Self-awareness of Life in the New Era

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication

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Introduction

Peter Jonkers

The papers in this volume were originally presented at two different meetings on the same theme, viz. self-awareness of life in the new era. The first one was a conference organized by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, taking place in Shanghai in July 2017; the second event was a roundtable during the World Congress of Philosophy, hold in Beijing in August 2018.

Self-awareness of life can roughly be defined as the attention for one's internal spiritual as well as external social and political life. Inner and outer human life should not be considered as separate spheres of being, but rather as two aspects of the totality of life. Because of its existential nature self-awareness of life should primarily be approached in a non-theoretical and even non-conceptual way. These conditions constitute a major challenge to philosophy around the world "in the new era." Given the fact that self-awareness of life has been an important theme of reflection in many philosophical traditions, the ongoing dominance of Western philosophy, characterized by a theoretical and conceptual approach and by making all kinds of clear-cut distinctions, is often considered by other or non-Western philosophical traditions as an impediment to approach this theme appropriately.

Based on this general description of self-awareness of life and the different ways to deal with it, the contributors in this volume attempt to examine this idea not only from the angle of various philosophical disciplines, such as philosophical anthropology, ethics, philosophy of religion, (inter)cultural philosophy and social philosophy, but also from a plurality of cultural and philosophical perspectives, in particular, Chinese, Indian, African and Western. This variety of cultural perspectives and philosophical approaches expresses a common concern, which underlies all the papers of this volume, namely, that Western philosophy tends to ignore questions about self-awareness of life and if it does pay attention to these matters, it risks to do so in a reductionist way. Therefore, notwithstanding the perennial value of Western philosophy, it has to be complemented by other approaches, many of which originate, unsurprisingly, in non-Western philosophical and cultural traditions. This volume aims to give a modest contribution to this goal.

The first part introduces the general theme by exploring what the expression "self-awareness of life" means and by examining the role it plays in various philosophical disciplines and cultural traditions. This part

also answers the important question: if and how self-awareness of life is able to move beyond individualism and collectivism. Peter Jonkers in his paper "On the Self-awareness of Life in Western Philosophy," shows that the theme of self-awareness of life and the non-theoretical approach connected with it are not completely absent in Western philosophy. Contrary to the wide-spread idea that ancient Western philosophy was purely about theoretical systems of thought, Jonkers argues that it was rather seen as a reasoned way of life and as a spiritual exercise aimed at wisdom. Hence, the most important philosophical question was "How should I live?" and the answer to this question consisted in a theoretical examination of the possible answers as well as in the effort of putting them into practice. This approach is also present in contemporary philosophy, for instance, in the philosophy of Charles Taylor as Jonkers mentions in his paper. Taylor criticizes the dominance of theoretical and purely conceptual thinking in the philosophy of the Enlightenment and its separation between the self's inner (emotional) nature and outer physical existence. He argues that, in our times, there is an aspiration towards a reunification of these oppositions and dualisms and a striving for a harmonious vision of the whole of reality. The self is not a self-sufficient substance or a radically autonomous subject, but only gets meaning against inescapable horizons.

He Xirong in her paper, "The Ethical Turn of Contemporary Philosophy and its Significance," pleads for a transformation of the current paradigm of theoretical philosophy into an ethical or practical one. In fact, this transformation has been already underway, as new research-questions and methods are emerging in various philosophical disciplines. The focus is on concrete people and their behavior and on the fact that the ultimate goal of human beings is to gain awareness of life. This transformation does not only concern the way of doing philosophy or a specific philosophical discipline, but also has implications for the classification of philosophy, the way of forming philosophical concepts. He Xirong examines the internal and external reasons of this ethical turn and concludes that this turn is the result of the crisis of modernity and the problems of foundational, theoretical philosophy. These transformations have, among others, a deep impact on the relationship between contemporary Western and traditional Chinese philosophy, since the latter has always maintained the unity of metaphysics and ethics. Through such a paradigm shift, philosophy can become more open to a reflection on self-awareness of life from various perspectives.

Yu Xuanmeng in his paper "On the Issue of the Human Being and the Ground of Philosophy," highlights the differences between Western and Chinese philosophy regarding the issue of self-awareness of life. For the Western tradition, freedom and equality are the essence of a human being, who experiences these values in her life. This essentialist approach results in a rather static idea of the human being, which is further

strengthened by the predominance of theory over praxis and of rationality over emotion. By contrast, according to the Chinese philosophical tradition, a human being has her destiny bestowed by heaven. The proper way to be a human being is, first of all, a matter of praxis, which means to follow the order of heaven, i.e. to follow the Dao. Yet, because there is no clear definition of what the Dao actually means, it can only be discovered by engaging oneself in life, in short, by learning to be human. These two different views are based on different philosophical assumptions: in terms of Western philosophy, it is an understanding of things where a human being finds her (eternal) essence, whereas for the Chinese, it is knowing the beginning of how human beings live, which is called "knowing the incipiency," i.e. the slight beginning of the movement or the procedure, and the earliest indications of good or evil. This approach of the human being in Chinese philosophy is based on the fundamental conviction that the whole world is a process of production.

Michael Zichy in his paper on "What is a *Menschenbild*? Introducing a Fruitful German Concept," analyses an important assumption of self-awareness of life, namely, a universal characteristic of individuals and societies. The (German) term "*Menschenbild*" refers to an individual person's, a group of people's or a whole society's understanding of the human being as such, thus it is plausible that every one of us has a "*Menschenbild*." In particular, this term indicates that every one of us has a set of strong convictions on what it means to be human. These convictions lie at the bottom of the epistemic and moral orders, by which we conceive and sort out the world. They are also powerful, because they mold us. Zichy introduces a differentiation between individual, group-specific and societal "*Menschenbilder*," and explains how they have important practical functions in our daily life. The characteristic of the societal "*Menschenbild*" in pluralistic societies is that the shared (positive and negative) convictions are abstract and thin with regard to their content, but these convictions are the core of the group-specific and the individual "*Menschenbilder*"; they can be qualified as higher-order typifications.

The second part of this volume is devoted to the question if and how self-awareness of life can be learned. This topic is closely related to the general theme of the World Congress of Philosophy in 2018, "Learning to be Human." If self-awareness of life requires human beings to pay attention to their inner spiritual and outer social and political life, an important follow-up question could be whether philosophy can provide ideas that help people become (more) self-aware of life. In fact, the answers to this question manifest how philosophy can indeed resume its task as a school of (practical) wisdom, which has been a common vocation of philosophers throughout the ages and in cultures over the globe. In his last

paper, "Learning for Self and Learning for Others: A Postmodern Reflection," before his sudden passing, Vincent Shen (1949-2018) criticizes the modern conception of human subjectivity by reexamining the Confucian ideas of the relationships between the self and (many) others. According to Shen's interpretation of Confucius and of Western postmodern philosophy, he thinks that in the process of learning and becoming human many others play a constitutive role. Taking relatedness and responsiveness into account, we have to make a change from the concept of the self as pure and absolute subjectivity to a concept of self-in-the-making, for one achieves one's subjectivity in the process of being in relation and in response to many others. Another change needed is to make a shift from a predominantly intellectual idea of subjectivity, as in modern Western philosophy, to a moral and artistic subjectivity in the Confucian sense. The latter is able to refer to the ultimate reality in one's moral experience. The importance of many others in the process of learning to be human can be seen from three levels: human desire as the direction of the good of many (related) others, the formation of virtue, as the ability to step out of one's self-enclosure and be generous to many others, and the ontological level of the connectivity of a person with other humans and all beings. These can lead to a more balanced relationship between "learning for self" and "learning for (many) others," which is a prerequisite for a true self-awareness of life.

Yasien Mohamed highlights another aspect of the question how to learn self-awareness of life, namely love and friendship. In his paper, "Relearning to be Human through Love and Friendship: The Contribution of Islam and Christianity," he compares the contributions of three classical philosophical traditions, viz. Greek, Islamic and Christian. Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* distinguishes three kinds of friendship, which correspond to the different object of love. The motives of friendship are either based on love for utility, pleasure, or a person's character. In Aristotle's view, only the last kind of love is enduring. An important characteristic of this kind of love is that it is reciprocal, although not necessarily in the same proportion. In sum, Aristotle sees friendship as an essential component of a flourishing life, and the highest true friendship is between two virtuous persons, who love each other because of their goodness. Mohamed then analyzes how Aristotle's views on love and friendship have influenced Islamic and Christian thinkers, in particular, Miskawayh, an 11th century Islamic philosopher, and Stephen Post, a contemporary Christian thinker. Both have broadened and extended the concept of love and friendship beyond that of families, friends, tribes and classes. According to Miskawayh, specific forms of familiar friendships, such as love between mother and child, friend to friend, and pupil to teacher, could help preparing the person for a wider application of love towards the unfamiliar and the stranger, while Post takes a different

approach to analyze the nature of love. He explores the intersection of science, human experience and the underlying metaphysics of divine love. He tries to build a scientific basis for unselfish and unlimited love rooted in the Christian ethical tradition of *agape*. Similar to Miskawayh, but not to Aristotle, Post stresses the extensivity of love to all people. This universality of love has its biological foundation in the almost instinctive love of parents for their children, and can be elevated by *agape*, where love is ennobled through the love for God. Post enriches his argument in favor of unlimited love with social scientific findings to show a correlation between intrinsic religiousness and altruistic behavior.

The third part is devoted to the value of self-awareness of life. As a preliminary question, Bo Meinertsen in his paper "In Search of 'Universal' Values to Live By" examines whether this value, as many other values we live by can legitimately be qualified as "universal." Although controversial, this question is especially important in today's increasingly globalized world. Meinertsen identifies three problems concerning the understanding of universal values: 1) how to restrict the number of universal values against the backdrop of the great diversity of values in cultures across the world; 2) how to deal with their – apparent – incompatibility; and 3) how to guarantee an unbiased idea of values of other cultures or civilizations given our limited or even non-existent familiarity with them. Meinertsen proposes to search for "universal" values by using insights of social sciences, in particular, cross-cultural psychology. Based on this empirical research he concludes that there are ten types of specific universal values: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity and security; and six core virtues: wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence. Meinertsen then singles out the four most important ethical, rather than political or socio-economic values, and supplements them with two values that are correlated with a reduction of conflicts between different civilizations. This results in a list of six universal values: wisdom and knowledge, respect for the uniqueness of individuals, communities and nature, tolerance, benevolence, gratitude, appreciation of beauty.

Li Qin in her paper "Reflections on and Implications of Hofstede's Individualism and Collectivism Dimension" takes a similar empirical approach as Meinertsen's regarding a particular value, which inherently belongs to self-awareness of life, namely, the individualism/collectivism divide. She examines the impact of this divide on the feeling of loneliness by using Hofstede's Cultural Dimension theory to define five dimensions to understand differences in national cultures. The Individualism/Collectivism index, the most influential of these dimensions, provides visual scores of various degrees of individualism in different societies. Empirical

studies from different European societies have demonstrated that the individualism and collectivism divide can, indeed, shed light on the understanding of loneliness. Since loneliness is a prevalent social issue across the world nowadays, it is important to recognize the consequences of physical and mental health. Hofstede's research on the individualism/collectivism divide helps us understand a counterintuitive research-result that people in collectivistic societies are more likely to feel lonely compared with individualistic ones. This finding enables us to answer an important practical question that is directly relevant to self-awareness of life: what kind of social support (emotional or instrumental) and interaction (with families or friends) can serve as a buffer against loneliness in different, i.e. individualist or collective societies?

Balaganapathi Devarakonda in his paper on "Relearning to be at Peace: Exploring Altnerative Conceptions" examines peace as a value. Peace is an excellent exemplification of self-awareness of life, since it is a nec-essary condition for inner spiritual as well as outer social and political life, for individuated as well as all forms of life. Devarakonda approaches the value of peace through a comparison between Western and Eastern, in particular Indian, perspectives. Mapping contemporary discussions on the concept of peace provides an understanding of peace from both external and internal, and from both individual and group perspectives. The latter one as the dominant stresses that the individual can live in peace only when there is social or political peace. This view assumes that peace is a state of tranquility or quietness facilitated by a homogenous state without any divergence and difference. It also distinguishes between negative peace or the absence of structural violence and positive peace or social justice. Yet this dominant view is limited because of its binary conception of peace (peace is the absence of war), its obsession with external peace alone (peace between two groups, societies, states, etc.), and its under-standing of the group-level peace as the precondition for individual peace. In contrast to this dominant assumption, the other approach of peace re-verses the relationship between the group and the individual, and empha-sizes that individual peace contributes to peace of the (social or political) group. Devarakonda develops this alternative conception of peace in more detail with the help of the Buddhist conception of *brahma-vihārās*. Ac-cording to this view, the cause of suffering lies in our craving for outward objects and in our misplaced presumption that achieving them would lead us to happiness and peace. Hence, the issue of suffering and life devoid of peace is to be addressed primarily at the individual level and from an inward perspective. It is only by practicing the inner culture of peace of the individual that the external peace of institutions is possible. To realize this inner peace, Buddhism prescribes four cardinal virtues or *brahma-vihārās: metta* (benevolence, friendly feeling), *karuna* (compassion),

mudita (empathetic joy) and *upekkha* (equanimity). All social relation-ships are based on one of these moral attitudes (*vihārās),* which represent the highest (*brahma*) conditions of social well-being.

The last two papers of this part discuss the relationship between self-awareness of life with the most fundamental human value, namely, humanism or human dignity. William Barbieri in his paper "Human Dignity and Intercultural Dialogue: Problems and Prospects" starts with a brief introduction to the notion of human dignity and its current impor-tance in contemporary global law, politics and morality. Barbieri argues that human dignity is the preeminent ethico-political value operating on the international stage at present. It is universally considered as both egali-tarian and inherent in human personhood. Insofar as self-awareness of life is a truly intercultural notion, it is essential to examine to what extent its fundamental underlying value, viz. human dignity, can be employed in different cultural settings. Barbieri sketches some of the principal prob-lems in attempt of developing a notion of intercultural understandings in the Western history of ideas. First, there is the internal challenge, which takes the form of contending invocations of human dignity rooted in as-sumptions of conflicting cultures within the broad tradition of dignitarian thought in the West. Second, there is the interreligious challenge, which revolves around the question of how well human dignity, rooted in Greco-Roman, Christian and Enlightenment thought, can be translated into, or find rough equivalents within, the idioms and intellectual structures of other religious systems. Finally, there is the cross-cultural challenge, which is presented by the broad civilizational divergences with respect to the mores and normative patterns of contemporary societies (e.g. the po-tentially incompatible differences among dignity cultures, honor cultures and face cultures). The author offers some important observations about promising opportunities to develop helpful intercultural dialogue in terms of human dignity and its cultivation and protection. First, although differ-ent cultural formations are expected to have internal differentiations, their internally anchored understandings of human dignity can be constructed. Second, shared intercultural learning about dignity is an undertaking, which brings many benefits, not least among them that the process itself enhances human dignity. Finally, the emerging scholarly field of visual ethics may provide a sort of lingua franca for unearthing commonalities associated with human dignity while helping to remedy our under-devel-oped appreciation of its aesthetic and bodily dimensions.

Seema Bose in her paper "Humanism Revisited" discusses a com-parison between two historical representatives of humanism, namely, Giuseppe Mazzini and Peter Kropotkin. Both have a humanist tinge in so far as they treat the theme of human beings and their nature. Mazzini criticizes the individualism of the so-called freedom rights and empha-sizes the importance of association and harmony between self-choosing,

right-acting and self-rule. He prioritizes duties over rights. He considers education as the first duty, because it helps human beings rightly choose between good and evil. Finally, Mazzini was hailed for combining nationalism with humanism, since he considers a nation as a living task and embraces universal brotherhood. For Kropotkin mutual aid rather than competition in the struggle for existence has been the chief factor of evolution and the basis for a just society. He gives a vision of a world where humanity would reign supremely and there would be no divide between haves and have-nots, as justice is impossible without equality. Kropotkin thinks that human beings may act sinfully, but at the same time, they have the ability to transcend evil because human beings are innately good. Both Mazzini and Kropotkin's total oeuvre project an image of a social order in which injustice, slavery and inhumanity will be abolished.

