modernization of traditional values, a Chinese turn for western values, and a definition of the predominate values which promotes the construction of a socialistic core value system. On the other hand, we should understand that to strengthen and develop both Chinese and contemporary healthy values is an arduous and complex work. The socialist core value system is a refinement and sublimation based on the general view of values and

⁶ Ceng Yanbo, “The Progress of the Contemporary youth’s values”, *Wenhui News*, 2008, 9,3.

⁷ The results of this theme will be published.

represents the predominant direction of values in Chinese-styled socialism. Constructing the socialist core value system will further strengthen the Chinese people's spiritual motives in building socialism, and will also promote the human being's and society's progress and developments. Therefore, constructing socialistic core value system is one of the important missions in contemporary China.

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CHAPTER XI

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: HARMONY IN A GLOBAL AGE

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Introduction: Unity ad Diversity in Classical Thought: Permmendes and Heraclitus

Philosophical concern with unity amidst diversity is as old as the philosophical enterprise itself. Philosophy emerged when man, surrounded by bewildering and fleeting realities asked: What is the stuff of the universe? What is the universe made of? Thales and Aniximanders' answers namely water and air respectively, invariably point to the concern with the underlying principles (unity) which undergirded the fleeting realities (diversity). Philosophy qua inquiry emerged as an attempt to understand the fundamental and foundational realities in which fleeting realities were anchored.

One immediate problem that cosmological speculation faced was relational, namely, if the ultimate stuff of the universe was water or air, how did that reality (identity), relate to the manifold of the fleeting realities (diversity). How did water, relate to tables, stones, kings etc....How did the manifold of experience come out of the fundamental and ultimate reality? The problem here was how could one be many; how could one (unity) (water) be many (diversity) tables, stones, trees, kings, etc...? One way round that problem was to introduce the concept of change and here the reasoning was that the ultimate reality over time changes into the manifold of experience. But change itself was problematic because to say that something changed, was to say that while it remained itself, it nevertheless become something else!! The problem here was that a thing that changed, must become something else, otherwise it has not changed! But then, it must remain itself, because it was it that changed.

The cosmological puzzles here led Heraclitus and Perminedes to take contradictory positions, with Heraclitus declaring that reality was in constant flux, (*diversity*), while Permenedes realizing that whatever changes must be identical throughout its change, took identity (*unity*) as the basic reality and was forced to deny change.

Platonic Interlude

Plato's theory of universals attempts a reconciliation of the Parmenidean *one* (or unity), with the Heraclitian flux, (or *diversity*) by showing that these two positions, rather than being contradictory, were complementary; they each emphasized an aspect of the ultimate nature of a composite reality. Accordingly, individual things have their variable identities, which in the Heraclitian lexicography were in flux hence their (diversity) because they partake in the eternal unchanging universals (the unity). The table I am writing on (a single instantiation of the multitude of tables there are), is perceived as such, i.e. as a table because it partakes in the unchanging universal table (the one, the unity). The mathematical variable three which is instantiated in the three pens on the table, the three text books in the shelves, etc., is conceived as three because it partakes of the universal three. The pencils and text books are mere instances of a universal, Three, without being the universal Three itself.

St. Paul on Unity and Diversity

Discourse on unity and diversity during the Presocratic and Platonic epochs had been largely metaphysical, concerned with how the manifold of experience, the diversity related to the foundational underlying unity.

St. Paul, in the Epistles to the Romans Chapter 14, brings the unity/diversity discourse down from metaphysics to the practical concerns of evangelization. His concern was: how could the Christian doctrine, born and nurtured in a Jewish cultural background, spread to gentile cultures, be acceptable to them, and still retain the core Christian doctrinal message? St. Paul's reflections, led him to the distinction between the "essentials", and the "disputable" of the Christian faith. Essentials constituted the core, the very heart of the Christian faith, which could not be denied without at the same time denying the Christian faith itself. No Christian, for example, could deny or dispute the divinity of Jesus, the Holy Trinity, the day of the judgment or the mystery of resurrection and still consider himself a Christian. Belief in these constituted the heart or core of the Christian faith—they constituted or formed the unity of the Christian value system, and they were non-negotiable.

The disputables, on the other hand, were beliefs and practices about Christianity, on which Christians could debate and take sides, but still remain within the confines of the Christian faith, without compromising the core doctrines of Christianity. Matters like when to worship, how to dress, what to eat or not eat, the language of worship,

these and many others according to St. Paul were debatable, but the outcome of the debate could not compromise the core values of the Christian faith. By making that distinction, St. Paul was able to underscore the core Christian values which were inherent in Christianity itself; these were universal, eternal and non-negotiable. But in the same vein St. Paul was able to highlight the merely contingent and accidental—owing to geographical and cultural variability and relativity.

That distinction served the double function of keeping the Christian doctrine and the core Christian values and message intact irrespective of wherever that message historically reached, but it also served the purpose of enabling the Christian doctrine to “talk” to the different cultures, taking cognizance of their cultural distinctiveness and diversities. The essentials in St. Paul’s categorization constituted the core, the unity, which was one and indivisible eternal and universal and there for all time. The disputables constitute the diversity—the manifold or myriad of cultural experiences, traversing different cultural landscapes.

Unity and Diversity in Pre and Post Independent African States

The invasion of African states by missionary and colonial agents in the period immediately before and after independence brought with it another set of challenges with respect to unity and diversity in culture and social life. When St. Paul drew a distinction between essentials and disputables to his gentile audience, in essence he was drawing it for the African missionaries and their form of evangelization which confused the two. Many missionaries looked very denigratingly at African cultures—songs, forms of dances, ritual practices, and banned them from Christian worship. They meanwhile paraded the Latin language and western musical instrument, the organ as key and indelible elements of Christian worship. There was failure here to distinguish between the merely contingent cultural elements from the core Christian messages, a failure to recognize and respect diversity in the course of evangelisation.

Besides the missionaries, colonial governors (who came alongside the missionaries), lumped together different ethnic groups which found themselves ensconced into arbitrarily concocted new states. The arbitrarily drawn borders did not only dismember tightly knit ethnic groups, they also brought together (under nation states), disparate and often loosely related linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse groups. There was an attempt to build nation states from above. It is debatable, given Africa’s many disparate entities, whether state formation processes could have proceeded otherwise.

Whatever the case, what has happened as a result of that top down national building processes is that national consciousness, a feeling of

national belonging or national unity is very much in deficit in many parts of Africa. Fakuyama has pointed out that, “nation, that is to say, communities of shared values, traditions and historical memory are never built, particularly by outsiders, rather they evolve out of an unplanned historical—evolutionary process.” Many African states were built from above, the consequence of that top-down approach was a feeling of alienation. Chinua Achebe was expressing that sentiment when he said, “Nigerian nationality was for me and my generation an acquired taste like ballroom dancing. Not dancing per se, for that comes naturally; but this titillating version of slow-slow-quick-slow.”¹ Achebe’s sentiment expressed a general sentiment not only confined to his generation or country, but almost universal in Africa. Wherever we look in Africa, we find that, save for a very small number of nationalist leaders, people still see themselves in terms of their “tribes and clans, then their religions and finally, if at all, in terms of their nationalities. That is so whether one is looking at the Igbo or Fulani of Nigeria, the Shona or Ndebele of Zimbabwe, Kikuyu or Luo of Kenya, the list is endless.

On the eve of independence, in the majority of African countries, the concern of tribesmen who had, to borrow Low’s phrase, “found themselves ensconced in an arbitrarily concocted new state,”² was not so much what the new nation states were going to look like, but how the “tribal” entities were going to be affected. The more articulate of the tribal leaders made these feelings clearly known. Reminiscing about that period when Uganda was about to attain its independence, Mutesa observed:

...the wind of change had started to blow in West Africa and there was no doubt now that Uganda would become independent. For most Africans in such a position the question is “when”. For us it was “whither?” We had struggled long and hard to retain our integrity during the life of the Protectorate Government. Now the situation was to be different and we looked ahead to see if there were different dangers, where would we stand in an independent Uganda?...We wished to hold to what we had and to

¹ Chinua Achebe, “My Country and me” in *New Africa Life* No 11 (June 1992), p. 14.

² D.A. Low, “The Dislocated Polity” in H.B Hansen and M. Twaddle, eds., *Uganda Now* (London: James Currey, 1988), p. 23.

continue to govern ourselves as we were demonstrably capable of doing.³

Sentiments similar to those expressed by Mutesa of Buganda on the eve of Uganda's independence have been expressed by Zwelithini of the Zulus on the eve of South Africa's independence. In both cases, nationalist sentiments have been subordinated to "tribal ones.

National Unity has been a problem precisely because the architects of that unity were unmindful of local ethnic sensibilities. They were disdainful of old political institutions which they derisively called tribal, and by implication, backward; they did not only question the legitimacy of tribal chiefs and kings, they went ahead to imprison or banish them, and after that put their own kings in the person of the Governor. They did not only question traditional leadership, they questioned local institutions, and often undermined them. In the circumstances, the national unity that has been constructed has remained largely suspicious.