The final part of this volume discusses a number of specific historical and systematic questions regarding self-awareness of life. In line with the plea for a non-theoretical approach of this self-awareness (see above) Dan Chitoiu shows the limits of objective knowledge in his paper, "Reality, Life and the Limits of Objective Knowledge." He analyzes the great shift from the Aristotelian, predominantly a qualitative paradigm for the investigation of reality to the Cartesian-Galilean, predominantly a quantitative one, based on mathematics. Such a shift was an important step forward, since the new paradigm provided an explanation of nature/reality and enabled the emergence of modern technology. It was also a step backward because this paradigm implied a straying from the understanding of *life* and the concrete phenomenon. Augustine developed an alternative, quite influential way of describing reality, namely, to observe the whole of reality based on an intellectual, blissful view of God in this life. In fact, these two paradigms existed simultaneously until the 19th century; both shared an epistemological optimism regarding the capacities of the intellect to reach truth unequivocally, which lasted until the mid of the 20th century. The author argues that the Cartesian-Galilean, distanced view of reality is problematic in the case of (self-)awareness of life, since life is present everywhere and surrounds us in many forms. We, as human beings, are embedded in life as living organisms. In conclusion, Chitoiu pleads for an enlarged paradigm for the understanding of reality, namely a broader and deeper understanding of life. This broader perspective is offered by spiritual and cultural traditions, which have accumulated many observations and reflections on life, and form an inexhaustible resource for understanding life philosophically.

Prakriti Mukherjee in her paper, "The Concept of Education in Tagore and Confucius: A Comparitive Analysis," argues that, since both authors failed to come to terms with their contemporary ideologies of education, they had to start to employ their respective wisdom traditions

to create alternatives. Tagore developed a system of education based on his own interpretation of ancient Indian wisdom. It aims at developing human creativity and a harmonious relationship with Nature. According to Tagore, the ultimate essence of the human being is harmony and an ever widening consciousness based on the surplus already present in the human being. For Tagore the purpose of education is to create an ethics and other social concerns, because education is a path of self-discovery and in so doing the pupil discovers the harmony in the world. Similar to Tagore, Confucius initiated in China a novel educational system with a rather pragmatic outlook, in which he tried to emphasize perfection, rituals and ultimately Heaven. Education for Confucius involves cultivating one's character, just as crafting something fine from raw materials. Both teachers developed a view for the student to understand the concept of being a disciple; that is, we learn to be human and remain students throughout our life, for this enables us to practice what we have learned throughout our life.

Chen Changshen in his paper, "Wittgenstein on Taste and Genius," illustrates that Wittgenstein explored the concepts of "taste" and "genius" from the perspective of aesthetic appreciation and artistic creation respectively. The early Wittgenstein denied the existence of aesthetic judgments presented by propositions, but affirmed the artistic features of "expression." The later Wittgenstein emphasized the regulatory characteristics of aesthetic judgments, structural characteristics and genius. For him genius means originality and requires excellent character; courage, followed by perseverance, attention and sincerity, is the primary characteristic of the genius.

Bao Wenxin in his paper, "The Transcendent Sphere and Revolutionary Morality: A Problem of Fung Yu-lan's Theory of Sphere," discusses the question of political radicalism, which Fung Yu-lan of the Modern New Confucianism often associates with self-awareness of life. The main aim of this paper is to examine the complicated relationship between political radicalism and its philosophical system by means of an analysis of the work of Fung, especially his theory of the transcendent sphere. Fung describes this sphere as a serene and peaceful spiritual state, which seems to be incompatible with political activism. Bao Wenxin argues that if we go through the logics of New Rationalistic Confucianism, we find that a person in the transcendent sphere might be a Confucian Sage in the traditional sense or a revolutionary hero in the modern sense. However, the concept of revolutionary morality is inconsistent with Fung's definition of morality, which is the inherent problem of New Rationalistic Confucianism. Against the backdrop of the abuse of instrumental rationality and the decline of the humanistic spirit in modern times, Bao Wenxin sees the importance of discussing self-awareness of life. However, the example of Fung reminds us that the possible relationship

between the superb sphere of living and political radicalism is an aspect to which we need pay attention when discussing self-awareness of life.

The final paper by Yan Jing, "On Manuel Castells' Identity Theory," discusses various new conceptions of identity in the context of the global network society. The identity theory includes legitimizing identity, resistance identity and project identity. The legitimizing identity is formed by the elites, but the fading away of the sovereignty of nation states has caused the disintegration of this kind of identity. The repelled people have formed the resistance identity around traditional cultural resources, while resisting the network society and global capitalism. Their actions have spilt society from the inside. Meanwhile the networking of society and power relationships has provided the conditions for the resistance identity to evolve into project identity, which facilitates the reconstruction of society. What happens now is that during the process of disintegration of legitimizing identity, the ability of the resistance identity to reintegrate society has facilitated the process of this kind of identity to transform into project identity. Castells considers the fading away of the sovereignty of nation states to be the presupposition of the rise of other identity types. However, as the strengthening of the logic of nation states in the process of anti-globalization is trending, Yan Jing thinks that identity theory should be put under the framework of nation states and the reconstruction of human society.

Part I

Introducing Self-awareness of Life

1.
Self-awareness of Life in Western Philosophy

Peter Jonkers

Introduction

In order to introduce the theme of this paper, I will start with a short analysis of the meaning of the concept "self-awareness of life," which is the central theme of this volume. According to Bao Wenxin, self-awareness of life is commonly used as a general characteristic of Chinese philosophy to distinguish it from Western philosophy. For Bao Western philosophy focuses on the exploration and conquering of the outer world, while Chinese philosophy emphasizes the importance of inner spiritual life and hence pays attention to questions about morality, value and meaning. He argues that "self-awareness of life" not only refers to the order and richness of one's own inner spiritual life, but also to outer social and political life.[1] In a similar vein, He Xirong opposes the binary character of Western philosophy, resulting in antitheses as those between subject and object, phenomenon and substance, reason and perception, etc., to Chinese thinking, which has a holistic view on human beings. This means that human beings are aware of their existence as an interactive process with their environment, both natural and social. Hence, self-awareness of life is crucial to see human life, society and eventually nature as a whole, because it helps people to enhance their living quality and to cultivate a perfect personality.[2]

Yu Xuanmeng extends the meaning of self-awareness of life to the very nature of philosophy, that is, to concretize philosophy's self-definition as the love of wisdom in an exemplary way.[3] Self-awareness of life emphasizes the importance of inner spiritual life and rejects the separation between inner 'self' and outer 'life'. Similar to the above-mentioned authors, Yu Xuanmeng argues that Chinese thinking has been more loyal to this ideal than Western philosophy. From the discussions between Plato

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[1] Bao Wenxin, "The Transcendent Sphere and Revolutionary Morality: A Problem of Fung Yu-lan's Theory of Sphere," in the last chapter of this volume.

[2] He Xirong, "On the Non-Theoretical Characteristics of Chinese Traditional Philosophy from the 'Zhong Dao' (the Mean Way)," in *Philosophy and the Life World,* eds. He Xirong, Peter Jonkers and Shi Yongze (Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2017), 185f.

[3] Yu Xuanmeng, "On the Self-awareness of Life," in *Philosophy and the Life World*, eds. He Xirong, Peter Jonkers, Shi Yongze (Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2017), 161.

and Aristotle on the true nature of human knowledge, to the "epistemological turn" in modern philosophy and the suspension of the existence of the external world by phenomenology of the twentieth century, Western philosophy has been marked by a rather one-sided focus on conceptual, more specifically, theoretical thinking and universal knowledge. Especially in modern philosophy, this focus has led to a separation between the knower and the known: the knowing subject conceives of itself as an original objectifying and representing activity, separated by an abys from the known object. As something passive the known object is open to objectification or representation by an objectifying and representing subject.[4]

According to Yu Xuanmeng, this kind of theoretical and universal knowledge is unable to cover the whole of reality, since "there are many things that we cannot know through knowledge, but should nevertheless be understood in our life. Something might be unknowable but understandable, most probably because it is not knowledge of some object, but rather the condition of one's own self."[5] This kind of non-conceptual, non-theoretical understanding becomes manifest in the awareness of oneself as the totality of life. For Yu, this is the main theme of traditional Chinese philosophy,[6] which results in a view of human beings who take into account different dimensions of practical life in their private and social existence. This approach is especially important when philosophy is dealing with the most important question of all, namely, the meaning of life. According to Yu, the advantage of Chinese over Western philosophy is that it is able to offer an encompassing answer to the question of the meaning of life. Chinese philosophy rests on a broader, non-theoretical understanding of reality, which does not aim at universal knowledge but rather gives a central role to a person's acting at a particular moment of an existential situation, which is always changing. Fox example, Confucius "did not want to develop a general (or universal) knowledge separately from the heaven, the earth and the human being, because such a knowledge may be divided into different areas and hence cannot cover the whole of reality. Instead, he focused on the issue of 'change', which can integrate heaven, earth and human beings into one process."[7]

I agree with the above quoted authors that the predominant answers to the question of the meaning of life in the history of Western philosophy

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[4] See Martin Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," in Idem, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1950), 98-103.

[5] Yu Xuanmeng, "On the Self-awareness of Life," 162. In his view, the early philosophy of Heidegger is the only one that has been able to escape from the conceptual predicament of Western philosophy. See Ibid., 166f.

[6] Yu Xuanmeng, "On the Self-awareness of Life," 168ff.

[7] Yu Xuanmeng, "On the Self-awareness of Life," 172.

have been conceptual and theoretical, so that some important aspects of this question, such as how the human person responds to change and contingency in life, have been lost. As I argued elsewhere, an important explanation of this loss is that Western philosophy has adopted, especially since the beginning of modernity, the paradigm of scientific rationality, and has extended this kind of knowledge to all domains of reality, including the human person and the world in which he lives.[8] Yet, although this way of thinking is still predominant, many contemporary Western philosophers have become aware of its fundamental shortcomings and, hence, have probed alternative avenues to uncover what it means that a person acts at a particular moment in an existential situation. In order to substantiate this claim, two of these alternative avenues will be explored in this paper. The first stems from a French historian of philosophy, Pierre Hadot, who interprets ancient Western philosophy as a way of life and a spiritual exercise, and retrieves these characteristics in some prominent modern and contemporary philosophies, such as those of Spinoza and Wittgenstein. The second avenue stems from Charles Taylor, a Canadian philosopher who has analyzed the sources of the modern idea of the "self." His main thesis is that, after the Enlightenment with its naturalistic view of the human person, the "self" sees itself nowadays as a close connection between his inner, spiritual, and his outer, physical nature. In the final section of this paper, I will examine some implications of these insights for the self-awareness of life, thereby assuming that they will prove to be relevant to other philosophical traditions and will lead to an enriching dialogue on this very important question. The setup of this paper implies that, although I am convinced that these two Western approaches bear important similarities with the ways in which other traditions, including Chinese philosophy, conceive of self-awareness of life, an elaborate comparison between them falls outside the scope of this paper.[9]

Self-awareness of Life in Ancient Western Philosophy

Although ancient Western philosophy in general and the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle in particular are often portrayed as theoretical

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[8] See Peter Jonkers, "A Revaluation of Wisdom as a Way to Reconnect Philosophy with the Life-world." in *Philosophy and the Life World*, eds. He Xirong, Peter Jonkers, Shi Yongze (Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2017), 44-51.

[9] Interestingly, Hadot highlights the correspondence between the wisdom of ancient philosophy and Eastern (religious) traditions, such as Buddhism and Chinese philosophy. See Pierre Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* (Paris, Gallimard, 1995), 351, 418ff. I am grateful to Dr. Hu Yeping of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy for drawing my attention to the work of Pierre Hadot and his approach of (ancient) philosophy as a way of life.

and conceptual, Pierre Hadot argues that they are primarily reasoned ways of life, aimed at wisdom and hence consisting of permanent spiritual exercises to reach this goal. A life devoted to the love of wisdom does not come about as a result of a purely theoretical activity, as if this love were only a practical annex, and subordinate to theoretical knowledge. Rather, living a philosophical life constitutes the very essence of the whole philosophical endeavor, and comprises theoretical as well as practical exercises.[10] To put it differently, philosophy has its origin in a person's existential choice for a specific way of life, which needs to be uncovered and justified with the help of reason. This indicates that a philosophical way of life is a unity of theoretical discourse and praxis: philosophical discourse has a practical aspect insofar as it tries to convince the listener or the reader to choose for a specific way of life, and philosophical praxis has a theoretical aspect insofar as it is a matter of contemplation, including a critical examination of the chosen way of life.[11] Moreover, these existential choices are not made in solitude, but rather in philosophical schools, which educate their pupils in a specific way of life.[12] The final goal of the education in the philosophical schools of Greek and Roman antiquity is wisdom, and in order to acquire it, one has to be educated theoretically in divine, i.e. eternal and unchangeable truths (the Greek word "theory" means "beholding the divine"), and trained in practical and political knowhow. As Hadot argues, "although philosophy is the activity, through which the philosopher is trained in wisdom, this training necessarily does not only consist in a certain way of speaking and discussing, but also in a certain way of being, acting and viewing the world."[13] This education and training are given by a master, who is the head of a philosophical school, and whom the pupils see as the transcendent norm of this or that specific way of life. They learn to ask themselves "what would the sage do in this or that specific situation?" and the different answers to this question define the individual schools of philosophy.

When we focus on the development of wisdom as the ultimate goal of a philosophical way of life, the introduction of the word "philosophy" in the fourth century BC implied a decisive turn in the understanding of the sage, and brought about a deep suspicion against all pretended incarnations of wisdom in the sage. Ideally, the true sage is someone "who is aware of himself as a self that, through his power over his judgments and through orienting and suspending them, can guarantee his perfect inner

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[10] Ibid., 17f.

[11] This is an illustration of Socrates' famous saying: "The unexamined life is not with living for a human being." See Plato, *Apology* 38a5-6.

[12] Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?,* 18.

[13] Ibid., 334.

freedom and independence of all things."[14] It is not surprising that all philosophical schools are aware of the superhuman character of wisdom, and of the immense distance that separates ordinary, human wisdom from divine wisdom.[15] Plato makes a sharp distinction between the perfect knowledge of the Gods, who possess true wisdom and therefore do not need to philosophize, and most humans, whose wisdom is confined to the running of their daily affairs. Thus, between the ideal of divine wisdom and the reality of ordinary wisdom as a practical knowhow, we see the emergence of philosophy, which is the essentially *human* exercise to attain *divine* wisdom.[16] This gap between the human efforts to attain wisdom and the divine character of true wisdom explains why philosophy can never be completed and why it is a never ending activity.

The task of the philosopher consists in the exercise, during his whole life, to describe, in a philosophical discourse, what the ideal sage is and how to live a life according to this ideal. This description constitutes the object of numerous treatises, and is the theme of practical exercises, aimed at training pupils to obtain wisdom in different philosophical schools.[17] Even Aristotle (who has always been portrayed as a purely theoretical philosopher) gives an excellent example of what living a truly philosophical way of life means, as distinguished from a political or practical life. For Aristotle a life of wisdom means that the human being fulfils his condition in the most superb way, while he realizes that wisdom is, because of its divine nature, beyond the human condition.[18] Since the most superb objects are eternal and unchangeable, it is no wonder that, for Aristotle, the highest form of wisdom is to live a contemplative life, and to be liberated from all material concerns. Yet, at the same time one is aware that human beings can only realize this ideal on rare occasions, and that, during most of the time, they have to content themselves with an inferior happiness in search of wisdom. In other words, wisdom confronts human beings with

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[14] Ibid., 339.

[15] Pierre Hadot, "La figure du sage dans l'Antiquité gréco-latine," in Idem, *Discours et mode de vie philosophique* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 2014), 178f.; Idem, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?,* 334.

[16] Hadot, "La figure du sage," 179.

[17] Ibid., 181.

[18] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* X 7, 1177b 26ff.: "But such a life [of wisdom] would be too high for man; for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of excellence. If intellect is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life. […] We must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything."

a paradox: "Wisdom corresponds with what is the most essential to man, namely living according to reason and spirit, and at the same time it strikes him as strange and superhuman."[19] Therefore, theoretical philosophy is also practical or ethical, since it is a way of life that possesses knowledge for the sake of knowledge, without any personal or egotistic interest which is foreign to knowledge. Ancient philosophers often discuss in their writings a wide range of (practical) problems in a non-systematic way. They consider their answers to all these concrete questions far more important than building a complete and coherent philosophical "system."

The above means that the most important philosophical question is "How should I live?" and the answer to this question is to have a theoretical examination of possible answers to the question as well as putting their implications into practice. Philosophy is basically about transforming one's life; to achieve this, all kinds of spiritual exercises are needed. These exercises should not be conceived as a praxis complementing an abstract theory or discourse, but they rather belong to the very essence of a philosophical life. They can be defined as "a voluntary, personal praxis, meant to realize a transformation of the individual, a transformation of the self."[20] Hence, the final aim of these exercises is not so much to *inform* the disciples about philosophical theories and insights, but to *(trans)form* their lives, that is to educate them, and to assist them in reaching self-awareness of oneself. Obviously, the various philosophical schools differ substantially in their answers to the question how to live and the result of the process of transformation. Hence, they can be considered as experimental laboratories in ways of life.[21]

Self-awareness of Life in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy

Another philosopher who has made a major contribution to the historical and systematic rethinking of the self-awareness of life in Western philosophy is Charles Taylor, author of *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (1989). Based on his critique of the dominance of theoretical and purely conceptual thinking in Western philosophy, especially that of the Enlightenment, Taylor thinks that we need "subtler languages" to uncover the self-awareness of life as well as the order in which life is set. These subtler languages are a matter of allowing "personal resonance" into one's way of philosophizing in order to shed a light on questions like

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[19] Hadot, "La figure du sage," 186. See also: Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?,* 128-130.

[20] Pierre Hadot, *La philosophie comme manière de vivre. Entretiens avec Jeannie Carlier et Arnold I. Davidson* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), 144. See also: Idem, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?*, 276ff.

[21] Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?,* p. 417.

"why it matters and what it means to have a more deeply resonant human environment and, even more, to have affiliations with some depth in time and commitment."[22] This methodological shift is an aspect of the many faceted movement of "subjectivation" and bears similarities with epiphanic works of art, in which personal resonance also plays an important role. "Things that were once settled by some external reality – traditional law, say, or nature – are now referred to our choice. Issues where we were meant to accept the dictates of authority we now have to think out for ourselves. Modern freedom and autonomy centers us on ourselves, and the ideal of authenticity requires that we discover and articulate our own identity."[23]

A second methodological point is that Taylor considers self-awareness and, hence, meaning of life, as essentially historical notions. Their meanings are not the result of a universal knowledge of the immutable essence of a human being but vary through time, because they are derived from articulations of what it means to be human, which are closely related to specific socio-cultural settings.

A final methodological consideration is that self-awareness of life is always the result of an interplay between discovering and inventing: "Finding a sense to life depends on framing meaningful expressions which are adequate."[24] This means that the content of the notions "meaningful" and "adequate" not only depends on the self, but on strong evaluations, whose ends or goods stand independent of our own desires, inclinations, or choices. In other words, they are part of a larger framework, within which the self can shape its self-awareness and determine where it stands on questions of what is good, or worthwhile, or admirable, or of value. That is why these frameworks are inescapable for our identity, for our self-awareness of life.[25] Again, these frameworks are not immutable, transcendent ideas in the Platonic sense, but define the way in which human beings in a particular era experience themselves and the world. Some examples of these frameworks in the history of Western civilization are: the honor ethic of early civilizations, in which the life of the warrior or citizen, marked by fame and glory, is deemed higher than the merely private existence; Plato's ethic, in which reason's vision of the transcendent good, marked by purity, order, limit and the unchanging, governs the desires, bending to excess, instability, fickleness and conflict; Christian

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[22] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 513.

[23] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 81.

[24] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 18.

[25] Ibid., 20, 27.

ethics, which understands the higher life as the work of God's grace, transforms of the will and aims at an ideal of altruism (agapè).

According to Taylor, a framework that dominates self-awareness of life in our times is the idea that inner and outer nature are not neutral and radically distinct entities, but form a profound source of what it means to be human. This framework originated in the late eighteenth century in Europe (the age of Romanticism) as a countermovement against the consequences of Enlightenment naturalism and Kant's sharp distinction between the natural and the moral world. These two ideas had led to a radical objectification fragmentation and instrumentalization of nature, as well as to a conception of the human self as an instance of radical moral autonomy separated from inner (emotional) and outer (physical) nature. Consequently, inner and outer nature were seen as without intrinsic significance for the life of the self, thus annihilating its richness, depth or meaning. To catch the quasi-coercive force of this perception of reality, Taylor uses the image of an iron cage, thereby following Max Weber.[26] The Romantic ideal of inner and outer nature as a source of meaning is a reaction against the view of nature as something neutral and, consequently, people's disengagement from it. Phrased positively, this ideal reflects an aspiration towards a reunification of oppositions and dualisms that mark the Enlightenment, and a striving for a harmonious vision of the whole of reality, "bringing us back in contact with nature, healing the divisions within between reason and sensibility, overcoming the divisions between people, and creating community."[27]

The reaction against the disenchanting and disjunctive effects of instrumental rationality has also led to a new vision on the self, "expressive individualism." According to this view, every single individual has an intimate awareness of his inner nature or self, and expresses it through his words, works and deeds, to resonate with the outer nature. This expression is not the actualization of what is already potentially present in the self, but should rather be conceived in the sense of an original and artistic creation. "Each one of us has an original path which we ought to tread; they lay the obligation on each of us to live up to our originality. […] Here we have the notion that the good life for you is not the same as the good life for me; each of us has our own calling, and we should not exchange them. Following you may be betraying my own calling, even though you are being faithful to yours."[28] This explains why in our times, in which "expressive individualism" is predominant, questions about the self and the meaning of life cannot be answered in simply universal terms: the inner voice within myself is unique and listening to this voice and ex-

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[26] Ibid., 500; Idem, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 93-108.
[27] Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* 384.
[28] Ibid., 375f.

pressing it is something that is hidden in the intimacy of my personality. This does not invalidate the fact that I give my individual answer to these questions against the horizon of substantial meanings or inescapable frameworks, but the originality of these answers has become much more important than in previous times. "Expressive individualism" has its most conspicuous manifestation in the culture of authenticity. It is the idea "that each one of us has her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority."[29]

What makes the role of these frameworks of the meaning of life different from pre- and early-modern conceptions is that they do not anymore reflect an objective eternal order, in the sense of the Platonic ideas, or Aristotle's idea of the good life, or a divine order or God's will. Instead, they have become fragile, as they have been linked to a person's original identity and depend on social recognition in a specific way. "The thing about inwardly derived, personal, original identity is that it does not enjoy this recognition a priori. It has to win it through exchange, and it can fail. What has come about with the modern age is not the need for recognition but the conditions in which this can fail. And that is why the need is now *acknowledged* for the first time. In premodern times, people did not speak of 'identity' and 'recognition', not because people did not have (what we call) identities or because these did not depend on recognition, but rather because these were then too unproblematic to be thematized as such."[30] Moreover, whereas recognition was initially something universalist and egalitarian (e.g. the idea of inherent human dignity, underlying the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights), the focus is nowadays on the recognition of differences and their expressions (e.g. the specific rights of LGBTs, the claims to cultural, religious ethnic rights etc.), which enhances expressive individualist character of our times.[31] A second difference between the Romantic period and today is that a life according to the ideal of expressive individualism was in those days restricted to a very small (culturally and financially privileged) elite. Yet, since the sixties of the twentieth century, this ideal became accessible for the majority of the population in Western societies, mainly due to the growing spread of wealth.[32]

The overall result of this development in modern history for today's Western societies is a sharp tension between the Enlightenment ideal of a completely neutral and instrumental stance to nature and the Romantic

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[29] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 475.

[30] Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity,* 48.

[31] Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* 510.

[32] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* 475ff.

idea that sees inner and outer nature as a source of profound intrinsic meaning and harmony. Taylor's reaction to the two conflicting trends of our times and their consequences for the self-awareness of life is a nuanced one. First, although instrumental rationality bears the risk of a naturalization and fragmentation of the 'self', and eventually can lead to an annihilation of the self-awareness of life, one should recognize the enormous benefits of this kind of rationality in the fields of life-expectancy, economic, social and cultural opportunities, spread of wealth, comfort, etc. Second, another risk of such rationality is that the frameworks of substantial meaning and the striving for encompassing harmony, which characterized the Romantic shape of "expressive individualism," have all but evaporated in our times. People now tend to express their inner voice and their self-awareness of life without any reference to these frameworks, and even consider them as obstacles to their fulfilment of life. Although the turn to "expressive individualism" bears the risk of sliding into a shallow subjectivism and self-centeredness, one should not forget that authenticity is a truly moral ideal that deserves to be valued. "It accords crucial moral importance to a kind of contact with myself, with my own inner nature, which it sees as in danger of being lost, partly through the pressures towards outward conformity, but also because in taking an instrumental stance to myself, I may have lost the capacity to listen to this inner voice."[33] To avoid this slide, true self-realization and inescapable frameworks of meaning should be conceived as not excluding but rather including each other. "Our normal understanding of self-realization pre-supposes that things are important beyond the self, that there are some goods or purposes the furthering of which has significance for us and which hence can provide the significance a fulfilling life needs."[34]

Conclusion

Which conclusions can be drawn from the above insights in the self-awareness of life, and to what extent is there a correspondence between Western and Chinese philosophy in this respect? It is clear that mainstream Western philosophy has fallen short of expectations when it comes to answering the question of the self-awareness of life, even though this is a traditional subject of philosophical reflection. This is not because Western philosophy would have failed to examine inner spiritual life, since this question has been a primordial point of attention throughout its whole history. Rather, this inability is due to the mismatch between the theoretical, conceptual and universal kind of knowledge that has predomi-

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[33] Taylor, *Ethics of Authenticity,* 29.
[34] Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* 507.

nated in Western philosophy, and the very nature of self-awareness of life. As the expression itself already indicates, self-awareness of life is closely linked to questions about the meaning of life, and thus is part of the still broader question of (the love of) wisdom. Generally speaking, wisdom is a kind of theoretical and practical knowledge that is essentially based on a profound insight in what is true and good, not only for oneself, but for all people. Although a profound insight in the true nature of things and human beings is essential for wisdom, it is certainly not identical with ordinary factual knowledge. Rather, sages are those who can see the bigger picture, whose horizons are broadest, and whose vision is clearest. Moreover, they not only need to have a broad and profound vision, but also have to be able to relate this vision in a meaningful way to the particular moral or existential situations of concrete individuals or societies.[35] This explains that self-awareness of life is indeed an instantiation of wisdom, and that self-awareness of life according to Chinese philosophy bears a lot of affinity with other wisdom-traditions, including in the West.

However, as Hadot illustrates, mainstream Western philosophy has lost its contact with most traditions and schools of wisdom and thus with the self-awareness of life. One of the main reasons of this development is that people defined and its history as a succession of systems of theoretical and conceptual thinking rather than as a variety of reasoned ways of life, taught by a master in a school of wisdom. To restore this connection between philosophy as a theoretical discourse and philosophy as a reasoned way of life, Hadot pleads for a restoration of philosophy as a spiritual exercise, which orients people towards wisdom. He defines the true sage, who serves as the exemplar of wisdom, as follows: "Only the sage never ceases to have the whole constantly present to his mind. He never forgets the world, but thinks and acts with a view to the cosmos. […] The sage is part of the world; he is cosmic. He does not let himself be distracted from the world, or detached from the cosmic totality. […] The figure of the sage forms as it were, an indissoluble unity with man's representation of the world."[36] This approach is another example of the affinity between Western and Chinese philosophy.

Similarly, Taylor has pointed out that the separation between inner spiritual life and outer physical nature, as manifested in the philosophies of Descartes and Kant, results in a reductionist kind of thinking that fails

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[35] I developed this in more detail in Peter Jonkers, "Serving the World through Wisdom. Revitalizing Wisdom Traditions in Christian Faith," in *Envisioning Futures for the Catholic Church,* eds. Staf Hellemans and Peter Jonkers (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2018), 73-105.

[36] Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life. Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Malden: Blackwell, 1995), 251 (Hadot quotes here a book of Groethuysen).

to grasp the self-awareness of life. Thus Taylor pleads for subtler languages, which are able to think the close link between one's inner and outer nature appropriately. Moreover, Taylor's analysis of the sources of the self also enables him to define self-awareness of life in a different way than the solipsistic and dualistic approach of the self in modern Western philosophy. The self is not a self-sufficient substance or a radically autonomous subject, but only obtains meaning against inescapable horizons. This approach of the self is close to that of Chinese thinking, namely that the self is always embedded in a societal environment.

In sum, I hope that the above analysis has provided some clarification that the idea of self-awareness of life in Chinese philosophy indeed offers a major contribution to some perennial philosophical problems, but also that this approach is not completely absent in Western philosophy. This affinity can make the dialogue between these two philosophical traditions not only promising but also feasible.

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2.

The Ethical Turn of Contemporary Philosophy and Its Significance

He Xirong

The Main Features of Ethical Transformation

After experiencing the rejection of metaphysics as too remote from the concrete life of human beings and the criticism of dualism, contemporary philosophy focuses more on the study of the moral and ethical domain as an element in the process of turning itself towards a reflection on concrete existence and philosophy of life.

First of all, we see the trend of transformation towards ethics in various branches of philosophy. For example, political philosophy was used to mainly focusing on demonstration of concepts and essence of interests and powers, systems and procedures; at present, it discusses moral problems of today's world and social justice, the responsible subject in the community, citizens' roles and responsibilities, etc. John Rawls's *Theory of Justice* is a typical example.

Economic philosophy has changed from the emphasis on rational economic human beings to the ethical appeal in business activities, which concerns the responsibility of not only companies and entrepreneurs but also governments and social activities. Hence, economic ethics has become another dynamic field of philosophy. In July 2016, the sixth World Congress of the International Society for Business, Economics and Ethics (ISBEE) was held in the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences; its theme was "Ethics, Innovation and Well-being in Business and Economic Development." Dozens of conventions, round tables and sessions were held in relation to socio-economic and environmental issues affecting international and domestic companies from an ethical perspective, as well as other challenges in financial ethics, employee participation, supply chain management and the current development of economic ethics in various parts of the world. This congress was a review of theoretical and practical achievements of economic ethics in the world, from which we learn that economic ethics has made a fruitful breakthrough in philosophy.[1]

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[1] Sponsored by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, the conference was held in Shanghai in July 2016. Important officials from the United Nations and more than 500 experts and scholars from more than 30 countries and regions from five continents attended more than 50 meetings, involving multidisciplinary ethical thinking. Details can be found in media reports and conference papers.

Philosophy of science and technology is also showing a stronger ethical orientation. It was used to discuss only basic problems of philosophy of science and technology (such as scientific epistemology and logic), but now it has changed its focus on moral issues in the field. It asks such questions as "what is progress," "what is development," "can we forecast the prospects of science and technological development," "what are the responsibilities of scientists," "how are science and technology related to cultural heritage," etc. Thus, philosophy of science has developed many new research areas in medical ethics, manometer ethics, ethics of information technology, bioethics, engineering ethics, etc.

Even in ethical research itself, things are changing. In the past, ethics made efforts to explain the moral phenomenon, to reveal the nature of morality and its law, and to offer moral principles for human behavior. Moreover, dominated by anthropocentrism, traditional ethics only paid attention to the individual and social behavior, but not to the non-human natural area (such as animals and nature), nor to global conditions of human life and their future. Today, ethics pays more attention to the study of moral practice and circumstances, as well as to the ethical relationship between human beings and nature, which leads to the development of ecological ethics, environmental ethics, and ethics of science and technology. The concept of urban ethics has also entered the theoretical framework of philosophy; and non-human animal ethics also attracted the attention of philosophers.

Not only are traditional branches of philosophy undergoing ethical transformation, but also Western postmodern philosophy, including phenomenology and deconstruction philosophy, as the critique of traditional philosophy, are turning their attention towards the ethical horizon. Postmodern philosophy aimed at opposing to essentialism, rationalism and foundationalism. Richard Rorty and Jacques Derrida claim that "post-philosophy had come." Jürgen Habermas emphasizes the importance of sociology of philosophy; Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur focus on philosophy of hermeneutics; and Alasdair MacIntyre advocates the incorporation of historical codification into philosophy. All these new directions show the ethical stance of philosophy, namely, to pay more attention to people and their behavior. Philosophy realizes that no matter how people choose to be active in the world, their ultimate goal is to gain awareness of life. And their view about people is no longer collective or abstract, nor do they only deal with the individual or isolated person, but rather their focus is on the concrete person and his/her relationships. This transformation reflects the individual's responsibility to others, and leads to the formation of multiple values. "Virtues" and "morals" have become important topics in contemporary philosophy. Philosophical hermeneutics, after going through the shift from methodological to ontological herme-

neutics, now is focusing on "virtue hermeneutics."[2] In this sense, we should consider the orientation of hermeneutics towards values and integrate virtues into the hermeneutic system.

The transformation of the ethical paradigm of philosophy not only manifests in this specific branch of philosophy, but also in the nature of philosophy itself. Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) even claims that "Ethics is the first philosophy." He criticizes traditional philosophy because of its emphasis on integrity and identity, while neglecting otherness (viz. diversity). He thinks that the relationship between the self and the other is a major problem in our time, and that it is not only a purely theoretical but also a practical consideration. He argues that philosophy is not a monologue of the self but an ethical relationship with the other. It is in this sense that he calls ethics "first philosophy" thus replacing metaphysics and ontology. This trend seems to verify what Hegel once predicted,[3] and confirms Giambattista Vico's (1668-1744) criticism of the neglect of ethics in his comment on the academic state of Europe in the early 18th century. Vico argues: "the biggest drawback of our research approach is that when we devote ourselves to the natural sciences, we have neglected ethics and in particular that part of the doctrine that deals with the nature of the human mind and its passions and relationship with civic life and eloquence."[4]

The ethical transformation of philosophy has also been reflected in Chinese philosophical circles. In recent years, philosophical research in China, especially on Western philosophy, has started its investigation of the other; the ethics of relationship has become a popular topic. Ethical transformation has been a major research trend in Chinese philosophy. The theme of the 24th World Congress of Philosophy, held in Beijing in August 2018, was on "Learning to Be Human," which reflected not only the ethical orientation of Chinese scholars when considering the priorities of research in philosophy but also the importance of such a topic for philosophy throughout the world.