Unity and Diversity in Liberal Society:

For our discussion of unity and diversity in liberal society, we start our analysis with Francis Fukuyama's declaration, concerning the end of history. Francis Fukuyama has observed that a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently, communism. In his view, liberal democracy may constitute, "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution, and the final form of human government, and as such constitute the end of history." It is quite possible to disagree with Francis Fukuyama's thesis, and Samuel P. Huntington has shown there was much Fukuyama did not sufficiently focus on, namely and significantly the potential clash of civilizations. Fukuyama himself has admitted in his major work, *Our Posthuman Future*, that there was much he did not factor into the end of history thesis, notably, the potential consequences of a biotechnological revolution and how that was likely to affect the future of civilization. Those oversights notwithstanding, an empirical historical survey shows that the liberal democratic age, unlike any other that has preceded it, allows individuals and communities a far greater latitude of personal and social freedoms and choice than any other. Socialism, conservatism, communism, the various forms of theocracies and monarchies, and a

³ Freddie King, *Description of My Kingdom* (London: Constable, 1967), p. 149.

host of other ideologies, all in various ways and to various degrees have impinged on individual and community freedoms and liberties and structures and regimented peoples live. Liberalism stands for the enhancement of individual liberty and the rejection of state, ecclesiastical and other forms of authority. The emergence of human rights awareness which has come close on the heels of liberalism has enhanced that trend, and has led to increasingly more overt expressions of individual liberties and freedoms.

But liberalism, both as theory and practice, throws up challenges for unity and diversity that traditional ideologies never contended with. The challenge was and still is: how can we live with our individual and cherished freedoms and liberties without succumbing to the force and coercion of others? Rousseau, (*The Social Contract*) and John Stuart Mill, (*On liberty*) invariably ask the same question. Mill succinctly asks, “What then is the rightful limit of the sovereign of the individual over himself. Where does the authority of society begin? How much of human life should be assigned to individuality and how much to society?”⁴

With hindsight, we can see Mill’s question as directed to Thomas Hobbes, who in his version of the contract theory, argued that men chose to submit to the authority of the sovereign in order to be able to live in a civil society which would be conducive to their own interest. Mill, raising a central concern of diversity within unity is asking: how much does the individual give away when he enters civil society? How do individuals who have agreed to come together under a sovereign, but who happen to espouse different, divergent or even contradictory values or value systems live together? Whereas contract theories invariably alluded to submission to a sovereign, they were not explicit about how to handle the emergence of a plurality of divergent and contradictory values. So the question is: how do we protect individual value systems (diversities) amidst the demands of the sovereign (unity). This concern did not prominently emerge in traditional ideologies, which assumed commonality of values.

Mill gives a formula on how he thinks we should be able to handle our divergent value systems, beliefs and practices as we enjoy our citizenship in civilized ‘liberal’ communities. He says:

The sole end for which mankind is warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over

⁴ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative government* (London: J.M. Dent, and Sons Ltd, 1940), p. 131.

any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise, or even right....The only part of the conduct of anyone, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute, over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.⁵

To what extent does Mill's formula judiciously adjudicate the interest of unity vis-a-vis the demands for diversity? To put the same question differently, how can we work for unity when we are forever engaged in the sole negative task of avoiding harm to others? Scholars who have worked on the subject of civil society, have highlighted the major task of the art of associating, which is central for the creations of strong civil society and social capital. But the art of associating will call for more than simply avoiding harming others! Mill's position is skewed in favour of protecting individual differences (diversities), and less so in the promotion of social unity. Mill's formula does not have a mechanism for developing social morality, or for that matter social capital, which would be necessary for the survival of society.

Another thinker whose views are useful in this debate is Patrick Devlin (*The Legal Enforcement of Morals*). Whereas for Mill, the individual who lives in any society can do whatever he wishes, on condition he does not harm others, Devlin's formula for living in society, is to live in it as its laws, regulations and morals demand. If a non-Christian who lives in England wanted to enter into wedlock, he, in Devlin's view, will have to follow the Christian tenets of marriage. Reflecting on the status of Christian marriage in England, he says that the great majority of those who live in this country, (meaning England), accept it, i.e. the Christian marriage, and for them it is the only true one. But he makes a very telling point: "But a non-Christian is bound by it, not because it is part of Christianity but because, rightly or wrongly, it has been adopted by the society in which he lives. It would be useless for him to stage a debate designed to prove that polygamy was theologically more correct and socially preferable; if he wants to live in the house, he must accept it as built in the way in which it is."⁶

⁵ *Ibid*; p.73.

⁶ Patrick Devlin, *The Enforcement of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 9.

Devlin takes us back to the traditional conservative outlook, where individual mores and idiosyncracies must fit within the traditional moral framework of society. Reference to “a moral principle”, which would be more appropriately rendered “the moral principle” underscores Devlin’s commitment to the *unity*, and cohesion of society, and here we have an invitation to be vigilant and on the outlook for any strictures which would lead to social collapse. Devlin makes it abundantly clear that institutions collapse much more frequently from their internal weaknesses than from external aggression. Accordingly, therefore, there is need to check every one’s goings, or else we create weak spots which could be the starting points of internal decay and eventual destruction.

Unity and Diversity in the Global Age

Today we live in a global village. The challenge then is according to which or whose rules, standards or values do we live in it. The contests between gay supporters and antigay crusaders, abortionists and antiabortionists, conservatives and liberals and a host of other bitter contestants are all ultimately aimed at defining standards and values by which we should live. For Devlin we should live in the house “as built”, but he left unanswered the question of built according to which or whose standards, and according to which values. Thomas Freedrian’s remark that “the most basic truth about globalization is that no one is in charge”⁷ may be right, but only up to a point. Yes, nobody may be in charge, but a plethora of groups, value systems, ideologies, etc., are all invariably masquerading like they are in charge!

In attempting to answer the question whose standards or whose values two philosophical positions emerge. One position traceable back to the Platonic heritage advances the view that there is but a single rational standard and value system, intransient and a-historical, that all human subjects qua rational beings must live by. The whole of humanity must subscribe to the same universal principles, irrespective of their cultural, economic, social and other diversities.

According to cultural globalists, man as a rational agent has clear standards of right and wrong, good or bad and this is true for all rational agents wherever they may be and for all time. Man, therefore, must adhere to standards as they are set, and this allows for no exceptions. These are dictated by man’s rational nature and since we share in this rationality of human nature, we see the some rational values, mores and

⁷ Peter Singer, *One world, The Ethics of Globalization*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 11.

principles. What is real is rational and this will be apprehended by everybody wherever they may be and for all time.

Another equally strong and in my view more convincing philosophical position, starts from a tacit recognition of our social cultural diversities and argues for the possibility of a plurality of rational and reasonable, though often contradictory, view points and world views, each one with their conceptions of what they consider their good. The self-claimed universalist who alone claims to have privileged insights into how people should live, and to know which values and mores they should hold, is on this view rejected.

Given our historically diverse civilizational backgrounds and world views, (which have made us what we are, and which we cannot wish away), cultural pluralists caution against parading a single view point as the view point for everybody and for all time.

Much anthropological research in the areas of cultural beliefs and religious practices have come to the conclusion that, “standards of rationality in different societies do not always coincide.”⁸ Peter Winch has cautioned that “an observer faced with a seemingly irrational belief in a primitive society should seek contextually given criteria according to which they may appear rational.”⁹ What Winch says about primitive society can very well be said about contemporary society. The banning of the Islamic face veil on grounds that requiring women to cover their faces was against French republican principles of secularism and equality, and a symbol of repression of women and extremist fundamentalism; then the banning of prayers in public schools and public displays of religious symbols like crucifixes; all these may be interpreted as requirements of secular republican constitutionalism.¹⁰ But the implicit assumption that they are irrational undercuts the spirit of tolerance and the realization that not all people, all over world will have exactly the standards of rationality, especially in matters of culture and religious beliefs.

Those who support cultural pluralism and alternative life styles will only do so only as long as cultural pluralism works in their favour. Hence, very strong supporters of gay marriages and lesbianism are not likely supporters of Islamic head scurfs, crucifixes in kindergartens or the Lord’s Prayer in public schools. Subscription to cultural plurality or diversity is not taken as a guiding philosophy to enable harmonious relationships among peoples or as tool for respecting cultural diversities.

⁸ Peter Winch, “*Understanding a Primitive Society*,” quoted in Boyan Wilson (ed.) *Rationality* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), p. 205.

⁹ *Ibid*; p. 203.

¹⁰ BBC News France report backs face veil ban, <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/h>.

Rather it turns out to be an ideology selfishly pursued to advance perspectival and narrowly circumscribed interests. Many of those who have condemned Iranian criminalization of gay marriages, and have referred to it as the Religious Reich, have not found anything wrong with their own criminalization of the head scarf. The challenge we face in arguing for universal values and or standards is that those who view a certain way of life, a practice or value as rational (and are even likely to invoke a cultural pluralistic argument to support their position), will do so only as long as cultural pluralism or alternative lifestyle works in their favour.

Conclusion

Philosophy always attempts to provide answers to fundamental questions that confront human kind in the different historical epochs and is adequate to the degree that it provides satisfactory answers to those questions. Philosophers will always be in business precisely because each new epoch brings forth its own challenges and philosophers come in to give solutions.