Philosophy plays a methodological role in other fields of humanities and social sciences. Other disciplines have also shifted more or less towards ethics. Jacques Rancière (1940-), a contemporary French philosopher, says in his essay *Ethical Turn in Aesthetics and Politics*: "The ethical

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[2] See Pan Delong, "Hermeneutics of Virtue," *Social Sciences of China Press* (Aug. 28, 2016),

[3] Hou Cai quotes from Hegel's manuscript *The Initial Systematic Programme of German Idealism*: "Metaphysics will enter the realm of morality in the future," and "ethics will become a complete system with all ideas." See Hou Cai, "Ethicalization of Philosophy and the Remolding Modernity," *Journal of Peking University*, No. 3 (2015).

[4] Giambattisto Vico, *Selected Works of Vico,* ed. Leon Pompah, trans. Lu Xiao-he (Beijing: the Commercial Press, 1997), 74.

turn means that there is a growing trend today which makes politics and arts subordinate to moral judgments as to the correctness of their principles and practices. And many people shout loudly for turning to ethical values."[5]

Some scholars hold that since the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, the discussion of literary ethics has flourished. "The ethical turn regards literature as a place to explore how human values work (or do not work) in a given setting. It includes acknowledging that literature often displays value-conflicts, raises questions about the choice of different values and the ultimate stand of ethical judgment etc."[6]

The Internal and External Basis of Ethical Transformation

There are some internal and external reasons why the ethical turn occurred. First, from an external point of view, there is an inevitable requirement in our times. If philosophy is the essence of times, then the times are the great driving forces for the evolution of philosophy. Nowadays, people pursue and enjoy the fruits of modernization, but they are also facing the crisis of modernity, because it affects the survival of human beings. The paradox and contradiction regarding development and cost, winning and losing, creation and destruction, etc., are increasingly ferocious and profound. Especially under the rule of the logic of capital traditional morality, ethics and values have been fundamentally subverted, and their effectiveness in the process of modernization has declined. To overcome the crisis of modernity and to pursue balanced and harmonious development, we need to pay more attention to the ethical relationship between the human being and him/herself, between the human being and the other, both human and non-human. And people should establish suitable morals and values in the new ethical relationship.

Second, from an internal point of view, that is regarding the development of philosophy as a discipline, every transformation in the history of Western philosophy is related to the maladies of the previous stage. Traditional Western philosophy defined metaphysics as "the basic principle seeking the primary cause," as the first philosophy. The concept of "first philosophy" originates from Aristotle in ancient times and runs through the philosophy of Descartes, Kant and Hegel in modern times.[7] Descartes

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[5] Jacques Rancière, *Ethical Turn in Aesthetics and Politics,* trans. Jiang Lan (Badya's Diaries: http://snapshot.sogoucdn.com).

[6] Jan es Phelan and Tang Weisheng, "Ethical Turn and Ethics of Rhetoric and Narratology," *Journal of Sichuan Institute of Foreign Languages,* No. 9 (2008).

[7] In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of knowledge, namely, contemplation, practice and technique. But the knowledge of contemplation is divided into physical, mathematical and ontological. Aristotle calls ontology, the

compares metaphysics with the root of the tree of knowledge, and thinks that the "first part of philosophy related to the principle of knowledge, which can be called first philosophy or metaphysics."[8] He compares different philosophical disciplines including ethics or practical philosophy with the branches of this tree. Therefore, practical philosophy must submit to theoretical philosophy and pursue the metaphysical theory as the universal truth. This makes the two domains of the good and the truth distinct and even opposite to each other. This idea even leads to the proposition that "virtue is knowledge." As a result, metaphysics seems to be taken as the most valuable form of wisdom, whereas practical philosophy or ethics seems to be regarded as secondary. This philosophical way to pursue a universal truth, which separates philosophy and human being, has been heavily criticized in these days. This implies that philosophy has to turn its attention to the life-world and to ethics. As Levinas points out, the concept of "first philosophy" defines the way of thinking of Western philosophy, and has framed many great philosophers' passions and missions. Ethics is first philosophy, "that is, knowledge is not the first philosophy. This statement was revolutionary and ousted the eldest son of knowledge."[9] Levinas opposes against the "metaphysical violence" of 2000 years in Western philosophy. Some scholars argue that he reinstated the supremacy of ethics in philosophy in France and opened a new way for contemporary Western philosophy in general.[10]

Third, from a combined external and internal point of view, contemporary social reality is calling for a new mode of production and a new way of life. This opens up some new areas and raises some new problems. A new ethic is bound to adapt to the new mode of production and lifestyle. For example, with the drawback and doubt of anthropocentrism, we see the rise of ecological ethics, environmental ethics, animal ethics and other research fields; with the rapid development of science and technology we see the rise of ethical thinking about the impact of human beings on the world. These new problems and new fields go beyond the original view of Western traditional philosophy and the original definition of ethics.

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research of Being as Being, "the first philosophy." See Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* trans. Li Zhen (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2005), 1016b18-30.

[8] René Descartes, *First Philosophical Meditation*, trans. Pang Jingren (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1986), 9.

[9] Zhang Xu, "Ethics as the First Philosophy: on Levinas," in *The Review of French thoughts. Vol 3,* ed. Gao Xuanyang (Tongji University Publishing House, 2008).

[10] Richard A. Cohen, "The Face of the Other. Ethics as First Philosophy: Two Types of Philosophy in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," trans. Yu Xuanmeng, *Philosophical Analysis,* No. 3 (2014).

Undoubtedly, the emphasis and research on these fields urgently demand for expansion and renewal of the concept of philosophy.

The Significance of Ethical Transformation

The ethical turn of philosophy is of great significance. First of all, the definition and classification of philosophy will change with the extension of philosophy and the renewal of ideas. If ethics becomes first philosophy, then metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of nature and logic will all aim at ethical inquiry, thereby destroying the traditional taxonomy which divided philosophy into a theoretical and a practical branch. Although Western traditional philosophy was called "love of wisdom" in ancient Greece, "wisdom" is certainly not equal to theoretical knowledge. Since Plato put forward the proposition "wisdom is knowledge," the pursuit of knowledge has become the sole purpose of Western philosophy. This knowledge, which is universal, essential and ultimate, is closely associated with rationalism (rejection of sensibility). As Bertrand Russell (1872-1970）says: "In Plato, ethics and science finally merge into one. Good is equal to knowledge. If so, it would be wonderful. However, unfortunately, Plato's view is too optimistic. The most knowledgeable people sometimes use knowledge for evil interests. In any case, no matter how much one knows, it does not solve the problem that how people choose behaviors."[11] According to Hegel, "the more a philosopher infuses personal feelings into philosophy, the better his philosophy."[12]

In such a philosophical style, the truth of life is ignored in the pursuit of the absoluteness of truth, the particularity of the individual is ignored in the universality of thought, and the inherent requirement of human beings is ignored in the pursuit of external exploration. In philosophy, the division of theory and practice, subject and object, reason and sensibility, and even male and female is dualistic; in value judgment the former is higher than the latter.

This kind of philosophy is constantly attacked by different sides of Western philosophy, e.g. Feuerbach, neo-Kantianism, existentialism, etc., especially since the end of the 20th century. French scholar François Julien (1952-) calls for "breaking the category" so that the imaginable fields can be restructured. He even regards Chinese thought, especially Confucian moral theory, as the "other," and tries to reconstruct a new philosophy by means of a detour-entry. Sun Zhouxing, a Chinese professor who has studied Martin Heidegger in depth, argues that Heidegger's

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[11] Bertrand Russell , *Wisdom of the West* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1992), 434.

[12] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy.* Vol. 1, trans. He Lin and Wang Taiqing (Beijing: Business Press, 1959), 7.

theory of reality constitutes a kind of implicit basic ethics. In his later period, Heidegger's thought focuses on how to live in accordance with destiny.[13]

The above indicates that the study of ethics is regarded as the primary (if not all) problem of philosophy. Human ethics is no longer confined to practice, but must be the unity of theory and practice.

How to judge the transformation of philosophy? I agree with Huang Songjie's remarks: "The most important and basic standard to judge the philosophical turn is to see the philosophers' attitudes, ideas and arguments on ontological and epistemological problems."[14] Ontology and epistemology have been the core of Western traditional philosophy. If ethics instead of ontology is considered as first philosophy and occupies the central place of philosophy, obviously this shakes the foundation of philosophy. Although there have been theories about the epistemological turn, the linguistic turn, the existentialist turn and so on, they only represent a shift in the focus of philosophical categories, or, a shift in the focus of research. However, this ethical turn is a kind of paradigm shift in philosophy. It represents the renewal of philosophical conceptuality and the change of philosophical classification. Levinas calls this "Ethics as first philosophy," trying to bring ethics into philosophical ontology. The novelty of this statement lies in the negation of what has been affirmed in the past. If knowledge can be replaced by ethics, the definition, form and content of philosophy will change. Some subjects such as economic ethics, ecological ethics, science and technology ethics, urban ethics, etc. have become prominent in present times, as well as the comparison of Chinese and Western philosophy. Moreover, interdisciplinary research methods challenge the classification of original Western philosophy. And eight disciplines of philosophy classified in China would be challenged too. These issues can lead to more discussions in the field of philosophy.

Second, because it was distinguished from religion, science and metaphysics, philosophy was neither the servant of theology, only offering the ontological argument for the existence of God, nor the myth of reason for the development of science and technology. All these disciplines turn back to the human being itself. If ethics is the theory of the human being, it involves the relationship between the human being and the world, between man and nature, as the integrated whole of heaven, earth and man.

Restricted by anthropocentrism, traditional ethics is confined to the frame of the relationship between human beings only. This kind of ethics

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[13] Sun Zhouxing, "Ethics as a Philosophy of Existence: The Dimension of Ethics in Heidegger's Thought," *Philosophical Research,* No. 10 (2008).

[14] Huang Songjie, "On the Turn of Western Philosophy," *Zhejiang Journal,* No. 1 (2004).

regards natural things as public resources and does not regulate human behavior with regard to the environment. Thus it certainly cannot protect the natural environment effectively.

Today, with the awareness of breaking this limitation, people discuss ethical problems from a broader scope of relationships and the circle of life. Ethics and environment, ethics and gender, ethics and ecology do not belong to the field of traditional ethics. Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), an American scholar and "the Father of Western Ecological Conservation," put forward the trilogy of the development of human morality in his famous paper on "Earth Ethics." He points out that the initial moral concept is to deal with the relationship between people, and the second with personal and social relations and with the development of society. The extension of morality to human natural environment has become an evolutionary possibility and ecological inevitability.[15]

A new theory, called moral extensionism, is a trend in ethics that has become popular since 1975. Morality extends from human beings to animals, plants, and even to abiotic factors. In terms of scope, it extends first to the ecosystem, then to the entire natural environment, further to the broader human environment, and finally beyond the earth to the exoplanets. These are the realistic and theoretical conditions for the emergence of ecological ethics, environmental ethics, life circle ethics and universal ethics. In this light, from the point of view of human beings, it is undoubtedly logical that "first philosophy" carries out ethical inquiry and philosophical reflection on the various environments and fields in which people live. It is also normal that categories and concepts of ethics are expanded with the emergence of many new ethical fields.

Last but not least, the ethical turn of philosophy has a positive significance for Chinese philosophy. It is conducive to understanding and clarifying the nature of Chinese philosophy.

According to the Western philosophical framework, the core of philosophy is metaphysics or ontology, pure theory, and universal knowledge. The rest of learning belongs to special categories, e.g. ethics as a knowledge of practice. According to this criterion, Chinese philosophy is at best an ethical theory as a branch of philosophy. If this is the case, the value of Chinese philosophy is debased. Some ideas in the Chinese tradition, such as the practice of self-cultivation and the understanding of the life circle of Heaven and Man as One, would have been considered as mysticism or moral preaching, rather than philosophy. It is in this sense that Hegel ridi-

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[15] Reference to Zhou Lindong, *Slave and Companion – New Ethics of Environment* (Wuhan: Hubei Education Press, 2000), 40.

culed Chinese philosophy only as ethical common sense, not speculative philosophy.[16]

To justify the legitimacy of Chinese philosophy, some Chinese scholars once conducted a desperate search for its metaphysical foundation, but again looked back to Western philosophy.[17] Mou Zongshan and Du Weiming, famous contemporary neo-Confucians, think that although Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties focused on issues of social ethics, its theory is also "based on a highly integrated metaphysical level," which is its own "ontological foundation." As Du Weiming says, "Neo-Confucian morality would lack self-sufficiency without an ontological view."[18]

In Zhang Dainian's (1909-2004) later years, he also recalled: "There was indeed a view at that time that China had only ethics, political science and no philosophy, and that philosophy was equal to Western philosophy, or that Western philosophy was the sole paradigm of philosophy. And those different purports and methods of philosophy are only another kind of learning but not philosophy."[19] Zhang Dainian in his book, *Outline of Chinese Philosophy*, divides Chinese philosophy into five categories: cosmology or theory of humanism, theory of knowledge or methodology, theory of cultivation and theory of politics. He argues that the first three categories (cosmology, theory of life and theory of knowledge) are equivalent to Western philosophy, while "theory of cultivation and theory of politics can be said to be special philosophy, not within the scope of general philosophy."[20] Because cultivation at most is relegated to ethics and not to general philosophy, the *Outline of Chinese Philosophy* has only three parts: cosmology, theory of life and theory of knowledge.

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[16] "Confucius is only a practical wise man in a society, and he has no speculative philosophy at all – only some kind-hearted, sophisticated moral lessons," see Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 120.

[17] Luo Kuang, *Confucian Metaphysics* (Taibei: Fu Ren University Press, 1980). In the preface, Luo Kuang, a scholar from Taiwan, says that when he was teaching at the University of Rome, the scholars who taught Chinese philosophy in Europe and America all thought that Confucianism in China had only ethics and no metaphysics. He read history of Chinese philosophy of Hu Shi and Feng Youlan and did not find them talking about Confucian metaphysics. Luo Kuang thinks that Confucian ethics has been around for 2000 years and could not have no theoretical basis. He discovers the Confucian metaphysical system from the *Book of Changes* and Song Ming Confucianism, and he entitles the first chapter of his book "Metaphysical Ontology."

[18] Du Weiming, *A New Theory on Confucianism* (Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 1991), 153.

[19] Zhang Dainian, *Zhang Dainian's Study* (Zhejiang: People's Publishing House, 1999), 47.

[20] Ibid.

The ethical turn of Western philosophy criticizes and even overturns traditional ontology, it not only clears the way for Western philosophy, but also creates a good opportunity for Chinese philosophy. People realize that we cannot depend on Western philosophy, but reexamine the Chinese tradition and contribute the wisdom of Chinese philosophy to the innovation of philosophy in the world.

From the perspective of metaphysics, Western traditional philosophy regards metaphysics as "the first philosophy" or the foundation of philosophy. It is positioned in "theory" (speculative) and "principle" (universal), thus separated from real life and human living condition. Ethics, politics and religion, which were originally closest to life, were also characterized as knowledge theory based on theoretical speculation. The result was the separation of metaphysics from ethics, and the philosophical value judgment that metaphysics is higher than ethics (theory is higher than practice).

In terms of Western philosophy, ethics is classified under the field of practice, it has to seek the metaphysical foundation for morality, whereas in Chinese philosophy, metaphysics is part of moral philosophy, or in other words, ethics itself is metaphysics. In Chinese culture, metaphysics and moral philosophy are inseparable. Metaphysical craving in Chinese philosophy is to be the "Tao" and practical activities to be the "Qi." They are two distinct but not completely separated areas. Chinese philosophy lays special stress on the principle that "the Tao exists in the Qi, and the Qi is present in the Tao" ("道在器中,器中显道"). According to the *Book of Changes*, "the metaphysical is the Tao, while the form (instruments) is the inferior." On the one hand, there are divisions of Taoist objects, which indicate specific activities and metaphysical pursuit; on the other hand, Tao and Qi are not completely separated, rather "Tao is the instrument, in the instrument." The metaphysical Tao is superior to the form of instruments, but the Tao also lies in reality of instruments. Just as Wang Chuanshan (1619-1692) says, "the Tao does not depart from the instruments, and the instruments do not depart from the Tao, and the Tao and instruments are containing each other. The Tao is the foundation which carries the instruments, and the instruments contain the Tao which is the functions of the Tao."[21] From Confucius' "Do what you want without breaking the rules" to Zhuangzi's story about "the dismemberment of the ox by Pao Ding," all are reflections of the combination of the Tao and vessels (instruments). Western philosophy expounds all issues, including ethics, according to the universal system of principles, while Chinese philosophy is more inclined to gain experience in various activities.

In terms of ethics, due to the influence of dualism, theory in traditional Western philosophy is separated from practice, and dominated by

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[21] Wang Chuanshan, *Chuanshan's Study on the Book of Changes. Vol. 2* (Taibei: Guanyun Book Company, 1971), 789.

anthropocentrism, it pays less attention to the value of nature and to non-human (animal) values of life and their moral status. The consequence of this understanding of theory is manifested in the environmental and ecological crises. On the contrary, Chinese traditional philosophy stresses the integration of all things and the three talents of heaven, earth and the human being, which harmoniously form the circle of life ethics.

The idea of "three types of talents" (三才) comes from *the Book of Changes*: "the way of setting up heaven, namely Yin and Yang, the way of setting up the earth, namely softness and strength, and the way of setting up people, namely benevolence and righteousness." This means: First, the Tao of three types of talents, heaven, earth and the human being, constitutes the metaphysical Tao. Second, heaven, earth and the human being are an indivisible integrality, in which the human being and nature are closely related. Third, what constitutes the "three talents" are two kinds of opposing forces, which are also the unity of opposites and complement each other. Among the three types of talents, according to the teaching of Confucianism, the human being is considered the most valuable, because it is man who sets the mind for heaven and earth and the life of people (为天地立心,为生民立命). The Taoists say, "Human follows land, land follows sky (heaven), and sky (heaven) follows Tao, Tao follows nature" (Laozi). Zhuangzi claims that "I live with heaven and earth, I and all things unite as one" (天地与我并生,万物与我为一). This has been seen as the "supreme virtue" (玄德). Buddhism also proposes that every creature, even a grass or a tree, has feelings (一草一目皆有情). Contemporary ethics should pay more attention to the principle of respect for nature and the idea of the unity of all things.

Of course, studying the ethical transformation of philosophy in the West does not mean that Chinese philosophy should depend on the West to carry out its own ethical transformation, but rather we should relearn the significance of Chinese philosophy. The ethical transformation of philosophy provides us with the opportunity to excavate the core value of Chinese philosophy, and to understand the internal unity between traditional Chinese philosophy and human beings, including the ethical relationship between the human being and nature, as well as the philosophical reflection embodied in it. It is of great theoretical and practical importance to establish an academic system in China.

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3.

On the Issue of the Human Being and the Ground of Philosophy

Yu Xuanmeng

Restating the Issue of "Learning to Be Human" after Several Thousand Years of Civilizations

The theme of the 24th World Congress of Philosophy was "learning to be human." I think it is a good theme. All nations, whether in the East or the West, have their own great persons and heroes who lead them to move forward in the world, they are the guidance of the people. People learn from them how to be truly human. Since many new things have occurred in our times, we need to learn to be human again. First, as the process of globalization goes forward, people live in a larger community. The encounter of different civilizations forces people either to give up or to preserve some of their ways of life. The so-called "clash of civilizations" is eventually the conflict over different ways of life. The cruelty of such a conflict is no less than that of wars in the past. In order to avoid the miserable end of humankind, we need to think clearly over this issue. Second, in the past, the human being was defined as the opponent of nature, while today, a notion of extra-terrestrial intelligent beings is gaining its ground. Though it has not been tested whether there really exist extra-terrestrial intelligent beings, the allegation that we need to move to another planet in space in the future shows that the earth, being polluted, might not be suitable for the survival of human beings. No doubt, the pollution is the result of human way of life, the threat to human beings comes from themselves. This raises the question whether our present way of life is appropriate. Third, artificial intelligence poses a new challenge. Although we do not know whether or not it will surpass human intelligence in all aspects, it is a fact that it has forced us to change our way of life in many directions. If profit and power determined the relationships among human beings in the past, that is, some rule and some are governed, then how about our future? Artificial intelligence is not something one can easily control or operate by just using one's own arms, its master might have the power over others. Thus, the question is whether this may lead to a new conflict between superiors and inferiors.

In order to discuss these challenges, it is necessary that we understand who human beings are. But are we sure that we have the same understanding? I do not think so. In this paper I will illustrate how different the understanding of human beings between Chinese and Western cultures is;

why different philosophies provide the ground of such different understandings. Specifically I will discuss the different grounds for Chinese and Western philosophies and try to articulate the ultimate ground for all philosophies.

The Notion of Human Beings in Western Philosophy

A proverb in the Delphi Temple in ancient Greece says "know yourself." Superficially, it says the same as "learn to be human," especially in the way Socrates develops this sentence: "…the unexamined life is not worth living for men."[1] That is to say, a human being cannot live unless he/she knows him/herself. This statement may unexpectedly become an obstacle for someone who just starts his/her life. According to that saying, one should not start a life before one has an understanding of one's own self. But it is not easy to have a clear understanding of the self. Even today we have different sayings about human beings, some of which contradict each other.

People can view human beings from various perspectives, such as metaphysics, theology, biology, even mathematics, etc. Every time as a discipline develops, it causes a change of the view on human beings. For instance, when Copernicus' heliocentric theory came out, it impacted the view on the position of human beings in the universe. The theory of boilogical evolution developed by Darwin vacillated the creation of human beings by God. The establishment of geometry and calculus yielded the idea that man like a God has the ability to grasp the infinite. From the perspective of quantum mechanics, human beings could be measured in a certain energy level. In terms of economics the assumption is that human beings are always striving for efficiency and profits.

If each particular science provides only a partial point of view about human beings, how about philosophy. Platonism, the most prevailing in the history of Western philosophy, has its tenet in the search for real knowledge of the world, which later turned out to be universal knowledge of the world. In this light, human beings were defined as the subject of knowing. To speak rigorously, the so-called "universal knowledge" does not denote empirical knowledge, but rather only concerns the essence of things. Such a knowledge is interpreted in logically determined concepts. Descartes's famous saying "I think, therefore I am" manifests that the knowing subject corresponds to such a kind of knowledge. Here, the word "thinking" does not mean "random thought," "feeling" or "touching," but thinking in concepts and clear and distinct ideas. Human beings can also be treated as objects by just finding out their essence. This is borrowed from the way of observing things. An earlier formulation says that the

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[1] Plato, *Apology*, 38a.

human being is a political animal (Aristotle). The more popular definition is that human being is a rational animal: rationality determines human beings as human since essence determines a thing as it really is; it is superior to phenomenon; rationality as human essence is superior to sensation. Since essence is supposed to be innate or inherent, rationality is something by birth. However, some philosophers do not agree with the above saying. For instance, Hume, arguing from the perspective of empiricism, claims that the "self" is a bundle of perceptions. Now more people consider the notion of rational being unfit, because it excludes human irrationality or belittles the function of irrationality. For Freud, human consciousness includes two levels: conscious and unconscious. Behind the apparent politeness restrained by social norms, there is the unconscious with sexuality as its core. Marcus Aurelius even claims that rationality harms the nature of the human being and contracts with human happiness and freedom.

Although the term rationality is used in various senses, its basic meaning is close to that of reason which means "an ability to move from the truth of some beliefs to the truth of others."[2] The knowing subject through his/her reasonable thinking knows things by their essence. The same way should be used to know human beings, that is, to find their essence. Since essence is so important for knowing an object, all the important properties are categorized in essence. For instance, in the wake of the 18th century French revolution liberty and equality were considered as part of human essence. However, the rise of irrationalism indicates the insufficiency of the definition of the human being as rational. Is there another way to understand human beings? This leads us to explore Heidegger's theory which will be introduced later in this paper.

In fact, we cannot have a full grasp of who we are. Each one of us is a human being as "me." Why am I not the other? Why do I live in this, not that era, born in this, not that family? The question of who we are has always been a riddle. It is ironic to say that you have to know yourself before you start a life. One can only know oneself in the process of living. Life is an adventure.

The Issue of Human Beings in Chinese Philosophy

In China, whatever profession one takes, if he/she has done well, and he/she would be asked to tell his/her experience most probably the person would start by saying that he/she is a good person, and then tell his/her professional accomplishment. Indeed, if one is quite good in art or technique, and tries to move forward, the way highest is to transcend art or

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[2] See Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu, "Reason," in *Dictionary of Western Philosophy, English-Chinese* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, Beijing, 2001).

technique towards the Dao. This is a beautiful way of being human. It shows how important it is to be a good person in Chinese traditional culture. However, if one tries to find a definition of the human being in traditional Chinese culture, one would be frustrated. Unlike Western philosophy, ancient Chinese philosophers did not search for the essence of things as well as human beings, nor develop a definition. What is certain is that the tenet of traditional Chinese philosophy is to be a perfect human being. It needs a book to demonstrate this point and here I can only focus on a few pieces of evidence.

The entire Confucian book *The Analects* is about being human. The last chapter ends with the following saying: "Without recognizing the ordinance of Heaven, it is impossible to be a superior man. Without an acquaintance with the rules of propriety, it is impossible for the character to be established. Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know men."[3] In the *Book of Changes*, we read "In ancient times, the sages institute the system of change in order to follow the principle of the nature and destiny."[4] Here, "the principle of nature and destiny" could be understood as "the principle of life" (性命之理). Entitled "changes," *The Book of Change* actually focuses on being truly human. It says "He only is the sage who knows to advance and to retire, to maintain and to perish; and that without ever acting incorrectly. Yes, he only is the sage."[5]

Up to the Song and Ming Dynasties, Confucianism evolved towards the learning of sage (圣学). Zhou Dunyi, a Confucian scholar in the Song Dynasty, says in his book, *Tong Shu* "The sage expects to meld himself with heaven; the wise man expects to be a sage; the gentleman expects to be a wise man." This means that to be a sage is the highest aim of human life. What does being a sage mean? It is not limited to pure morality, to speak broadly, anyone with perfect arts or skills could be such a person. For instance, Wang Xizhi is a sage in calligraphy, Lu Yu is a sage in enjoying tea, and also Du Fu, a sage in poetry. Each in his own way reaches the status of mingling oneself with the heaven-earth. They are examples of being a truly human being. Why should human beings take the sage as their example? What exactly is a human being? Unfortunately, there is no clear definition in Chinese philosophy. What we find is about the origin of human beings. *The Book of Change* says that everything originated from the interaction of the two dynamic elements: Yin and Yang. The same is with human beings "The way (Dao) of Qian (yang) constitutes the

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[3] Confucius, *Analects*. James Legge's translation. The original text in Chinese reads 不知命,无以为君子;不知礼,无以立也;不知言,无以知人也.

[4] Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 269.

[5] Confucius, *The Book of Change*. James Legge's translation. The original text in Chinese reads 其唯圣人乎!知进退存亡而不失其正者,其唯圣人乎!

male, while the Kun (Ying) constitutes the female."[6] Produced in this process is not only everything, but also the position of everything. "The great characteristic of heaven and earth is to be produced. The most precious thing for the sage is (a full understanding and grasp of) position. To guard the position is the human being."[7] The same idea is expressed in *The Doctrine of the Mean*: "What heaven (tien, nature) imparts to man is called nature. To follow our nature is called Tao."[8] Since human nature is bestowed by heaven, it is clear that to follow the way of heaven is the proper way of being human. The question is what is the Way (Tao) of heaven? It seems only having a clear meaning of Tao, we can grasp who a human being should be. Unfortunately, it has never been expressed clearly about what Tao is. Tao is not something that could be spoken out with certainty. It seems our thinking has reached a dead end. However, the point is just that any use of language is not adequate; our thinking cannot help us, we should go to practice and try to find new tendencies in life so as to resolve life challenges. Sometimes people think that they are the only results of their ancestors' achievement, and do not see or think the destroyed tribes or nations in the past. In fact, they have a narrow way of understanding who they are.

Compared to Western philosophy, the issue of human beings is not explicated clearly in Chinese philosophy. What Chinese philosophy traces back on this issue is Tao, but Tao is something that cannot be certain, for it is always in the process of revealing. Because of this, to be human while pursuing Tao means to *learn* to be human. If there were an inherent essence attributed to the human being, it would not be necessary for one to learn to be human, for he/she is already born a human being. With such an assumption, what one needs to learn is some professional skill or ability to make a living. In fact, all one needs to do is to fully realize his/her essence in life. To display the human essence is the core meaning of humanism. If someone acts as inhuman, that does not mean that he/she has no essence, but that he/she is alienated from what it means to be human.

In sum, Westerners and Chinese have different points of view on the issue of learning to be human. I do not intend to comment which one is better, but to analyze and discuss the two philosophies which cause different views of human being.

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[6] Confucius, *The Book of Change, Appended Remarks 1.* "乾道成男，坤道成女."

[7] Ibid., 2. "天地之大德曰生, 人之大宝曰位,何以守位曰人."

[8] "天命之谓性,率性之谓道."

Respective Ways of Dealing with Human Beings:
Essence and Incipience

The idea of human being is a basic faith, on which we decide about ways of being a human being, his/her values and purposes. Although we are all human beings, we nevertheless have different understandings of being human, different values and purposes of life. Then where does the faith of being a human being come from? If such a faith is based on the way we think of human being, how do we think about them?

Discussed above, there is an important concept in Western philosophy in thinking about the idea of human being, i.e. essence. The classification of essence and phenomena is an important feature of Western philosophy. It originated from Plato who holds that there is, besides our perceptual world, an idea-world. The motivation of such classifying comes from the fact that there are various things in the world; even things belonging to the same sort are full of differences, which makes perceptual knowledge so different, even opposite to true knowledge. What is true knowledge? Plato thinks that there is One out of many as the unmovable among the moving. He calls it the ideas which represent the true knowledge of the same sort of things. They exist in an idea-world, other than our perceptible world. After Plato developed the theory of ideas, it was criticized by others, including by his disciple Aristotle. They argue that there is no such idea-world. The so called idea is but the essence of things in our world. The essence cannot be grasped directly by perception but by conceptual thinking. Concepts cover a broad area from general to truly universal ideas. General concepts are generalizations from our experiences, and thus can be further enlarged as the experience goes. The concept expressing the essence is supposed to cover all the possible experiences; hence it is beyond time and space and absolute. This theory has caused series of problems in the history of Western philosophy. People may ask from where do these concepts come from? Do these concepts have their realities?, etc. Although there have been disputes in the history of philosophy, one cannot but recognize that the idea of essence has been influential for the development of natural science, especially for universal and necessary knowledge.

When Engels summarized the dispute between materialism and idealism, the idea of essence still worked vividly. As a saying goes, the function of philosophy is just to teach people to move from phenomenon to essence. The only difference between the two campaigns is that, for materialism, though essence can only be grasped conceptually, it represents the real nature of things outside us, while idealism holds a similar idea about essence grasped conceptually, but together with the law of nature it is something of our own spirit. Both schools agree that if we grasp the essence of things, we can have knowledge of things in a clearer

and more exact way. It is admitted that the idea of essence especially facilitates the advance of a deductive knowledge of nature.

In traditional Chinese philosophy, there is no word corresponding to the word essence. The Chinese characters 本质 are a new formulation to translate essence. Neither is there a demarcation between phenomenon and essence. Instead, when Chinese philosophers have a deeper understanding of things, they try to observe the very origin of an event and use the word "knowing incipiency." The notion of "incipiency" comes from *The Book of Change*. In *Appended Remarks PT.1* of that book, it says, "The (operations forming the) *I* are the method by which the sages searched out exhaustively what was deep, and investigated the incipiency (of the event)." It continues "Only goes to deep, can one penetrate through all the tendencies under the sky, only captures incipiency, can one complete all the affairs under the sky."[9] Zhen Xuan, a famous scholar in the Han Dynasty, explains the word "deep" and "incipiency" as "To reach its source before the truth reveals, it is called deep. To sense just in the moment of start, it is called incipiency."[10] Again, in *Appendix PT.2*, it says "The Master said: how marvelous as one knows the incipiency!"[11] "Incipiency is the slight beginning of the movement, and the earliest indications of good or evil."[12] Zhen Xuan says "Incipiency, that in the moment leaving nothing and coming into being, the truth without formulating; it cannot be addressed by name and seen by form yet."[13] Kong Ingra, another scholar in the Tang Dynasty, re-notes "incipience means the subtle; moving both in conscious and the event. At the very beginning, the truth has not been notable, only being subtle. If after its being notable, it could not be called incipiency, for both conscious and the event are revealed. Neither could it be called incipiency before it initiates, for there would be nothingness. Incipiency is the moment between leaving nothingness and entering into being. Therefore it is called the subtle of moving."[14] Here moving means both consciousness and event. Why does it emphasize incipiency? Since all have to undergo a process of the beginning to the end; to find the incipiency could help one foresee the development of affairs. Zhang

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[9] Confucius, *The Book of Change,* 309; also Wu Jing-Nuan, *Yi Jing* (Washington DC: The Taoist Center, 1984), 270 "夫《易》,圣人之所以极深而研几也. 唯深也,故能通天下之志;唯几也,故能成天下之务."