Confronted with the challenge of unity and diversity now, exacerbated by globalization, many have become cynical and pessimistic. "No one is in charge" is a commonly heard remark, which is generally true, but not very useful. What we need is not lamentation about things in disarray, but rather a critical dialectical synthesis to take us beyond the crisis. As different cultures meet, inevitably there will be challenges; that is in the very nature of the social dialectics. It is a loss when we do not creatively utilize knowledge and insights gained in the meeting of ideas and cultures. The meeting of cultures, values, and ways of life can be the starting point of new cultures, values and ways of life.

This is already happening in trade, commerce and finance. Prevalence of local national currencies has not detracted us from international use of Visa, Express and other credit card facilities for international business. Increasingly, local and regional languages and scripts are being adapted to internet and ICT facilities. Formerly local and regional cuisines: Chinese, Ethiopian, Thai, Indian-Tandori are all gaining international respectability and acclaim. Although initially only Hollywood provided international movies, today Bollywood, Nigerian, Chinese and other movies makes are all joining the fray, and there does not seem to be any conflict.

If the meeting of cultures can thus be positive, why the anxieties and fears? Huntington (1996) for example expressed fears concerning immigrants from other civilizations who reject assimilation and continue to adhere to and propagate the values customs and cultures of their home societies. His fear is that, "if assimilation fails in this case, the United

States will become a cleft country with all the potentials for internal strife and disunion that entails.”¹¹ But the fear that failure to assimilate will lead to a cleft country is true only to a point.

First, recent world history has shown that cultural homogeneity does not necessarily mean internal peace. The two nations that have been most bedevilled by internal strife in the recent past namely Somalia and Rwanda are also countries that to a very high degree would be considered culturally homogenous. True, there are different clans in Somalia, and there are some differences between Tutsis and Hutus. But on the whole, these societies would be said to be very well “assimilated.” If that is so, how do we explain the violent clashes that have been called a genocide in one place (Rwanda), and extreme civil strife in Somalia? Would it be convincing to argue that the outbreak of violence in these societies are attributable to the failure of one group assimilating to the culture of the other. In any case, in Rwanda, who would assimilate to what?

Secondly, historically, America’s greatness was not built on indigenous community assimilation of immigrant cultures. For if that were so, the predominant culture in America today would be Red Indian Culture. Aborigi culture would be the dominant culture in Australia. On the contrary, America’s greatness (and the same can be said about Australia) owes much more to the diversity and exuberance of the different immigrant groups who have crossed Ellis Island (and other entry points), and brought with them fresh outlooks, experiences, and values.

In any case, the language of assimilation which undergirds the philosophy of the melting pot (a view Huntington implicitly subscribes to), has long been discarded, having been realized illusory. The more contemporaneous realization is that to be American is to be aware of the distinctiveness of people around you, different in their origins, their religions, their life styles.¹² There is thus a rejection of the reductionist philosophy which took it that human diversity could be reduced to a seamless cultural mosaic.

But even if we granted that assimilation was a positive thing only it was failing; still it would not be time to lament, but rather to think about new conceptualizations, legislations, and institutions to enable the

¹¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remarking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Touchstone, 1996), p. 305.

¹² Arthur Mann, quoted in, “The Changing Face of America” *Time Magazine*, Special Immigrants Issue The Changing Face of America (July 8, 1985), p. 19.

¹³ Admson Poebel, *Anthropology: The Study of Man*, 3rd Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 442.

assimilation process. Legal theorists in the field of anthropology have long since known that breach and dispute in conflicts of claims are the sources of law.¹³ Breach, so the thinking goes, is the mother of law, as necessity is the mother of invention. Laws embody beliefs that have triumphed in the struggle of ideas, and therefore in the event where non-assimilation is a source of discomfort or outright conflict, that would be the occasion to build new institutions and legislations to handle emerging unease. Already much has been achieved in the area of human rights, where International human rights laws have been enacted to mediate conflicts which emerge as different people meet and make their claims.

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CHAPTER XII

HOSPITALITY, DIVERSITY, AND UNITY

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INTRODUCTION

How is unity possible in the contemporary world—i.e., in what we call the ‘post-modern age’? Post-modernity challenges our norms and conventions, our theories of human nature, our grand narratives, and—in general—any essentialist or foundationalist approach. And so it would seem to challenge any attempt to engage in dialogue across cultures or in any way that proposes to be independent of context.

One response to this is to focus, not on theories, but on practices, and to see what we might conclude from there. Thus, in this paper, I want to focus on one particular practice on which much has been written of late, and which has been suggested as a feature for dialogue—and that is the practice of hospitality.

In this paper, I begin by saying something about the nature of hospitality, why people are enjoined to be hospitable, and some of the ways in which hospitality is a particularly ethical concern. Next, I suggest that hospitality should be understood as a practice, and that the corresponding characteristic of ‘being hospitable’ should be seen a virtue. And, finally, I argue that if we understand hospitality as a practice, it allows us to determine when being hospitable is and isn’t appropriate, and also how it contributes to goods, such as human flourishing and intercultural dialogue.

HOSPITALITY TODAY

The Turn to Hospitality

In the last 15 years, there has been a growing interest in Anglo-American philosophy in the notion of ‘hospitality.’ There are a number of reasons for this.

One, certainly, is the appeal of the theory of cosmopolitanism, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the various ‘velvet revolutions’ in central and eastern Europe. This interest in cosmopolitanism naturally draws one back to Kant who, in his essay on

Perpetual Peace (1795),¹ saw ‘universal hospitality’ as a defining condition a “cosmo-political system.” Thus, the Danish philosopher, Peter Kemp (for example, in his recent book *Verdensborgeren som pædagogisk ideal*² [*The World Citizen as Educational Ideal*]), sees hospitality as a constituent part of international law that is, itself, based in cosmopolitan law. And one finds related, though far from identical views, in Martha Nussbaum’s work on cosmopolitanism.³

A second reason for the attention to hospitality is the discussion of different senses of the notion by Jacques Derrida⁴—and, indirectly, Emmanuel Lévinas.⁵ Derrida’s proposal for an ethics and a politics of hospitality is rooted in his reflections on Lévinas’s concern for the radical otherness of the other, but it is motivated in large part by a wish to respond to contemporary political events.

A third reason for this interest in the Anglo-American philosophical tradition is that hospitality seems to be a notion that is relevant to a number of issues in contemporary applied ethics, such as the long-term effects of war, civil conflict, and poverty, and particularly the phenomenon of immigration, the movement of displaced peoples and refugees, and the difficulties they encounter. (It is in part for this reason that Derrida turns his attention to it.) But the notion also applies to the concern to build a general humanism and the cultivation of character.

There may be other reasons as well. In all cases, however, the presumption is that the notion is at least useful, if not key, to ethics and social life in the contemporary world.

¹ *Kant's Principles of Politics, including his essay on Perpetual Peace. A Contribution to Political Science*, trans. W. Hastie (Edinburgh: Clark, 1891)

² *Verdensborgeren som pædagogisk ideal* (København: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2005).

³ See her “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism” (in *Boston Review* 19:5 (October–November 1994); reprinted in *For Love of Country?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002). See also her Castle Lectures delivered at Yale University in 2000, entitled *The Cosmopolitan Tradition* (This will be published by Yale University Press).

⁴ See, principally, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, Trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, Trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁵ See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Trans. Alphonos Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), where the centre of ethical relationship is the experience of the other. See also *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, Trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981).

What Hospitality Is

What is hospitality? The notion is, arguably, vague and ambiguous. It has been interpreted in rather different ways, and there has even been debate about its etymology.⁶ A standard definition of the term is that it is “the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and good will” (Oxford English Dictionary). It is the equivalent of *xenia* in Greek and *hospitalitas* in Latin, and the term is found in English since the middle ages.

Though generally seen as something dealing with worldly concerns, it is interesting how close a relation hospitality has with religion. Within western religious traditions, hospitality classically involved a welcoming of the stranger or guest on a par with one’s family—of ensuring that one who arrives from a distance be not only provided with shelter and refreshment, but be brought into the community of the household. In some Islamic traditions, hosts are enjoined to give what they have to the guest—to treat a guest as if he or she was the most important member of the household⁷—to the extent that the hosts may do without themselves. Similar examples of hospitality are found within the Jewish and Christian traditions,⁸ and the Christian spiritual writer, Henri Nouwen, writes that “if there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality.”⁹ Key here is that to be hospitable is to receive another in a way that is kindly, open, and engaging—and not diffidently or indifferently.

Philosophical discussion of hospitality has, however, been relatively rare—perhaps because it could be subsumed under or included in a part of other ethical activities. Although it appears in the Stoic tradition and is mentioned in classical Greek authors, it does not seem to be a principal concern of many major mediaeval or modern thinkers.¹⁰ Shaftesbury refers to hospitality as “extensive Love of Mankind, and

⁶ Despite some suggestions of the proximity of *hospes* (guest or stranger) and *hostes* (enemy), the etymology is fairly clear.

⁷ A text from the Hadith records Muhammad as saying: “Anyone who believes in Allah and the last day let him be good to his neighbour. Anyone who believes in Allah and the last day let him be hospitable to his guest.”

⁸ See Genesis 18.4-5, where Abraham receives the three strangers at Mamre; see also the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10: 38-42.

⁹ Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), p. 66.

¹⁰ Though, see Georg Cavallar, *The Rights of Strangers: Theories of International Hospitality, the Global Community and Political Justice since Vitoria* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

Relief of Strangers.”¹¹, but does not expand on this. Perhaps the best-known modern account is in Immanuel Kant—but Kant offers a rather meagre definition, simply stating that hospitality is “the Right of a stranger in...another country, not to be treated...as an enemy...so long as he conducts himself peacefully.”