[10] "极未形之理则曰深,适动微之会则曰几."

[11] "知几其神乎!"

[12] "几者, 动之微,吉凶之先见者也."

[13] "几者,去无入有,理而未形.不可以名寻,不可以形睹者也."

[14] "几,微也.动谓心动,事动.初动之时,其理未著,唯纤微而已.若其已著之后, 心,事显露,不得为几;若未动之前,寂然顿无,兼亦不得称几.几是离无入有,在 有无之际,故云动之微也."

Dainian says, "Raised in *The Book of Change* the notion of incipiency and advocated by that book the studying and knowing incipiency, it is a very profound thinking. It should be recognized that incipiency is an important notion in ancient Chinese dialectical thinking."[15] Qian Zhongshu also sees the importance of this notion, he illustrates in detail the use and the meaning of this word in classics.[16]

To know incipiency is a basic attitude towards the world, for the belief is that the world is in the process of becoming and changing. This process is a whole which has nothing to do with the classification of essence and phenomenon. Thus a deep understanding of the world is to know its ins and outs, while incipiency is the very beginning of the process. This incipiency is the beginning of both affairs and the mind. We can understand that, without the incipiency of the affair, the incipiency of the mind would be groundless, whereas without the incipiency of mind, the incipiency of the affair would be meaningless. Based on this point of view, traditional Chinese philosophy has investigated tremendously how we can understand incipiency and open human beings' life according to the unique process of the Tao, which I will further discuss later in this paper.

To search for essence and to know incipiency are two different ways or intentions towards the true meaning of the world, hence yield different results. According to the former, our intention is to learn what a thing really is; the result will be a that-ness. In this case human beings are understood as rational animals. By contrast, in terms of the latter, the deepest way of thinking is to find the beginning of affairs. Therefore, the deepest search of human beings is their origin. Now we have the assertion, "what the heaven imparts to man is called human nature."[17]

There are two different ways to go deep into the truth of the world. The way of essence is synchronic, that is to say, there is no sequence between essence and phenomenon. In other words, essence might have logical priority over phenomenon, but is not temporally prior to phenomenon. We might say that essence is expressed as a structure with concepts. The doctrine of essence facilitates greatly the natural sciences and emancipates human thinking by concepts such as deduction, which makes scientific hypotheses. Once these hypotheses are verified, we have the truth of nature.

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[15] Zhang Dainian, *An Outline of the Notions and Categories in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Science Press, 1989), 118.

[16] Qian Zhongshu, *Limited Views*《管锥篇》 (The joint publishing company LMD, 2008), 75-77.

[17] Confucius, *The Doctrine of Mean* "天命之谓性," Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy,* 98.

The way of incipience is diachronic. It determines the occurrence and development of affairs. *The Great Remarks 1, Zhou Yi* says "The *I* was made on a principle of accordance with heaven and earth, and shows us therefore, without rent or confusion, the course (of things) in heaven and earth."[18] Although the course of things is mentioned here, what is of the most concern is the human affair, which is used to judge happiness and evil.

Indeed, the different views of human beings are based on different ways of philosophy. Our further question is: why have there been different types of philosophy? On what ground does each philosophy set off?

The Ground of Traditional Western Philosophy

Thus far, we have spoken about human beings in terms of philosophy. From the perspective of Western philosophy, the human being is a rational animal, while from the perspective of Chinese philosophy, the nature of human beings is bestowed by heaven (nature). A question may arise what is the respective ground of these two philosophies? Since we have found that different views concerning the issue of human beings are based on different philosophies, we need to go a step further and answer the question why there exist different philosophies. To answer this question, we should look at the ground of these different philosophies. It is a difficult challenge. Fortunately, as we have analyzed one of the eminent features of each philosophy, essence and incipiency, it might be easier for us to understand the respective ground of these two philosophies. Let's check Western philosophy first.

In terms of essence, there must be an assumption about the separation of the world into two realms, phenomenal and essential world. Together with such a separation, there would be a separation of consciousness, sensation and reason. The motivation of this separation is intended to find the true meaning of the world. Since what we know by our senses is uncertain, thus the anticipation of some certainty gives the knowledge of essence. However, which one comes first, the world as an object or the intention as a subject? The quarrel about this question makes the two campaign, one holds that the material world comes first (materialism), while the other that consciousness comes first (idealism). Though people think that Hegel belongs to idealism for the reason that he argued that the principle of the world is expressed in the absolute spirit, he did try to overcome dualism. He thinks that philosophy begins neither with the subject, nor with the object, because both are partial. The real beginning of philosophy is being, which sublates the opposition between the subject

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[18] Confucius, *The Great Remarks* "《易》与天地准,故能弥綸天地之道," James Legge's translation.

and the object. This being is pure knowing without any thing known and yet it is everything without any particular determinations. As he says, "Pure knowing as concentrated into this unity has sublated all reference to another and to mediation; it is without any distinction and as thus distinctionless, ceases itself to be knowledge; what is present is only simple immediacy."[19]

If this pure being is the beginning point of philosophy, it is nothingness. Hegel demonstrates this as follows.

Being, pure being, without any further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equals only to itself. It is also not unequal relatively to an other; it has no diversity within itself nor any with a reference outwards. It would not be held fast in its purity if it contained any determination or content which could be distinguished in it or by which it could distinguished from an other. It is pure indeterminateness and emptiness. There is *nothing* to be intuited in it, if one can speak here of intuiting; or it is only this pure intuiting itself. Just as little as anything to be thought in it, or it is equally only this empty thinking. Being, the indeterminate immediate, is in fact *nothing*, and neither more nor less than *nothing*.[20]

In Hegel's *Science of Logic*, being, pure being, is the beginning of his whole logical system. If being "is in fact nothing," philosophy should begin with nothing. At first sight, one might be surprised because of this conclusion. How could philosophy, a ground for all sciences, begin with nothing? But to think it over again, I feel we cannot but accept the conclusion. If philosophy has its own assumption with a positive determination as its beginning, the task is to further justify this assumption. This is a ceaseless process. Furthermore, any determination has its limitation. Philosophy, being the foundation of all sciences, should have no further ground. Only set out from being as nothing, philosophy reaches its steady ground, because it has the possibility to produce every kind of determination. This means that the ground of Western philosophy is being as nothingness. It is not a negative but a positive conclusion. We can also see this in traditional Chinese philosophy.

The Ground of Chinese Philosophy

People who have some knowledge of Chinese philosophy will recognize that nothingness is the ground of Chinese philosophy. As Laozi says:

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[19] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Science of Logic*, translated by A.V. Miller (New York: Humanity Books, 1999), 69.

[20] Ibid., 82

"All the things under heaven are the products of being. Being itself is the product of nothingness" (chapter 40).[21]

People are more familiar with Laozi's saying about the Dao "Dao gives birth to the One, the One gives birth successively to two things, three things, up to ten thousand" (chapter 42).[22]

But the Dao is still subjected to nothingness, as Laozi says in the very beginning of this book: "The Tao that can be told of is not a constant Dao; the name that can be named is not the usual name. Nothing is the origin of heaven and earth; Being is the mother of ten thousand things."[23]

This point of view had pervaded throughout all the important classics in ancient China. As I mentioned above, the Chinese see the entire world as a process of production. This is the reason why they pay attention to incipiency. Although incipiency has a very mall meaning, it comes from something veiled, from which we can deduct that before incipiency reveals itself, there is nothing present.

The Book of Change also indicates nothingness as the origin of all things. It says, "Therefore in the system of change there is the Great Ultimate. It generates the Two Modes (yin and yang). The two Modes generate the Four Forms (major and minor yin and yang). The Four Forms generate the Eight Trigrams. The Eight Trigrams determine good and evil fortunes. And good and evil fortunes produce the great business (of life)."[24] What is "the Great Ultimate"? In comparison with "Dao gives birth to the One, the One gives birth successively to two things, three things, up to ten thousand," it seems to be the One. However, according to Zhou Dunyi, a new Confucian scholar in the Soon Dynasty, "there is non-Ultimate that goes ahead of the Great Ultimate."[25] This is tantamount to "being itself is the product of nothingness."

If it is true, then it seems the two philosophies, Western and Chinese, have the same beginning or starting point, say, nothingness. Why does philosophy begin with nothingness? A simple reason is that if philosophy is the ground of all sciences and learnings with various assumptions, it itself should not have any determined assumption. Otherwise it would become certain kind of knowledge.

However, the question still remains, if both philosophies start from the same origin, nothingness, why do they come out so differently? To

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[21] Lao Zi, 天下万物生于有,有生于无.

[22] Lao Zi, 道生一,一生二,二生三,三生万物.

[23] 《老子》: 名可名,非常名. "无", 名地之始; "有", 名万物之母. 中文标点据陈鼓应.

[24] Confucius, *The Book of Change, Commentary 1* "是故易有太极,是生两仪,两仪生四象,四象生八卦,八卦定吉凶,吉凶生大业."

[25] 周敦颐《太极图说》"无极而太极."

answer this question, we need go a step further to see the implications of nothingness in the two philosophies respectively.

Different Implications of Nothingness in the Two Philosophical Traditions

It might be ridiculous to search for the meaning or implication of nothingness. Nothingness just means nothing. What else could it mean? However, nothingness we are talking about here is not an absolute nothing, because absolute nothingness means not only no things at all, but also no people who talk about nothingness. In this sense, there could not have been any discussion about nothingness. All the nothing we are speaking of is relative, which means that nothingness corresponds to something. In other words, nothing, insofar as we can talk about it, is always the nothingness of something, the non-being. For instance, if we say there is no A, i.e., a nothingness corresponding to A, it leaves undetermined the possible existence of B, C, D, etc.

We cannot speak about absolute nothingness, which is the dark abyss. What we can talk about is relative nothingness. If philosophy wants to begin with nothing, this nothing should be the largest nothingness, which means, it corresponds not to some limited beings, but to all beings. I call the nothingness corresponding to all beings the largest nothingness.

Hegel tried to conceive the largest nothingness. He argues that philosophy begins with the category of being which is tantamount to nothing. Being is without any determination, i.e. universal being. At the same time, he notes that there must be someone who knows being. Since someone who knows being is also a being, he includes in the being the pure intuiting, while nothing is intuited here.[26]

It seems nothing could be larger than what is formulated by Hegel. For what nothingness means for him is the opposite to both everything as the object and the knowing as the subject. What else could be left?

If we compare Hegel's views with Chinese philosophy, we find that the way to reach nothing by the ancient Chinese philosophers is different from that of Hegel. For instance, *The Doctrine of Mean* says, "While there are no stirring of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of equilibrium."[27] These words, I believe, describe a way for people to follow the Dao. What would it be like if one puts oneself in the state without pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy? There must be no objects to correspond to these emotions. Nothing is always a nothing in the sense of non-being. Literally "equilibrium" means "center." If one

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[26] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 82.

[27] Confucius, *Doctrine of Mean.* James Legge's translation. The original text reads: "喜怒哀乐之未发,谓之中。"

pulls back from one's feelings and emotions to the "center," there will be what neither one's sentiments, nor any objects comes purely to these sentiments. In this sense, "equilibrium" just means a kind of nothingness. This understanding is also matched with the other sentence of the text: to follow the Dao. One should be cautious of and even be terrified by something revealing, for the thing reveals itself secretly and incipiently. Therefore, one should be watchful over oneself, when one is alone.[28] Here we have a kind of nothingness, a relative nothingness. Nothingness could be the way to follow the Dao, because a basic point to view the world is that everything is in the process of production and becoming, i.e., to start from nothingness, through incipiency, to becoming, and move towards the end. To find incipiency, one needs to empty one's mind, that is, to enter into a state of nothingness. In this way, one can be quite sensitive to the revelation of incipiency.

Here we find different ways to reach nothingness. For Hegel, nothingness is reached by the retreat of knowing, both the knowing subject as pure intuition without anything to be intuited and the known object as the most universal being without any determination. It is this pure being that is tantamount to nothingness. In *The Doctrine of Mean,* nothingness is reached by the retreat of sentiment that is to empty one's mind waiting for things to be seen and heard.

The Largest Nothingness: The Ultimate Ground of Philosophy

All sciences and doctrines have their own beginning as their ground, but they do not justify the ground by themselves. They leave the ground to be justified in philosophy. Then, what is the beginning or ground of philosophy? Especially, when we philosophy is assumed to cover all sciences and doctrines, what is the beginning or ground of philosophy? If all sciences and doctrines begin with certain assumptions, what is the assumption of philosophy?

If philosophy has its own assumption as its beginning, such an assumption should be ultimate, otherwise, people may ask what is the ground of that assumption, which is the foundation of all sciences. The question is what is the ultimate assumption if there is any. Can we expect the ultimate assumption for philosophy?

When Hegel argued that the start of philosophy is being without any determination, I think, he was trying to find the ultimate assumption for philosophy. He is right when he thinks that any determination has a limitation, which makes being unfit as the universal being. Universal being means that it covers all particular beings without any exceptions.

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[28] Ibid., "是故君子戒慎乎其所不赌,恐惧乎其所不闻.莫见乎隐,莫显乎微,是故君子慎独."

Any particular beings would exclude other beings. But did Hegel find the ultimate assumption when he said philosophy begins with universal being without any determinations?

Superficially, philosophy finds its ultimate assumption in Hegel. But if we go deeper, we find that it is not enough. What is veiled in Hegelian thinking is that he presupposes knowing as the beginning of philosophy, that is, a being without any determination, i.e. the object of knowing, and the intuition without any thing intuited, i.e. the subject of knowing. In short, Hegel defines philosophy as the doctrine of universal knowledge of the world. How about ethics, aesthetics, axiology, humanities, etc. which cannot be covered by ontology? All these fields, though with knowing in them, are different kinds of knowledge than that of the world as the object.

It is clear that not until in modern times, when Dilthey stressed humanities as an important branch of philosophy in opposition to the traditional understanding of philosophy, traditional Western philosophy demonstrated its shortcomings. In fact, this also one of the main causes for the crisis of traditional philosophy.

Could we find the ultimate assumption for philosophy? We will try. When Hegel sublates all determinations to reach pure being, he also reduces knowing to pure intuition. This pure intuition is one form of consciousness. But consciousness does not exhaust itself in knowing, for there is also consciousness of ethics, aesthetics, sentiment and so on. If Hegel tries to reach to pure knowing by pure intuition, a kind of consciousness, why do we not reduce all kinds of consciousness to pure consciousness, which has no content whatsoever as its object? Pure consciousness is pure light. In pure light everything becomes illuminated. But pure light itself cannot be seen, for what is shown by light is not pure light itself.

Do we have such pure consciousness? Yes, we do. In Confucianism, it is called "illustrious virtue."[29] The human being has "the illustrious" as the virtue. Because of this virtue, the human being cannot only know the world as where he/she dwells, but also can sense his/her own status and the relationship between him/her and his/her environment.

This pure light or illumination is the largest nothingness for it is reached by reducing any possible content of consciousness, including the content of knowing. This way of reaching nothingness is different from that of Hegel, for the latter is only deducing from the content of knowing, which leaves other possible contents of consciousness, such as aesthetics, ethics, etc. The Chinese way focuses on consciousness itself, rather than on the content of consciousness. It might be difficult for us to list all kinds of consciousness and its corresponding contents, but it is easier to reduce a specific kind of consciousness to pure consciousness. This is the key

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[29] 《大学》"大学之道,在明明德."

step to reach nothingness. If it is pure consciousness, there will be nothing left, whether it be the state-of-mind, the psychological object or the object of knowing. Even one could not say "I" at this point. Everything will reveal itself on the ground of this largest nothingness. Nothingness is the ground of philosophy.

The Ground of Philosophy and the Human Being

This paper began with the issue of the human being, which led us to the ground of the different views about the human being and further to the ground of philosophy. Now we face the question why there are different types of philosophies which have different views about the human being?

As I above mentioned, philosophy takes nothingness as its ground. Here, nothingness is not absolute nothingness, but the largest nothingness. Absolute nothingness is an abyss, largest nothingness implicates its opposition, such as beings, consciousness and the object of consciousness. In this nothingness there are two elements: consciousness itself and the object of consciousness. The two elements are a unique unity. Consciousness dwells in its objects, and the objects depend on consciousness. All types of philosophies are but a reflection of this structure. There are three ways of reflection, 1, to reflect on the side of consciousness; 2, to reflect on the object; and 3, to reflect on the entire structure, that is, to reflect both consciousness and its object. To speak roughly, Buddhist philosophy represents the first type of philosophy; Western philosophy, the second one; and traditional Chinese philosophy the third one.

Western philosophy begins with the search for truth of the world, and divides the world into two parts: the sensible and the essential. The essential world is formulated by categories, which leaves consciousness in the conceptual thinking. Since the essential world is superior to the sensible, conceptual thinking is superior to sensation. The ability of conceptual thinking is called reason or rationality, which is considered the essence of human beings. Essence as something innate and unchangeable determines the nature of things. Hence, the essence of human beings determines their nature. To be a human being is to display his/her essence. Therefore, to learn to be human is not a serious problem for a human being.

For traditional Chinese philosophy, the philosophical reflection is based on the entire structure. It holds that everything reveals itself in the process of this structure, which means that everything is illuminated by the illustrious virtue. This virtue indicates how to be a human being. We do not know what kinds of things, useful or harmful, will come out ahead of time. Waiting for the incipiency, we should be cautious and even be apprehensive. Our own status and condition are co-determined by the thing or event we face. To adjust ourselves to the thing or event is a process of learning to be human. This is also called "following the Dao." And

what we need to learn first is to illustrate illustrious virtue, as said in *The Great Learning*, "What the Great Learning teaches, is – to illustrate illustrious virtue."[30]

I do not want to comment directly here which view, namely Chinese and Western philosophy, concerning the human being is more advantageous. What I want to discuss is the different philosophical grounds of these views, which lead further into the ground of philosophy itself. As the ground of all sciences and doctrines, philosophy has its ground in nothingness, but not in the absolute nothingness, rather in the largest nothingness. Compared to traditional Chinese philosophy, what traditional Western philosophy holds as its ground, nothingness, is not much larger, for it preserves consciousness of knowing and the object of knowing without sublation. Although all kinds of illumination in consciousness are a kind of knowing, what consciousness reveals is not merely limited to the knowing of the external object, it also reveals consciousness itself, self-consciousness as sentiment, state-of-mind etc. When traditional Western philosophy, as in Hegel, stresses on the essence of things, it limits knowing only to conceptual thinking. Thus, philosophy loses its status as the ground of all sciences and doctrines. If philosophy still wants to be the ground of all sciences and doctrines, it has to go deeper into its own ground. I think we need philosophy to be the ground of all sciences and doctrines. This is not the task of philosophy only, but the destiny of humanity. I have seen the dawn of this destiny in Heidegger's philosophy.

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30 "大学之道,在明明德."

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4.

What Is a *Menschenbild*?
Introducing a Fruitful German Concept

Michael Zichy

Introduction

It was philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche who first understood three things: First, that every one of us has a set of strong convictions on what it means to be human.[1] Second, that these convictions lie at the bottom of the epistemic and moral orders, by which we conceive and sort out the world.[2] And third, that these convictions are very powerful, because they form us: Our deepest convictions about what it means to be human are self-fulfilling prophecies; over time, they inscribe themselves into the human being and slowly turn us into what we think we are.[3]

Nietzsche called this set of convictions about the human being a "*Menschenbild.*" This concept has since then made a remarkable career in German thinking and has become important and ubiquitous, particularly in public political and moral debates.[4] Unfortunately, there is no appro-

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[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen," in Idem, *Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 1*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München, Berlin, New York: dtv/de Gruyter, 1988), 368.

[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Nachgelassene Fragmente 1883," in Idem, *Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 10*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München, Berlin, New York: dtv/de Gruyter, 1988), 316.

[3] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Menschliches, Allzumenschliches II." In Idem, *Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 2*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München, Berlin, New York: dtv/de Gruyter, 1988), 419

[4] For the role of *Menschenbilder* in the different branches of the humanities and social sciences see Bodo Rollka and Friederike Schultz, *Kommunikationsinstrument Menschenbild. Zur Verwendung von Menschenbildern in gesellschaftlichen Diskursen* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2011); Anna Katharina Reichardt and Eric Kubli, ed., *Menschenbilder* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999); Rolf Oerter, ed., *Menschenbilder in der modernen Gesellschaft. Konzeptionen des Menschen in Wissenschaft, Bildung, Kunst, Wirtschaft und Politik* (Stuttgart: de Gruyter Oldenburg 1999). For the role of this term in German public discourse see Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Missbrauchte Götter. Zum Menschenbilderstreit in der Moderne* (München: C. H. Beck 2009), 133-176. For a detailed conceptual history of the term see Michael Zichy, "Menschenbild. Begriffsgeschichtliche Anmerkungen," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 56 (2014): 7-30 and the first chapter of Michael Zichy, *Menschenbilder. Eine Grundlegung* (Freiburg/ München: Verlag Karl Alber 2017).

priate English translation for this word. Like the term "*Weltanschauung*," which has been translated as "worldvision,"[5] but mostly used in English as a loan word in its original German spelling, "*Menschenbild*" seems to be a specifically German term. Literally, the term would be translated as "mental image of the human being," but the translations "understanding of the human being," "concept of human nature," "idea of the human being" or "view of the human being" may seem more appropriate. However, all these translations cannot really grasp the specific meaning and the richness of the German term. In particular, they miss the strong moral, societal and political connotations the term has. Therefore, I will simply use the German word *Menschenbild*. Put it boldly, a *Menschenbild* is a bundle of deep convictions about the human being in general. As such, it functions as a scheme or a typification about the human being; it is a typification of what humans are, how they typically behave, what inclinations to act they have, what goals they have or should have, etc. Or, even more simply: A *Menschenbild* is the specific *filter* through which we look at human beings.

In this paper, I will primarily elaborate on the first of the tree insights Nietzsche had.[6] I will explain what a *Menschenbild* exactly is, and try to make plausible the claim that every one of us has a *Menschenbild* and that *Menschenbilder* are important and influential. I will do this in five steps: First, I will develop a definition of *Menschenbild*. Second, I will give a short overview of the typical contents of *Menschenbilder*. Third, I will introduce the differentiation between individual, group-specific and societal *Menschenbilder*. Fourth, I will explain how our *Menschenbilder* are embedded in our everyday life and fifth, I will give a short description of the most important functions *Menschenbilder* fulfill in our everyday life.

Menschenbild: A Definition

Every one of us has several convictions about the human being in general. Many of us, for example, hold that humans have free will or that they should strive for societal harmony; some believe that humans are egoistic; some are convinced that they have been created by God, that they have an immortal soul, etc. The specific set of convictions of a person, a group of people or a society about the human being is what Nietzsche calls a *Menschenbild*. A *Menschenbild* consists of several strong beliefs about the human being: it is a *bundle of convictions* about the human being. Encompassing several convictions, these bundles do not only consist in the convictions themselves, but also in the relations between them. These

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[5] See David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002).

[6] A full account of *Menschenbilder* can be found in Zichy, *Menschenbilder*.

convictions will complement, support, and limit each other, and every now and then they will also contradict each other. However, a certain minimum of coherence, consistency and systematicity is characteristic of every *Menschenbild*. Therefore, *Menschenbilder* can be defined as *more or less coherent* bundles of convictions about the human being.

We all hold a myriad of convictions about the human being. We believe that humans usually have two legs, teeth, and can laugh, run, cry etc, that they get older. In a strict sense, all our beliefs about the human being are part of our *Menschenbild*. However, not everything we believe about the human being is of equal importance. Some convictions are – in a practical and systematic sense – more fundamental than others. For example, the conviction that humans possess human dignity is practically and systematically more important than the belief that they usually have two ears. According to our *Menschenbild*, some human features are more important than others, which also means that some convictions about the human being are more fundamental than others. As a result, while *Menschenbilder* comprise all our beliefs about the human being, including the very trivial ones, they define certain beliefs as crucial. This allows us to reduce *Menschenbilder* to these crucial convictions. Therefore, we can extend our definition: A *Menschenbild* is a more or less coherent bundle of *crucial convictions* about the human being.

A further clarification needs to be added: *Menschenbilder* are bundles of convictions about the *human being in general*, and not about an individual human being or a particular type or a group of human beings. Although this seems to be clear, it has to be left open who is included by "the human being in general," for some *Menschenbilder* have a narrower, others a broader definition of who is a human being. Racist *Menschenbilder* for example do sometimes expel some members of the biological human species from the purview of humanity, while some animist *Menschenbilder* extend it to animals, plants, ghosts or even things.[7]

The definition thus runs as follows: A *Menschenbild* is a more or less coherent bundle of crucial convictions about the human being in general. This definition is quite broad, for it encompasses all sorts of views about the human being. Thus, it makes sense to further distinguish a wide from a narrow meaning of the definition: In the wide sense, the term *Menschenbild* encompasses all kinds of such views, for example, literary views such as Shakespeare's understanding of the human, theoretical or philosophical understandings of the human as Hobbes', Nietzsche's or Marx's, scientific models of the human like the *homo oeconomicus*, etc. In a narrow sense, which is both the basic Nietzschean and the true sense of that term, *Menschenbild* only includes such bundles of convictions

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[7] See Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

about the human being that are embedded in ordinary everyday life, i.e., the life-world. In other words: Real *Menschenbilder* have a place in the real lives of real persons. In the following, the paper will focus solely on *Menschenbilder* in this latter, life-worldly sense.

Types of Convictions

Life-worldly *Menschenbilder* are bundles of crucial convictions about the human being in general, which are embedded in our everyday life. What are these important convictions about? As people have numerous different convictions about the human being in general, it is not possible to name them all. However, as shown elsewhere,[8] it is possible to identify a few categories of convictions, under which all the important convictions about the human being fall. Through an analysis of what we need to know of each other in order to deal with each other in everyday life, and also through an analysis of a number of culturally extremely diverse *Menschenbilder* it is possible to draft a list of ten categories of important beliefs that every image of the human being contains:

	Categories of Convictions	Questions answered by the convictions
1.	Convictions about who belongs to humanity	Are all members of the biological species homo sapiens human beings or is the definition of "human being" narrower or broader?
2.	Convictions about fundamental ontological features of the human being	What are the main (ontological) elements humans are made of? Do humans only have a material body or do they also have an immaterial soul (or even two or three souls)? How are the relations between these ontological elements, etc.?
3.	Convictions about the human being's position in the cosmos	What is the human being's ontological, axiological and power position with respect to all other beings? Is the human being the pinnacle of creation, is it nobler than all other beings or is it inferior to some beings or are all beings of equal worth, etc.?
4.	Convictions about ontological, axiological and legitimate power differences between humans.	Are all human beings ontologically and axiologically equal, and do all humans have the same right to possess power, or are there fundamental differences between humans, e.g. between man

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[8] Zichy, *Menschenbilder*, 267-357.

		and woman, between the old and the young, between races and ethnic groups, etc.
5.	Convictions about the character of human individuality	Are human beings individual beings in a strong sense or are they interconnected? Are individual beings sub- or superordinate to society, etc.?
6.	Convictions about the human self	Do humans have one substantial inner core self, do they consist of many selves, or is the self an illusion? Is the human self-interdependent, i.e., a result of human relations, or is it independent, i.e., prior to human relations? Etc.
7.	Convictions about human freedom	Do humans have free will, and if so, how far does it reach? Is it just freedom of basic choice (e.g., choosing coffee with or without sugar) or is it far-reaching autonomy (e.g., choosing the moral system or one's life plan)? Etc.
8.	Convictions about human behavior (or human nature)	Is human behavior the result of innate dispositions or is it learned? How moldable is human behavior? Are there dominant factors determining human behavior such as genes, sexual desire or societal influence? Are there strong behavioral motivations and dispositions such as egotism? Etc.
9.	Convictions about core human capabilities	What are the capabilities only humans have? What are the capabilities that are particularly important for being human (the ability of language, reasoning, empathy, to feel and defend one's honor, etc.) and should these be trained? What capabilities are of human value? Etc.
1.	Convictions about the good human life	What is the real goal of human life? What is the meaning of human life? What values should a successful human life follow and realize? Etc.

These are the ten categories or issues we all have strong convictions about. They form an important part of our background beliefs, which allow us to interact with our fellow-humans and live our ordinary day-to-day lives. It is important to see, however, that not everyone does necessarily have *clear* beliefs about all these issues. To the contrary, the con-

victions about many of these issues are often rather unclear and remain implicit in many cases. More often people do not clearly know what they believe, but can at least tell rather clearly what they do not believe. For example, many people in Western societies might not be able to tell whether they believe human beings have a material body *and* an immortal soul. But they *will* be able to clearly deny that humans have a material body and three immortal souls.

Individual, Group-Specific and Societal *Menschenbilder*

Menschenbilder are bundles of convictions about the human being. Every one of us has such a bundle of convictions. However, it is important to realize that we usually do not have all our convictions about the human being just for ourselves. On the contrary, we share many of them with other members of our society. Our *Menschenbild* thus has several layers. If we look a little closer we will discover that (a) we share some of our convictions about the human being with all or nearly all other members of our society. For example, in many countries people share convictions that humans are free and responsible for their deeds, that they deserve moral respect, that they remain who they are throughout their lives (rather than to become completely other persons), etc.

(b) We share some of our convictions only with some other members of our society, i.e., with a group of people. In most secular societies, for example, only few members of the society share the belief that humans have an immortal soul, or that God has created humanity.

(c) We have convictions that we share with nobody else. These are personal convictions we hold completely by ourselves. For example, it might be that somebody holds the private belief that humans with long noses are particularly high principled; and somebody else has the idiosyncratic conviction that regularly brushing one's teeth not only guarantees a low dentist bill, but is also good for one's spiritual healing.

Our bundle of convictions about the human being in general is thus built up in different layers, shared with all, with a few, and with no other member of the society we live in. These layers can be isolated theoretically. By doing so, we are able to distinguish three different bundles of convictions, i.e., three *Menschenbilder*:

1. Individual *Menschenbilder,* all the convictions an individual person holds about the human being in general.

2. Group-specific *Menschenbilder,* bundles of convictions believed by groups. Typical examples of such groups are religious groups, sects, political parties, ideological groups, etc. A group-specific *Menschenbild* consists of all the shared overlapping convictions the members of a particular group have about the human being in general.

3. Societal *Menschenbilder* are bundles of convictions about the human being in general that are embedded in a society or a culture as well as in societies' shared values, in the pedagogical system, in institutions, in well-established practices, etc. Here too, the *Menschenbild* consists of the shared overlapping convictions the members of society have about the human being in general.

It is important to understand that these three kinds of *Menschenbilder* do not exist next to each other, but are grafted on each other. Societal *Menschenbilder* form the basis of the other *Menschenbilder*; they are a kind of rudimentary torso-*Menschenbild* that is open for expansion and completion.[9] This is exactly what group specific *Menschenbilder* do: they specify the societal *Menschenbild* and add convictions to them; individual *Menschenbilder* specify and add new convictions.

Our *Menschenbilder* are thus almost like a map: In a society, every member gets the same copy of the societal map. In this map, only the most important streets, buildings, rivers and mountains (i.e., the most important convictions about the human being) are indicated, that is: they are the necessary elements for you to find your way in this society. With this map in hand, every member of society goes to the group or the groups he/she feels attached to – religions, political parties, other ideological groups – and adds all the points, streets, corners, etc., that are of importance for the particular groups one belongs to. Finally, with this enriched map, people go home and add all other things that are of importance to them as individuals. Note that the different layers on the map are drawn in different colors, so that people are able to distinguish between the marks which are binding for all society members, and which are only binding for me or the group I belong to. Indeed, we are well able to distinguish our private convictions about the human being from those we share with groups and those we share with society. We know what people in our society generally think about the human being, and in which points our convictions differ.

Among these three sorts of *Menschenbilder*, the societal *Menschenbild* certainly is the most interesting and important one, because it is a more or less coherent bundle of convictions about the human being that is shared by all – or at least by the majority of the – members of society. In pluralistic societies, the convictions of *Menschenbild* bear three characteristics:

1. The shared convictions are abstract and thin with regard to their contents. The thick and rather specific convictions of the individual and

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[9] This idea is inspired by Rawls' concept of the overlapping consensus. See John Rawls, "The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus," *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 7, no. 1 (1987): 1-25 and idem, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press 1993).

group-specific *Menschenbilder* are replaced by vague convictions that can be specified in a variety of ways and that are thus compatible with a whole range of more specific convictions.[10] For example, in many societies the rather abstract conviction that humans have human dignity is a widespread conviction. However, it also leaves open many questions, because it does not define nor give a justification of what human dignity exactly is, neither does it tell what exactly follows from human dignity, for all this is a matter of divergent opinions. For some, human dignity is rooted in the likeliness to God; for others, it is rooted in the faculty of reason; for others again, it is rooted in biological complexity; and some think that human dignity is not rooted in anything at all, but is a mere positing. Some think that abortion, death penalty, or active euthanasia are all compatible with human dignity, while others that these convictions violate it, etc. There is, hence, only a very narrow societal consensus on human dignity; the shared conviction that humans possess human dignity is thin and abstract.[11] But this is exactly the reason why this conviction is open for more specific interpretations and compatible with a wide range of more specific individual and group-specific convictions about human dignity.