Today, hospitality seems to have lost much of its earlier significance. It is still regarded as a primary obligation in some religious communities but, when it concerns daily life in most western nations, it generally lacks any “peculiar sacredness,” and the expectations one has are no longer “peculiarly stringent.” Even as long ago as the late 19th century, the British utilitarian ethicist Henry Sidgwick noted that “in the progress of civilisation [hospitality] has become a luxury.”¹² Defining the term ‘hospitality’ and identifying precisely what it entails are challenging because there are no established criteria or expectations for what is involved. Nevertheless, the lexical definition cited above should serve as a starting point for discussion.

The Challenges of Hospitality

Why be hospitable? From what we have seen above, for many it is a religious duty; it is part of one’s obligation to God or to the community of believers.¹³ Others may see it simply as a humanitarian duty—that is, given the concern and respect that we should have towards other human beings in general, or given the inherent value of human dignity, we are morally bound to treat them in certain ways, particularly when they are in situations of need or distress. For Kant, universal hospitality is grounded in (though also restricted to) matters of right, which are, in turn, based on the principle that, in the beginning, no one had a right to the earth greater than anyone else.¹⁴ One can imagine that hospitality (in varying degrees) is an appropriate response in certain cases on a utilitarian model. And there may be other reasons for hospitality as well—e.g., as being part of a more general obligation to help to relieve suffering, or to exhibit generosity, or to demonstrate distributive justice. Indeed, Derrida writes “ethics *is* hospitality.”¹⁵ Hospitality may also be engaged in for political or prudential reasons (though I will not deal with these reasons here).

¹¹ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue Or Merit*, Book II, Part II, Section III, in *The British Moralists*, Vol. 1, ed. Selby Bigge.

¹² Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, Bk 3, Ch 4, sect. 3.

¹³ In Christianity, see Romans 12: 13; Hebrews 13:1-2; 1 Peter 4:8-9.

¹⁴ See Kant, *Perpetual Peace*.

¹⁵ Derrida 2001, p. 17. (emphasis mine)

The precise nature and extent of this obligation is, however, unclear. Is it a strict duty, or an imperfect one? (Must I show hospitality to all, or can I choose to whom, when, and where I am hospitable?) Is it like the injunction to ‘love one another’—to ‘do good’ (as Kant would understand it¹⁶). Or is it simply a good or praiseworthy thing to do? Are there—must there be—limits to hospitality and, if so, what justifies this? What about ‘innocent threats’ (such as the carriers of infectious disease), or those of whom nothing is known to those offering hospitality; are all categories of stranger or guest morally equivalent? Is it arrogant to offer hospitality, because it assumes that it is that person’s place to do so?¹⁷ Do we all have the right to show or extend hospitality, or must we at least sometimes defer to a higher authority? And what can the recipient of hospitality rightly expect?

Many different responses can be—and have been—given to these questions. But there is a way of sorting through them, and establishing some general standards. If we focus on hospitality as a moral practice, with an end and a corresponding virtue or virtues, we can have an account that both fits some of the traditional understanding of the notion, and is also of use in showing hospitality today.

HOSPITALITY AS A MORAL PRACTICE

Despite the vagueness and ambiguity in the notion, it is clear that hospitality is a practice. We can speak, formally or informally, of *rules* of hospitality—governing the obligations of the host, but also of the guest (e.g., concerning what the host offers, how long a guest may expect to be received, what the guest can rightly expect, the importance—and way—of showing gratitude to the host, and so on). These rules are internal to the practice, but they also reflect the standards of the social institutions in which the practice occurs (e.g., a religious tradition), and they can sometimes be rather complex. And, like all practices, hospitality must have an end or purpose.

For some practices, the end is purely internal to the practice itself, or we might say of certain practices that they are engaged in for their own sake. But if we see hospitality as a *moral* practice, then its end is the end of all moral practices: human flourishing, the growth and development of human beings.

As it is regarded by Kant (and, apparently, by some postmoderns too), the practice of hospitality tends to be defined in terms of a giver and a recipient; the immediate ‘recipient’ of hospitality would be the stranger or guest. But this, it seems to me, is too strongly an

¹⁶ See Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 399-400.

¹⁷ See Derrida 2001.

individualistic model, and it does not fit with many of the traditions in which hospitality is practiced. Moreover, what is missing in the preceding description is *why* the practice is engaged in, and what other practices, or institutions, or traditions bear on it at the time. This, together with thinking of hospitality as a practice which has an end that is, or contributes to, a common good—such as human flourishing, and not just someone receiving something from someone else—suggests a reading of hospitality which is much less individualistic. We see it, instead, as characterised by a complexity of relations and by corresponding virtues.

There is no denying that hospitality is a practice in which we speak of one who offers hospitality and one who accepts it. My claim here, however, is that this does not exhaust the relationships at work here. For ‘both’ parties are participants, the practice is one in which each benefits, and the parties are not, in fact, in an asymmetrical relation. The host offers—but it is because the arrival and the presence of the guest already places the host under an obligation. The guest accepts, in part because it is right—but usually because it is part of the practice that one must accept (or else an offense is committed). It is expected that the guest should show thanks and respect—or gratitude. But the guest is not the only one who thanks; the host normally thanks the guest as well. Thus, there is a mutuality in the relation between or among the parties—and perhaps more. Hospitality not only involves a concern for and an attention to each party by the other, but it presupposes respecting one another; respect must be reciprocated. Nor is the practice something that can be reduced to a set of encounters, for when hospitality is known to be a practice within a culture, it informs other practices, and it is also an assurance to all those who may find themselves as strangers or guests. The practice of hospitality, then, serves not only those involved in the encounter, but is part of the network of practices and relations within a social whole. To see this practice in this way—as an activity that draws on and is conditioned by mutual respect—addresses some of the critiques that have been made of hospitality.

Practices, of course, bring with them a corresponding virtue. Being (*properly*) hospitable is an excellence or virtue of the individual (as can ‘being a good guest’). It will normally involve a number of the practical as well as moral virtues in its exercise. Moreover, what this amounts to concretely depends largely, though not entirely, on the traditions and the institutions in which the practice appears. Being hospitable to a neighbour involves different kinds of activities and relations than being so to a stranger or to one’s employer. Still, the mutual appreciation, gratitude, respect, and so forth remain characteristic. And, further, being properly hospitable requires following a mean; an excessive hospitality, or a miserly one, are failures—and they can be

moral failures, for they may damage not only the particular exchange between host and guest, but one's respect for oneself and, possibly, the status of the practice within the institution as a whole. To be a good host—i.e., being 'hospitable'—may also be regarded as a disposition to follow that mean. There are, of course, limits to hospitality. The way in which one is hospitable—i.e., shows hospitality—and its limits are, however, 'relative' to the situation.

Understanding hospitality as a moral practice is not just a matter of seeing it as following certain procedures or rules. Rules and principles are not sufficient for the hospitable person and may not be necessary; the good host knows what to do. And while hospitality is a practice, it is not something that is free standing or *sui generis*. Practices do not exist in the abstract, separate from all other practices.

In fact, hospitality seems to be a practice appropriate to *any* activity that involves encountering others: encountering others as immigrants and refugees; having friends and guests into one's home; receiving one's students into one's classroom or office.

To be hospitable, then, needs to take into account the larger set of practices and institutions in which the specific encounter has a place. As rooted within these other practices, hospitality takes its specific character from them. But hospitality, as a moral practice, as noted above, has an end—human flourishing. And this end helps the participants to assess their own activities as well as the practices and institutions in which these activities take place, and to determine whether these, too, are morally acceptable.

How we show hospitality and to whom; what we can expect of ourselves and of others; when it is necessary and when it is optional depend, relevantly, on the institutions and traditions in which hospitality is 'offered' and 'received.' But in any of these cases, hospitality has its own distinctive character.

SOME IMPLICATIONS

What follows from this account of hospitality?

I have suggested that we should not see hospitality simply as a matter of a host 'offering,' and the guest or stranger 'receiving,' but as defining and establishing a relation among the parties—and *as continuing a tradition* that goes beyond the particular encounter. The host who welcomes the guest does not put himself above the guest, any more than do the parents who welcome a child returning from a long trip. There is no matter of one party establishing or assuming control, for both parties are necessary to the practice, show respect for the other, and as moral agents are themselves committed to a number of practical and moral virtues.

I have also said that the practice of hospitality is not *sui generis*—and that this practice itself exists within a larger set of practices. So hospitality as a practice has its limits—but these limits are drawn from the notion of a practice itself, from what it is to engage in a *moral* practice, from seeing hospitality as part of a tradition, from the institution or institutions in which this particular practice exists, and from the end of hospitality overall—human flourishing.

Hospitality is central to a range of moral, social, and religious activities which are part of the communities in which human beings live. But there is more to ethics—and to these activities—than hospitality.

DIALOGUE ACROSS CULTURES

By way of conclusion, I wish to note briefly some of the implications of this view for the relation of hospitality to dialogue across cultures.

To start, we note that dialogue is a practice. This practice is normally (and most productively) engaged in, not to establish the superiority of one party over another, or even to prove that one's own view is true. It is, rather, to pursue the truth—from one's 'position,' but open to the insights and contributions of others—which requires listening, openness, and willingness to exchange and to reassess one's own views. If this is true of dialogue in general, it should be true of intercultural dialogues in particular.

Hospitality as a practice is appropriate here, for it is a means by which dialogue can start and be pursued. It begins with a respect for one another, and it involves 'receiving' others, and building relations with them. It requires mutuality—and the recognition that all those who participate in dialogue have responsibilities. It is a practice in which the participants not only contribute, but receive, and for which all parties should be grateful. But it is also a practice that is governed by other institutions and practices, such as the religious traditions from which the participants come. Particular encounters will, of course, have distinctive features. But if we see hospitality in the way that I have suggested, then it must surely be present in any genuine effort at intercultural dialogue.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE WISDOM OF FRIENDSHIP: THE CONTRIBUTION OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY FOR THE DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS

JOÃO J. VILA-CHÃ

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

Globalization, image as it is of a concept with universal implications, is a word that today is intensely present in the vocabulary of many people around the world. Some refer to the phenomenon with good doses of optimism; others, however, are alert mainly to its more somber and problematic aspects and effects. In reality, these effects of globalization being either positive or negative, are measured, presently, in terms that are simultaneously cultural, economic, social, and, ultimately, also religious. Hence the importance, I believe, of considering the cultural dimension of globalization. Needless to say, the contacts and the inter-cultural actions have attained in today's world a dimension which has never been seen before.

In any case, one of the characteristics attributed to post-modernity has to do with the advent of a cultural situation in which economy and culture become deeply interconnected: economy becomes more and more cultural, while culture sees itself more and more determined by its economic dimension. In fact, the major reason why, after World War II, American authorities so ardently defended their television and film-industry is precisely because they recognized, probably better than anybody else at the time, that culture also constitutes a very important economic factor. This, no doubt, is a first justification for the importance of recognizing the value of culture in today's globalized world.

The traditional systems of culture have great importance as regulators of the ways in which people live and strive for the preservation of their dignity, systems that very often are endowed with characteristics which have been maintained during hundreds, or thousands of years. Fortunately, we know of situations in the world in which the cultural fabric is still widely preserved, as the case of China might illustrate in a particular way. But the big question remains the same, and that is to know the extent to which the effects of globalization can be resisted when it comes to culture and the ways in which people

seek to define their own approach to life and, ultimately, to the question of its very meaning.

Be that as it may, it is quite clear that in the hands of the so-called global culture are very powerful means, means that encompass the entire world. I refer mainly to the effects of the mass media, a power to which, in a certain sense, is owed, as much as or even more than to economy, the process of unification of the world we live in. Today many people tend, and rightly so, to be worried with problems raised by many of the possibilities (some fearful) offered by genetic engineering, specifically as it concerns the “programming” of human embryos, that is, of babies even before they are born. But should it not be recognized as one of the major ethical challenges of our time to react in a discerning way to what amounts to large-scale campaigns of programming the human minds all over the world, the effects of which affect not only children and young people, but also adults of every age? Indeed, how can we not be aware of the fact that such a process is so well at work not only in the mass media, but also in places like the family, the school, the university, etc.?

This view might be labeled negativist or even considered unjustified. But we should not forget that in order to be able to expand the market, that is, to increase the number of consumers, the most “natural” and fundamental exigency of the economic agents is to create in people needs adequate to the products effectively manufactured, rather than to provide for their real personal and social necessities. After all, is this not a good explanation for a phenomenon like the one we call consumerism? Needless to say that consumerism represents one of the major social consequences of an economy based more on desire than on real needs.

This understanding of the situation in which we find ourselves make the dialogue and friendship between cultures, beginning with the great cultures of the world, an absolute priority. The encounter between East and West, North and South is, in the first place, a matter of common understanding and active intellectual friendship. Here the main purpose is to celebrate the power (political, educational, etc.) of the ideal of *friendship*, an idea that I understand as being essential to the dialogue among cultures and civilizations as well as to the creation of a new global ethos. This ideal was very much present among the Greeks and Romans of ancient times, the epochs in which life par excellence, that is, life worth living, was considered inseparable from an active participation in the life of the *polis*, so much so that for a Greek of Athens the fullness of life could not but be the life of a citizen. In the ancient *polis*, to work in favour of others, to contribute to the amelioration of the common life, was an admirable means for the ennoblement of one’s own life. Hence the importance given to community, first among the Pagans and then among the Christians,

something reputed as being of the greatest importance and the seedbed for human harmony and the discovery of meaning itself. Hence my desire to deepen our mutual understanding and to enrich one another on the basis of a true intercultural dialogue. Indeed, our goal is to recognize some of the means proper to the Chinese civilization and cultures that might be of assistance in the process of finding ways towards the best possible meaning and of the most efficacious ways for achieving and promoting mutual understanding and cooperation among cultures and civilizations.

Regardless of the fact that our human situation today is in many regards very different from the one proper to the classical ages of the East and of the West, to consider some basic ethical and religious implications of the ideal of citizenship can be of true interest and real importance for our discussion. In this sense, my proposal refers simply to the ethical problem of Happiness and Virtue, as well as to the problem of Friendship. It is a problem that, in order to ground the ethical implications of any system of culture or civilization, we always need to tackle both in its affective as well as in its political dimension. I shall first here attempt to make a brief presentation of the manner in which the problem had one of its first philosophical articulations within the context of Greek culture and civilization. The illustration of the problem and of its contours shall here be done in the terms inaugurated by one of the most influential masters of the Western tradition: Aristotle of Stagira (384-322 b.C.).¹

ETHICS AND HAPPINESS

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, one of the most important and foundational books of Western Civilization, Aristotle begins, and ends, his ethical reflection with a thorough discussion about the nature of *happiness*. According to him, the demand for *Happiness* constitutes the

¹ Besides the references to Aristotle himself, this paper is particularly indebted to: Aubenque, Pierre, "Sur l'amitié chez Aristote". In: Aubenque, Pierre, *La prudence chez Aristote*. 1. éd. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963), pp. 179-183; Berti, Enrico; Veca, Salvatore, *La politica e l'amicizia*. Introduzione di Franco Riva. Roma: Edizioni lavoro, 1998; Sokolowski, Robert, "Phenomenology of Friendship". In: *Review of Metaphysics*. 55 (2002), n. 3, pp. 451-470; Hauerwas, Stanley; Pinches, Charles, *Christians among the Virtues: Theological Conversations with Ancient and Modern Ethics* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); Hauerwas, Stanley, *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics*. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975; Ricci, Matteo (1552-1610): *On Friendship: One Hundred Maxims for a Chinese Prince*. Translated by Timothy Billings (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

basis of all *moral life*, a life that inevitably must be centered in the ideal of *virtue*. As much as we recognize that the ethical project of Aristotle can be summed up in the idea of Philosophy as a service to the promotion of *citizenship*, harmony and social cooperation, we will take into consideration some of the most important moments in Aristotle's ethical reflection. In the first place, we need to consider his study of what he calls the *ends of the human being*.

Happiness as Goal

In his analysis, Aristotle begins with a study of the *ultimate end* which justifies the action of the human being in the world. His first observation is precisely that at the basis of human morality is the pursuit of *happiness*. Aristotle begins by studying the nature of the goal of this human being, inviting us, before anything else, to go through the meaning of the various existing opinions about the subject. One by one, Aristotle presents the different opinions which he finds at least among his contemporaries, until he draws the conclusion that all seem to coincide in the idea that *happiness* constitutes "the greatest good one can reach through action" (1095a).² And if there is a disagreement between people's opinions regarding this matter, the fact has mainly to do with the identification of the more appropriate meaning inherent to the notion itself. For some, maybe the majority, *happiness* consists in merely obtaining things like *pleasure* or *wealth*; for others, however, *happiness* represents always something which is related to different things in accordance with the diversity of times and situations (for instance, when we are ill we tend to identify it with health; when we fall into poverty we tend to identify it with wealth, and so forth); others, namely those who reflect more thoroughly about the problem, say that happiness is not only beyond all or any list of properties, but is precisely the *good* which in itself and by itself is *cause* of all the other ones (1095a20-30).

The *good* from which derives the understanding of all human goods is *happiness*. And since its power of attraction is clearly superior to all the other goods, happiness is often identified with the *Good* par excellence. In this sense, when describing it in the first Book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defends that the *happy person*

will be happy throughout his life; for always, or by preference to everything else, he will do and contemplate what is excellent, and he will bear the chances of life most

² Aristotle (384-322), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. The revised Oxford translation, edited by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 1730.

nobly and altogether decorously, if he is 'truly good' and 'foursquare beyond reproach' (1100b12-1100b21)³.

Aristotle then continues his argumentation by saying that

no happy man can become miserable; for he will never do the acts that are hateful and mean. For the man who is truly good and wise, we think, bears all the chances of life becomingly and always makes the best of circumstances, as a good general makes the best military use of the army at his command and a shoemaker makes the best shoes out of the hides that are given him; and so with all other craftsman. (1100b33-1101a8)⁴.

But in Book VII, he also underlines the fact that *happiness* bears a very special power of attraction, and enforces the idea according to which, in the field of ethics, it is very important to recognize that nothing belonging to the human sphere is absolute or deprived of change:

Those who say that the victim on the rack or the man who falls into great misfortunes is happy if he is good, are, whether they mean to or not, talking nonsense. Now because we need fortune as well as other things, some people think good fortune the same thing as happiness; but it is not that, for even good fortune itself when in excess is an impediment, and perhaps should then be no longer called good fortune; for its limit is fixed by reference to happiness. (1153b7-1153b24)⁵.

The question, therefore, is much more complex than it seems to be at first sight. Aristotle begins by accepting the idea that happiness consists in the satisfaction of our desire, but is reluctant to say which specific desires happiness meets in the end. For the Philosopher, therefore, happiness can only be truly understood in the extent to which we identify it with the ultimate end of the human being. In the human condition, therefore, "all knowledge and every choice are oriented to a good" (1095a15). In fact, there is not any human activity which in itself is not oriented to the achievement of a good. But, says Aristotle, we must also take into account that good is

³ Idem, p. 1739.

⁴ Idem, p. 1739.

⁵ Idem, p. 1823.

different in medicine, in strategy, and in the other arts likewise. What then is the good of each? Surely that for whose sake everything else is done. In medicine this is health, in strategy victory, in architecture a house, in any other sphere something else, and in every action and choice the end; for it is for the sake of this that all men do whatever else they do. Therefore, if there is an end for all that we do, this will be the good achievable by action, and if there are more than one, these will be the goods achievable by action. (1097a15-1097a23)⁶.

Happiness, more than any other singular end of the human being, is distinguished from other ends, its finality being unique; in fact, contrary to what happens with many of the other finalities of action, such as power or wealth, we cannot imagine the pursuit of happiness for any other reason than happiness itself. Moreover, Aristotle also makes it clear that happiness does not constitute an “end” which can be pursued or realized when separated from our whole form of life. The life we have is not a means to that end which we call happiness. On the contrary, happiness, in Aristotle’s mind, is nothing but the name which deserves to be given to “the best possible form of life”. The question that necessarily follows is, thus, simply the following: How should this life be, the one that for each one of us deserves to be declared the best one possible?

Aristotle reinforces his idea by underlining that the proper function of the human being can never be reduced to the mere biological dimension of life, seeing that this one constitutes something which humanity shares with non-human beings, namely plants and animals. Rather, the distinctive mark of the human being, says the first Book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, consists in an active life of the element endowed with a rational principle. For Aristotle, the rational principle has two parts: one is rational in the sense of obeying the directive of reason, the other in the sense of possessing and exercising thought. To the extent to which the expression “life of the rational element” can be used with two different meanings, Aristotle seeks to explain that what is at stake is a life determined by the activity, here to be opposed to the mere possession, of the “rational element” constitutive of the human being. For the Philosopher, therefore, activity has a greater legitimacy than simple possession, so much so that it becomes a proper “function of man”. But the crucial point in the argument is the affirmation that the

⁶ Idem, p. 1734.

specific function of man consists in an activity of the soul in conformity with the rational principle, or, at least, as Aristotle says, not without it.⁷

As exposed in the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, what seems mostly to preoccupy Aristotle is precisely the idea that happiness cannot be separated from other goods; that is, happiness is not completely impermeable to the good or bad fortune of people. But the crucial point in Aristotle's reflection is, as we mentioned before, the idea that happiness cannot be separated from virtue. And this in the sense that the happy person must always be endowed with a fundamental characteristic or character. In other words, virtuous and, consequently, happy, is only the man or the woman who is able to be so throughout time, and this, for Aristotle, is so much the case that, in the end, only lasting happiness does actually deserve to be pursued.

Clearly, happiness is not something to be conquered when we seek it directly. The virtues elevate us not by the production of happiness, nor by creating in us a temporary state of happiness, but simply in the measure that they represent for us, each one in its own way, the opportunity for achieving a life of and in activity. In this sense, it seems crucial, according to Aristotle, that we do not fall in the temptation of thinking, especially when we feel happy, that happiness is something like my individual conquest. Rather, the happy person should always think that his or her happiness could very well not be the fortune finally found. This means also that nobody should enter the search for virtue only with the objective of achieving happiness, and this precisely because when that is the case neither virtue nor happiness will indeed be achieved. After all, the moral excellence, and the happiness attached to it, has basically the structure of a gift. When the question is raised whether happiness can be acquired by learning or by habituation, Aristotle clarifies that

if there is any gift of the gods to men, it is reasonable that happiness should be god-given, and most surely god-given of all human things inasmuch as it is the best. But this question would perhaps be more appropriate to another inquiry; happiness seems, however, even if it is not god-sent but comes as a result of excellence and some process of learning or training, to be among the most godlike things; for that which is the prize and end of excellence seems to be the best thing and something godlike and blessed. (1099b9-1099b17)⁸.

⁷ Cf. Idem, p. 1735.

⁸ Idem, p. 1737.

Besides requiring virtue, happiness always demands a complete life. This means that happiness cannot be conceived separated from the totality of human life, something that becomes all the more evident as we realize how easy it is that the course of any human life be changed, and this even in the cases in which we are dealing with virtuous lives. On the other hand, it is clear that Aristotle in no way wants to make us think that happiness is something equivalent to a final state of things, something to be attainable only in a distant future. Rather, for the Philosopher, happiness, much more than a point of arrival, is something that becomes what it is simply as we move on the way towards it. By definition, happiness can never be found at once, be it at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of life.—After all, this is also the reason why Aristotle is reluctant to acknowledge the possibility that happiness may easily be found in persons of a young age (cf. 1100a1).

Happiness and Virtue

Characteristically, Aristotle underlines in his ethical view the great importance of temporality as an element constitutive of what the human being actually is. That is precisely the reason why practicing virtue more than a means to reach happiness constitutes its own and most specific form of coming to be. For Aristotle, once again, happiness and virtue are truly inseparable.

The virtues constitute a series of basic dispositions which the human being acquires as he progresses on the moral path. They are the strength which permits us the accomplishment of our own way; they make up the abilities which provide us with the stability needed for us to arrive to the point of recognizing in the good of happiness the most important attribute of human life. Yet, happiness shall not be conceived as a result of our virtuous activity, but rather as something which is to be found in the essence of our own action as persons of virtue. In this regard, the most interesting thing to consider is the fact that the action we are referring to can never be truly understood if separated from a *we* capable of sharing concepts and ideas about the moral life. After all, it is certainly not by chance that Aristotle's ethical reflection in the *Nicomachean Ethics* represents just the first part of a much wider project of which the *Politics* was destined to be an essential part. In order to think through the life of the *polis*, or to educate in citizenship, we cannot forego the importance of the element that, according to Aristotle, is at the origin of the State, and justifies its cohesion, and, obviously, that is *friendship* (cf. 1155a23). Hence the exceptional importance of the concept of *philia* throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics*, something that clearly is not a matter of chance, but rather constitutes a strict exigency of the ethical discourse and of its very foundation.

The presumption is that the human being can never be understood in an isolated form. As said above, nobody can live a virtuous life alone; nobody can achieve a life of virtue just on his own account; and much less for his or her own profit. To live a life of virtue will always be something which is done with and for others. This means that the practice of virtue can never be reduced to the dimension of a mere individual act. On the contrary, the virtuous person will always be the one that thinks that s/he is able, and truly wants, to be friend. The person unable or unwilling to experience friendship will always remain unable to form the kind of character that, in the end, justifies and explains the experience of virtue.

THE “POLITICS” OF FRIENDSHIP

For Aristotle, the idea that happiness, virtue and friendship constitute profoundly interconnected realities is something that stands at the core of the ethical life. Happiness cannot be understood without our understanding the meaning of virtue; but the two of them, happiness and virtue, cannot but lead to a reflection on the meaning of friendship. After all, the moral life can only be lived in the company of others, since the presence of others is absolutely indispensable for achieving the transformation that the moral life necessarily requires from each one of us.

At the beginning of Book VIII of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle considers that

friendship...is an excellence or implies excellence, and is besides most necessary with a view to living. For without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods; even rich men and those in possession of office and of dominating power are thought to need friends most of all; for what is the use of such prosperity without the opportunity of beneficence, which is exercised chiefly and in its most laudable form towards friends? Or how can prosperity be guarded and preserved without friends? The greater it is, the more exposed is it to risk. And in poverty and in other misfortunes men think friends are the only refuge. It helps the young, too, to keep from error; it aids older people by ministering to their needs and supplementing the activities that are failing from weakness; those in the prime of life it stimulates to noble actions—'two going together'—for with friends men are more able both to think and to act. Again, a parent seems by nature to feel it for offspring and offspring for parent, not only

among men but among birds and among most animals; it is felt mutually by members of the same race, and especially by men, whence we praise lovers of their fellow men. We may see even in our travels how near and dear every man is to every other. Friendship seems too to hold states together, and lawgivers to care more for it than for justice; for unanimity seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all, and expel factions as their worst enemy; and when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality (1155a3-1155a28).⁹

Aristotle's presumption is that goods like property or power are only transformed into true goods for the human being when the person positions her/himself in the attitude of sharing such goods with others. Obviously, happiness may be understood as a good which deserves to be searched by itself; it happens, nevertheless, that this search can never be done laying aside the presence of others, especially of those we recognize as our friends. Happiness is nothing but an activity, one that only gradually comes into being and that cannot be considered to be present at the start like a piece of property. Indeed, for Aristotle,

If happiness lies in living and being active, and the good man's activity is virtuous and pleasant in itself, as we have said at the outset, and if a thing's being one's own is one of the attributes that make it pleasant, and if we can contemplate our neighbours better than ourselves and their actions better than our own, and if the actions of virtuous men who are their friends are pleasant to good men (since these have both the attributes that are naturally pleasant)—if this be so, the blessed man will need friends of this sort, since he chooses to contemplate worthy actions and actions that are his own, and the actions of a good man who is his friend have both these qualities. Further, men think that the happy man ought to live pleasantly. Now if he were a solitary, life would be hard for him; for by oneself it is not easy to be continuously active; but with others and towards others it is easier. With others therefore his activity will be more continuous, being in itself pleasant, as it ought to be for the man who is blessed; for a good man qua good delights in excellent actions and is vexed at vicious ones, as

⁹ *Idem*, p. 1825.

a musical man enjoys beautiful tunes but is pained at bad ones. A certain training in excellence arises also from the company of the good (1169b29-1170a12).¹⁰

In other words, for the Philosopher it is clear that happiness and friendship are part of the same moral equation. But as any other exacting and valuable activity, it is also obvious that the activity to which we normally refer by the name of happiness is something that requires learning and, even more, practice on the part of any human being that desires to acquire it. Such learning, however, is something that can only be properly done in the framework and in cooperation with a given community, and never by oneself alone. And this is the same as to say that without the experience of friendship the human being remains without access to that other and most fundamental experience in and of life: happiness. Let's now try to understand why this is the case.

WHAT FRIENDSHIP IS

Books VIII and IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are grounded on an essential distinction between three kinds, or levels, of friendship: friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure, and, finally, friendship based on virtue. According to the Stagirite,

There are three kinds of friendship, equal in number to the things that are lovable; for with respect to each there is a mutual and recognized love, and those who love each other wish well to each other in that respect in which they love one another. Now those who love each other for their utility do not love each other for themselves but in virtue of some good which they get from each other. So too with those who love for the sake of pleasure; it is not for their character that men love ready-witted people, but because they find them pleasant. Therefore those who love for the sake of utility love for the sake of what is good for themselves, and those who love for the sake of pleasure do so for the sake of what is pleasant to themselves, and not in so far as the other is the person loved but in so far as he is useful or pleasant. And thus these friendships are only incidental; for it is not as being the man he is that the loved person is loved, but as providing some good or pleasure. Such friendships, then, are easily dissolved, if the parties do not remain like themselves; for if the one party is no longer

¹⁰ Idem, p. 1849.

pleasant or useful the other ceases to love him (1156a6-1156a2).¹¹

Friendships based on utility are those of shorter duration, since that that is useful is not permanent, but rather tends to remain in constant mutation. Besides, friendship among young people seems oriented by pleasure, which explains why they quickly become friends and why they also quickly put an end to their friendship; “their friendship changes with the object which is considered pleasurable, and that pleasure changes rapidly” (1156b1). Contrary to these two kinds of friendship, friendship based on virtue or perfect friendship

is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in excellence; for these wish well alike to each other qua good, and they are good in themselves. Now those who wish well to their friends for their sake are most truly friends; for they do this by reason of their own nature and not incidentally; therefore their friendship lasts as long as they are good—and excellence is an enduring thing. And each is good without qualification and to his friend, for the good are both good without qualification and useful to each other. So too they are pleasant; for the good are pleasant both without qualification and to each other, since to each his own activities and others like them are pleasurable, and the actions of the good are the same or like. And such a friendship is as might be expected lasting since there meet in it all the qualities that friends should have. For all friendship is for the sake of good or of pleasure—good or pleasure either in the abstract or such as will be enjoyed by him who has the friendly feeling—and is based on a certain resemblance; and to a friendship of good men all the qualities we have named belong in virtue of the nature of the friends themselves; for in the case of this kind of friendship the other qualities also are alike in both friends, and that which is good without qualification is also without qualification pleasant, and these are the most lovable qualities. Love and friendship therefore are found most and in their best form between such men (1156b8-1156b24).¹²

According to Aristotle, there is a very precise way for distinguishing true friendship from all those forms of which, when

¹¹ Idem, p. 1826.

¹² Idem, p. 1827.

compared to this one, it can be said that they are only analogical. Therefore, perfect friendship is the one in which one wishes the friend's good just for the friend's sake. Besides, it is also important to stress that one of the more distinctive factors of perfect friendship in relation to all the other ones is the fact that it persists in time (1159b4-12). In other words, bad people are divested of the constancy needed to the formation of friendships based on character. Besides, Aristotle also adds that inside true friendship constancy grows, because good people naturally tend to help each other in the process of maintaining themselves as that which they are—at least in a proleptic way—that is, as the good persons they are.

Obviously, this also means that the virtue of constancy, to which Aristotle gives major importance in his ethical discourse, has an eminently social character. It is not something one possesses alone, but always something which is shared and which can help us in aiding each other in the process of growing and of becoming what one really is. In this sense, constancy taken as an integral part of the life of virtue excludes the common idea, though wrong, according to which the virtuous person is self-sufficient, totally capable of sustaining his or her own happiness.

Naturally, there are people who object that the Aristotelian idea of friendship based on character is so demanding that it cannot possibly be realized in our present life, particularly as it presupposes the arrival at a perfect form of virtue, that is, to such a degree of perfection that, practically, nobody will ever be able to claim the possession of it. But if that were the case, Aristotle claims, it would not make any sense to occupy ourselves with such an ethics, even though the Philosopher seems to have no problem whatsoever in recognizing that friendship based on character is, indeed, something quite rare:

One cannot be a friend to many people in the sense of having friendship of the complete type with them, just as one cannot be in love with many people at once (for love is a sort of excess, and it is the nature of such only to be felt towards one person); and it is not easy for many people at the same time to please the same person very greatly, or perhaps even to be good for him. One must, too, acquire some experience of the other person and become familiar with him, and that is very hard. But with a view to utility or pleasure it is possible that many people should please one; for many people are useful or pleasant, and these services take little time (1158a11-1158a17).¹³

¹³ *Idem*, p. 1830.

Naturally, friendships based on utility and pleasure are rather common, as is easy to see. The number of those who are pleasurable or useful always tends to be much bigger than the number of those in possession of a firm character. Moreover, the corresponding services to be expected from each one of those human types, in the case of the first two, is considerably less demanding than in the case required for perfection (1158a18). But, for sure, the fact that true friendship is rare does in no way imply its impossibility. After all, considering that friends grow together in friendship and goodness, perfect friendship becomes all the more imaginable as we come existentially to understand that it can only grow from the more imperfect forms of friendship, that is, from those forms of friendship based on pleasure and utility. In other words, the ideal form of friendship should never be declared impossible, and this in spite of the fact that every moral being can intuitively understand the considerable challenge it represents.

Being as it may, the truth is that the diverse forms of friendship are intimately related to one another, so that the distinction among them is not, and cannot be, as accentuated as Aristotle seems to say, and this for the simple reason that there is not an *a priori* reason making it impossible that each one of those less perfect forms of friendship be not developed up to the level of their specific perfection. More importantly, I believe that the idea of friendship cannot be separated from the idea of human development and of human growth, a characteristic that is most human among all the ontological properties we have. As Ortega y Gasset would say, the human being is, by nature, *gerundive*; and so is, necessarily, human friendship.

In fact, this is one of the things we need to recognize as the grounding base of the relation that explains the closeness between friendship and politics. In the first place, it is clear that politics has, also for Aristotle, the vocation of protecting friendship, as we naturally assume, for example, that the proper function of any government would include the protection of its citizens in relation to any individual or power that dares to trouble them. But the important thing for us here is rather the consideration that friendship has an eminent capacity to determine the political, and that precisely in the sense that the proper objective of all good politics, according to the Stagirite, is nothing else but the promotion of a life of virtue. This goal coincides with that of politics, whereby we can just say that its aim consists in the systematic enhancement of the conditions needed for the practice of true citizenship. In this sense, it is even possible to say that failures occurring in the political sphere present, invariably, a failure in the domain of friendship, precisely in the measure that friendship represents for Aristotle the bond that fosters life in the *polis*. The political importance of friendship, therefore, can also be seen in the Aristotelian conviction that whenever a

crisis situation occurs in the social or in the political sphere, the medicine to be prescribed, if it is really one, cannot but go through an attentive and systematic effort of reconstruction of the underlying process leading up to friendship. This is true even when that may presuppose, as certainly would be the case when serious dissention occurs, a re-start of the process from its inception. In Christian terms, the only thing equivalent would be, also in the political order, the idea, and the praxis, of reconciliation.

As an analyst of the most common situation to be found in the majority of the city-states of his time, Aristotle observes that

In the Spartan state alone, or almost alone, the legislator seems to have paid attention to questions of nurture and occupations; in most states such matters have been neglected, and each man lives as he pleases, Cyclops-fashion, 'to his own wife and children dealing law'. Now it is best that there should be a public and proper care for such matters; but if they are neglected by the community it would seem right for each man to help his children and friends towards excellence, and that they should be able to at least choose to do this (1180a25-1180a32).¹⁴

Hence the centrality, also in the inevitable political sense, of a true *paideia*, of a process of education by means of which citizens awake, in the context of the polis, for a life of virtue and friendship. But if this is the case, it is because, according to Aristotle, friendship constitutes the true foundation of the political life. And the implication is that, whenever the State fails in its proposal of realizing the specific finality of politics, the only available resource for a consistent practice of virtue will be no other but the free association of friends. But it is important to remember that, in accordance with the spirit of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, even when politics does not favour friendship, the community of friends will always remain a political option, a true resource for the good of the State.

For our Western Philosopher, therefore, virtue begins and ends in friendship. Our first fundamental task as citizens is not to become virtuous first, and then once thus established to proceed into the social world in order to search and find our true friends. Rather, friendship constitutes in itself, from the very beginning, a kind of activity through which we will find the possibility of acquiring the kind of interior consistence of character that, as such, allows us to enter relations of true and perfect friendship. In this sense, true citizenship should not be

¹⁴ Idem, p. 1865.

understood as an ideal which is unachievable in practice, but rather as a relationship in continuous growth, one that, precisely in the measure that it grows, makes possible our own transformation into beings of ever greater virtue. And this, after all, is the reason why Aristotle has no problem whatsoever in “tolerating” the most elementary forms of friendship, and this precisely in the measure that these never lose their innate potential for bringing us to the point of becoming practitioners of moral excellence, i.e., of virtue.

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CHAPTER XIV

A CALL TO HARMONY: THE VOCATION OF RELIGION IN A GLOBAL AGE

EDWARD J. ALAM

My claim is controversial. Simply put, it is this: the only genuine and lasting resource for appreciating human diversity as complementary rather than conflictual, is religion. For many, this is not only controversial, but offensive, especially in the light of a certain reading of world history that blames most of the world's conflicts and atrocities upon religion.¹ But this misreading of history stems from a misunderstanding of the essence of religion. To be sure, there have always been, still are, and probably always will be grave offenses against the dignity of human beings in the name of religion. Gandhi's famous saying concerning the Christian religion comes to mind here: "I think I may very well become a Christian someday, that is, if I ever meet one." Nietzsche, on a much more somber note, put it this way: "the last true Christian died upon the Cross." Similar sayings can be found about other religions; about Islam, for instance, from among the Sufis, or about Judaism, from the Jewish mystics. There are plenty examples of corruption disguised in the garments of religion.

Such distortions of religious energy, however, come about when religion is divorced from aesthetics, from conscience, and from the life of the mind, in short, from philosophy. But to say this is not to suggest that beauty, or the good, or the true, can stand on their own. Aesthetics divorced from Ethics and Logic becomes mere sentimentalism—a destructive form of romanticism. Ethics divorced from Logic and Aesthetics degenerates into mere legalism and oppressive moralism, and Logic divorced from Ethics and Aesthetics becomes dogmatism, reducing reason to a sterile and cruel instrumentality that destroys everything in its myopic and unrelenting path. This latter radical

¹ As Charles Taylor writes, "think of the long line that runs from Aztec sacrifice, through Torquemada, to Bin Laden..." See Taylor's *A Secular Age* (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 548. In this regard it is curious, to say the least, how often the failings of religious personalities are held up for the world to see as a proof of the futility (and even immorality) of religion, and how seldom the question concerning whether the atrocities of professed atheists, Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pat, are linked to their irreligious (atheistic) convictions, is publicly discussed.

rationalism in particular is perhaps the most dangerous. In this regard, someone once defined insanity not as losing your mind, but as losing everything except your mind. Rationalism has its own tragic track record.

The sages from my own Southwest Asian Syriac tradition would say that the mind was meant to be wedded to the body, just as a bride is wedded to her bridegroom. Extending this analogy, we could say that just as the bride is not bride without her bridegroom and vice-versa, so, too, the soul or the mind is not what it is without the body and vice versa. And this union must be ordered toward a third reality, and must bear fruit as a unified life, the couple, the family, forever renewing itself in active and receptive relation to other lives, other couples, other families, to form eventually communities, societies and civilizations. The only other option is extinction at all levels. My choice of this analogy is intended to shed light on my claim concerning religion because of all human institutions, it is the institution of marriage between a man and a woman that is the central institution at the heart of all human society, and one that has forever been profoundly linked to religion; even in the most secular societies, the sacred connotations associated with marriage can still be easily detected.

This being said, it seems that a new paradigm for understanding religion is needed in these global times when religious traditions and values are challenging and enriching one another in new and perhaps unprecedented ways. In order to get a sense of what such a paradigm might look like, it is necessary to go back to those shifts in Western civilization whereby the very foundations of religion, at least the Abrahamic religions, were questioned and challenged in new and powerful ways. Those who value religion ought not dismiss these challenges, but should look for what was true in them, and should use the insights therein to help articulate what the new paradigm for religion in these global times might be.

NINETEENTH CENTURY CHALLENGE TO RELIGION²

With the publications of Comte's *The Positive Philosophy* in 1848 and Darwin's *Origin of Species* a decade later, a steady stream of philosophers, natural scientists, sociologists, psychologists, historians, anthropologists, and eventually theologians, grew more and more

² I am using here some of the same material I had prepared for a presentation I gave on the "Role of Religion in the Dialogue of Civilizations: A Middle Eastern Perspective" at a local conference in Lebanon at my university, Notre Dame University-Louaize, on 3 June 2009.

confident in their predictions regarding the “end of religion.”³ Even as great a philosopher as Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) ends up chanting the “end of religion” mantra. This is very difficult to explain considering that he was not impressed with the 20th century scientific arguments against religion rooted in the systems of Comte and Darwin. When it came to science, Sartre, like Heidegger, argued rather for the “superiority of natural science during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” since, as Heidegger himself says, and Sartre agrees, “in [those] times, all the scientists were philosophers.”⁴

In any case, the point here is not to investigate why Sartre joined the “end of religion” bandwagon while rejecting the main reasons why the bandwagon began in the first place, but to point out that the causes behind the move away from religion were more complex and varied than just positivism and scientism, as the recent breathtaking work of Charles Taylor has convincingly shown.⁵ And although his work focuses exclusively on the last five hundred years of what is called “Latin Christendom”, it is still the case that Taylor’s accomplishments are groundbreaking when it comes to the goal of articulating what a new paradigm for religion might be in our global times, since the broad outline of causes he analyzes could also be valid in the case of any decline in any religion in any era.

At any rate, one thing this decline has effected in the West, and arguably in those parts of the world that follow the West, is a deep and sincere search for life’s most pressing questions—questions that really matter—questions about justice, about peace, about violence, about death, about beauty, about what it means to be human. Of course these questions are the traditional questions of philosophy. But philosophy, especially Western philosophy, has a tendency to remain in the abstract. Religion, on the other hand, is the incarnation of philosophy, or it can be, if it responds to its call to cultivate harmony between body and mind, husband and wife, parents and children, families and communities, and in our global times, between and among civilizations.

This, I believe, is the new paradigm appropriate for today: the good, the true, and the beautiful find their concrete unity in religion—as long as religion is engaged in that authentic search for the fullness of

³ I am cognizant of the fact that these are not the only causes for this “end of religion” movement; the case is much more complex. In fact, as Charles Taylor has pointed out in his massive and epoch making work, *A Secular Age*, we also find in nineteenth century Europe and America, instances of significant increase in religious practice and devotion

⁴ See Martin Heidegger’s *Basic Writings* ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1977) 271-272. From the essay titled “Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics”.

⁵ See Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*.

Being, for Plenitude, acutely aware of the innate limits of such a search. And this is the great opportunity in these present global times: when confronted with authentic searching and all this has achieved over the ages in art, poetry, literature, and philosophy, one is constantly reminded of the limits of one's own search and is compelled to be enriched by the striving and searching of others, ever aware that in this present world, no fullness is possible. That is to say that without a concrete eschatology, no philosophy can ever hope to gain religious status. This is why the most influential philosophies and religions over the ages have all had an elaborate eschatology, and where it was lacking, was eventually supplied; this is one way in which Daoism and Buddhism complemented Confucianism in China, and is one of the main reason why the Abrahamic religions continue to have such profound appeal—even in those parts of the world that are secularized. Marcel Gauchet's famous prediction uttered three decades ago that "the third millennium will either be a secular age, or it will be nothing at all," has not really panned out, for it seems that there is a post-secular age now emerging that is recognizing the importance of religion in new ways. Whether one believes it is sincere or simply manipulative politics, we have reason to pause when we here from France, that symbolic embodiment of secularism, such statements as "secular morality ["*morale laïque*"] always runs the risk of wearing itself out or changing into fanaticism when it isn't backed up by hope that aspires to the infinite."⁶ And if that weren't enough, France's president went on to claim that morality becomes trivial if "stripped of any ties to transcendence."⁷

Whatever the motives, these are clear indications that religion is at the heart of what it means to be human; its vocation is to bring harmony—a lofty but crucial vocation; if the world's great religions do not live up to this vocation, then appreciating human diversity as complementary rather than conflictual seems certainly bound to fail.

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⁶ This is a quote from a speech given in Rome by the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, when he visited the Pope in December, 2008. The speech is well known and widely quoted in newspapers and on the web. See <http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/2840>. Accessed on July 1 2009.

⁷ *Ibid.*

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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 Research 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.

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A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

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