2. The *Menschenbild* of pluralistic societies contains only a *few* positive abstract and thin convictions about important features of the human being. In most Western societies for example, these convictions, among others, are that every member of the biological species *homo sapiens* is a human being, that humans possess human dignity and are thus morally equal, that humans are (and should be) free and responsible for what they do, that they are or have a self, a kind of enclosed inner realm to which only they have access, that humans have numerical identity in the sense that they are only one (and do not, as for example some African tribes think, consist of three or four persons),[12] that humans possess transtemporal identity in the sense that human persons remain themselves across years and despite all the changes they go through, etc.

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[10] This idea is drawn from the concept of "open *Menschenbild*" which is, according to some German legal scholars, the foundation of the German Constitution; for this see Wolfram Höfling, *Offene Grundrechtsinterpretation. Grundrechtsauslegung zwischen amtlichem Interpretationsmonopol und privater Konkretisierungskompetenz* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot,1987), 116-118; Martin Morlok, *Selbstverständnis als Rechtskriterium* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 283; Peter Häberle. *Das Menschenbild im Verfassungsstaat*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2008).

[11] See Dieter Birnbacher. "Mehrdeutigkeiten im Begriff der Menschenwürde," *Aufklärung und Kritik* Sonderheft 1 (1995): 6; Horst Dreier. "Bedeutung und systematische Stellung der Menschenwürde im deutschen Grundgesetz," in *Menschenwürde als Rechtsbegriff,* ed. Kurt Seelmann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), 35f.

[12] Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*.

3. It is important to see that societal *Menschenbilder* do not only consist of a few positive convictions about the human being, but also contain a number of *negative* ones. This is because those individual and group-specific convictions that are not consensual in a society do not simply fall outside the societal *Menschenbild*, but remain there as a blank space. For example, the societal *Menschenbild* of a typical secularized society does not contain religious convictions. These convictions, which may well be found in individual and group-specific *Menschenbilder,* are not part of the shared societal *Menschenbild*. However, these religious convictions do not simply disappear but are rather replaced by the shared conviction that there is no shared belief in these religious matters. In secularized societies, there is the shared knowledge that people do not agree whether humans have been created by God, whether they have an immortal soul, etc.; people agree to disagree in these matters. But this shared conviction that people disagree in these matters is an important part of the societally shared *Menschenbild*. Consequently, a societal *Menschenbild* consists not only of the shared positive, but also the negative convictions about the human being, for which there is no societal consensus about its features.

What is also important about societal *Menschenbilder* is the fact that they are the core of a society's individual and group-specific *Menschenbilder*. Recall the picture of the map: The most important markings, the ones that are relevant and mandatory for all – regardless of the added group-specific and individual markings – are the societal markings. You cannot get rid of the societal *Menschenbild* without falling out of society altogether. Imagine you were a German Catholic and had a Catholic *Menschenbild*, a Catholic understanding of the human being. This understanding would open up the Catholic world to you – its narratives and creeds, the practices of baptism, of weekly church ministries, of regular confessions and so on.

However, it could happen that you lose your Catholic faith and with it also the Catholic *Menschenbild*. This might well be a painful process, and entail a severe identity crisis. By losing your faith in the Catholic *Menschenbild* you would certainly lose the access to the Catholic world, which before made so perfect a sense to you, but now seems rather absurd. Even if you lost your Catholic understanding of the human being, you could still participate in German society as a member, orient yourself in the common life-world, and have access to your former brothers and sisters in faith as members of your common society.

Things would be dramatically different when you lose a societally shared conviction about the human being. If you, for instance, seriously stopped to believe that humans are free, then you would no longer be able to orient yourself in your society, let alone in your Catholic universe. The moral system, the legal system, the educational system, and the day-to-day interaction would not make sense any more. Societal *Menschenbilder*

are thus the most important ones. They are the fundament for individual and group-specific *Menschenbilder* and almost cannot be denied in practice.

Menschenbild as Hyper-typification

In order to understand what life-worldly *Menschenbilder* are and how they function, it is important to see that every one of us carries around with him or her a multitude of bundles of convictions about specific types of humans, and that we constantly make use of these bundles. We all have many different typifications, which we use to identify the people we encounter. We come across someone, and instantly and automatically we assign that person to a category: a child, a woman, a professor, a policeman, an artist, a politician, an actress, etc.

We assign not only humans to mere categories, but also convictions to them that are connected to the respective categories – convictions about the type of persons that fit into the category. For example, artists are believed to be creative, sensitive and often socially difficult; plumbers are – at least in Austria, where I come from – believed to be unreliable, grumpy, always late and expensive. If these bundles of convictions about a certain type of human beings are incorrect, unjust, inappropriate or problematic, we call them stereotypes. In many cases, our bundles of beliefs are totally unproblematic. For this reason, it is better to call them – just as Berger and Luckmann do – typifications.[13]

In everyday life, we have a huge stock of such typifications at our disposal, and we draw from them when we need them. We need them to bring order into the realm of humanity by classifying our fellow human beings. Our *Menschenbild* also belongs to this stock of typifications; in fact, a *Menschenbild* is basically a general typification. As such, it works like an automatic stereotype.[14] Whenever I see a human being, I immediately and automatically attribute to him or her a number of features – important and not so important ones. I assume that this being is able to speak, has reason, deserves moral respect, and should at least be free and autono-

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[13] See Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. *Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2010) and Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann. *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, 2nd vol. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979).

[14] For automatic stereotyping see Mahzarin Banaji and Curtis Hardin, "Automatic stereotyping," *Psychological Science* 7, no. 3 (1996): 136-141; for stereotypes see John Dovidio et al, *The SAGE Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010) and Lars-Eric Petersen and Bernd Six, ed. *Stereotype, Vorurteile und soziale Diskriminierung. Theorien, Befunde und Interventionen* (Weinheim/Basel: Beltz, 2008).

mous. I also assume that he/she needs food and sleep, and has mood swings, etc.

In my everyday life, I also carry with me a bundle of convictions about the human being in general, and this bundle of convictions is activated every time I come across a human being or I hear the word "human." At this moment, I so to speak put the bundle of convictions over the phenomenon.

However, *Menschenbilder* are not ordinary typifications, rather a special kind. They do not stand at the same level as our other typifications, but are prior to them. They are higher-order typifications, or hyper-typifications.[15] This is due to two main reasons:

First, they are prior because they are more general. Before I typify a human being as a beggar, or a professor or a plumber, I have to typify this phenomenon as a human being – or rather, by typifying someone as a plumber or a professor, I have underhandedly always already typified him or her as a human being. It is this very bundle of convictions about the human being in general that opens up the realm of humanity and makes the application of all our more specific typifications possible. Only *if* and only *after* I have typified someone as a human being I can use a more specific typification and typify him or her as a plumber or an artist.

Second, *Menschenbilder* are prior because they are on a higher, or rather – the highest – hierarchical level of our typifications for the human being. Images of the human being are equipped with epistemic and moral authority. We generally think that our deepest core convictions about the human being are more true and right than all our other typifications. That this is indeed the case becomes clear when we correct ourselves. For example: When I read a newspaper report about an extraordinary brutal case of rape and murder, the thought could arise in me that it would be best to immediately put the offenders, these monsters, against the wall and shoot them. However, if I am at least a little bit sensible, my faculty of moral self-correction would come into action the next moment "You should not think that way." I would say to myself, "these offenders are, their horrible deeds notwithstanding, human beings who have to be treated with respect and who thus deserve a fair trial." In this case, I have corrected a specific typification – the offenders as subhuman monsters – with a higher typification, namely, my *Menschenbild* which comprises the convictions that human beings deserve moral respect and fair trials. I can only do so due to that my convictions that humans have dignity and deserve fair trials are truer than the thought I just had.

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[15] For the hierarchical structure of typifications see Roy D'Andrade, "Schemas and Motivation," in *Human Motives and Cultural Models*, ed. Roy D'Andrade and Claudia Strauss (Cambridge/New York/Victoria: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 32.

In short, our *Menschenbilder* are higher-order typifications that are equipped with epistemic and moral authority. We believe that they are true and right, and thus they are overruling other typifications.

Under normal circumstances, we are not aware of that. In general, we apply our *Menschenbilder* completely automatically, and we automatically assume that they are true and right. This is because our *Menschenbilder* are transparent for their referent. It is not the case that I perceive a human being, and *then* I attribute him or her all the qualities I believe human beings have in general. To the contrary, I just see a human being with all the qualities I attribute to him or her. Only now and then it happens that we orient ourselves knowingly by our *Menschenbild*, and only sometimes it comes to our mind that there is a difference between our *Menschenbild* and the real human being.

Functions of *Menschenbilder*

It should have become clear by now that *Menschenbilder* are indeed important elements of the epistemic and moral orders by which we conceive and understand the world. But what exactly do we need a *Menschenbild* for? Basically, a *Menschenbild* has the same functions as typifications have.[16] As shown elsewhere,[17] *Menschenbilder* have at least ten functions, of which the five most important ones are:

(1) *Identification*: *Menschenbilder* serve to identify an experienced phenomenon as a human being. To identify a phenomenon as a human being I need a set of criteria by means of which I can find out whether this thing is a human being or not. *Menschenbilder* contain these very criteria. If our *Menschenbilder* contain these criteria that allow us to identify human beings, they establish or open up – as said before – the realm of humanity.

(2) *Reduction of Complexity*: *Menschenbilder* are very general concepts. They reduce the myriads of human individuals, who existed, are existing, and will exist, to an abstract type, and they reduce the multitude and variety of specific features that individuals have to some abstract common features. By this, *Menschenbilder* allow us to seize all human beings in a somehow qualified entity, and enable us to interact with people unknown to us and to interact with various people at the same time.

(3) *Legitimation or Justification*: *Menschenbilder* serve to justify other beliefs we hold about what is morally right or wrong, how society should look like, which kind of education we cherish, and so on. They

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[16] For the functions of typifications see Craig McGarty, Vincent Yzerbyt and Russell Spears, ed., *Stereotypes as Explanations. The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs about Social Groups* (Cambridge: Cambride University Press, 2002).

[17] Zichy, *Menschenbilder,* 172-190.

serve to justify our actions towards our fellow people. To give an example, if we justify our rejection of immediate death penalty for murderers by saying that they have dignity and unconditionally deserve moral respect and thus deserve fair trials, we refer to a moral conviction that is part of a *Menschenbild*.

(4) *Orientation*: *Menschenbilder* serve as points of orientation, in a double sense: First, our *Menschenbilder* inform us about what to expect from other people. For example: We usually expect that people behave more or less rationally in normal circumstances. We can expect this only because we are convinced that humans are rational beings. Our *Menschenbilder* thus tell us what we can expect from each other. They are the fundament of mutual expectations and of the determination of what is normal human behavior. Second, *Menschenbilder* serve as models, especially in education. Our *Menschenbilder* tell us which features a human being should have and which faculties he or she should develop.[18]

(5) *Identity Formation*: *Menschenbilder* are important for our identity. They tell us what the core features of the human being are. By this, they tell us not only what is important in human beings as such, but also tell *me*, who understands myself as a human being, what I am in my core, what is important in my life, where the goals and the meaning of my life lie. *Menschenbilder* thus are existentially significant, because they are deeply interwoven with our self-understandings and our identities.

Final Remarks

The aim of this paper was to elaborate on a concept which goes back to Nietzsche and has since then become popular in the German speaking (academic) world: the concept of *Menschenbild*. *Menschenbilder* are more or less coherent bundles of crucial convictions about the human being in general. They are ubiquitous phenomena, for every one of us believes in a *Menschenbild*. As we share many of our anthropological convictions with a few or even with most people in our society, it makes sense to distinguish individual, group-specific and societal *Menschenbilder*, of which the last one is the most important as it forms the core of the two other two. In our everyday lives, these bundles of convictions play an important role. They function like higher-order typifications, which are equipped with epistemic and moral authority. As such, they are an important – and powerful – element of the epistemic and moral orders by which we conceive and understand the world.

Even though it was not possible in this paper to give a full account of all three insights Nietzsche had, it should have become clear what a

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[18] This is the main reason why the issue of *Menschenbild* plays such an important role in German educational science.

Menschenbild is and why it would be important to further investigate into this subject.

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Part II

Learning Self-awareness of Life

5.

Learning for Self and Learning for Others: A Postmodern Reflection

Vincent Shen (†)

Learning for Self and/or Learning for [Many] Others

Confucius' saying, "In the old days people learn for self, nowadays they learn for others" (*Analects* 14:24), was interpreted by the Neo-Confucian philosopher, Mou Zongsan, as a kind of *weiji zhi xue* (learning for self). Thus this passage has been taken as the textual justification of a philosophy of subjectivity, according to which one's learning process should focus principally on one's self-cultivation instead of or prior to service to others. Emphasizing a philosophy of subjectivity, one would interpret the meaning of Confucius' "humanity" as the self-awareness of one's own subjectivity. This legacy of emphasizing the self, the "inner sage," has been followed by scholars such as Tu Weiming, Liu Shuhsien and Huo Taohui, etc., who all speak of "Confucianism as a learning for self." The recent unearthed bamboo slips, in which the character *ren* is composed of *sheng* (body) and *xin* (mind), are taken by Tu Weiming as another textual support for this interpretation.

However, apparently, Confucius does not seem to be saying anything that is biased in favor of either "learning for others" (為己之學) or "learning for oneself" (為人之學). The reading of such distinctions between "learning for self" and "leaning for others" raises two questions: whether there is a discrimination between the present and the past; whether it implies a connection between "learning for self" with the *junzi,* and "learning for others" with *xiaoren*, as Xunzi does.

As I see it, in this proposition of Confucius proposition there seems no immediate evidence that gives support to the discrimination between the past and the present, the "learning for self" and the "learning for others." For a good Confucian there should be creative continuity between the past and the present, and interaction between self and many others. As to the distinction between these two phases of time, past and present, there seems to be no discriminatory opposition. In Confucius' usage, "the present days" may, at its most, be seen as a way to say things of a lesser degree, or of some minimal requirements, rather than as a discriminatory opposition. The following is an example

> Zi Lu asked what constituted a complete person. […] The Master then added, 'But what is the necessity for a complete

person *of the present day* to have all these things? The man, who in the view of gain, thinks of righteousness; who in the view of danger is prepared to give up his life; and who does not forget an old agreement however far back it extends – such a man may be reckoned a complete person' (*Analects* 14:12).

Confucius uses these temporal terms (past, present) to show a little bit of a comparative sense between two different ways of facing life issues. For example

The Master said, '*In the past,* men had three failings, which now perhaps are not to be found. The high-mindedness of antiquity showed itself in a disregard of small things; the high-minded-ness of *the present day* shows itself in wild license. The stern dignity of antiquity showed itself in grave reserve; the stern dignity of the present day shows itself in quarrelsome perverse-ness. The stupidity of antiquity showed itself in straightforward-ness; the stupidity of the present day shows itself in sheer deceit' (*Analects* 17:16).

We may say that Confucius' use of these two terms, past and present, indicates three ways of comparison: a comparison of a lesser and even a minimal degree, a comparison without any discrimination, and finally a comparison between a higher degree of vice while looking down to the present days. Nevertheless, for Confucius, there is no discriminatory opposition, while there is always a Confucian effort of learning from the lower level to reach the higher level.

Regarding the second question: the connection between "learning for self" with the *junzi* and "learning for others" with *xiaoren*, historically, the interpretation of "learning for self" and "learning for others" is always linked with the distinction between *junzi* and *xiaoren*, thus to a dis-crimination of personality. This could be traced back to Xunzi in his *Chuanxue pian* (Chapter on Exhortation to Learning), which says, "Schol-ars of old days learn for oneself, scholars of today learn for others. A *junzi*'s leaning is for the purpose of betterment of his own self; however, petty persons learn for (presenting to others for the purpose of) promotion" (Xunzi 1:13). This reading has influenced the later interpretations of Confucius' own words. For instance, the Two Chen brothers say that "scholars in the past learn for self and thereby achieve affaires, however, scholars of today learn for others and thereby lose their self." And they comment this in the context of running for promotion of one's interest in power and profit. Therefore, there is a tradition of a discriminatory reading about *junzi* and *xiaoren*, virtue and profit, the past and the present, leaning for self and leaning for others.

However, for Confucius, the distinction between *junzi* and *xiaoren* should be understood in reference to its moral understanding. When Confucius made this distinction between *junzi* and *xiaoren* he referred to their thinking of *yi* (righteousness) or *li* (profit). As Confucius says, "*Junzi* thinks always in terms of righteousness (*yi*), whereas *xiaoren* thinks only in terms of profit (*li*)." This is a distinction made on the level of persons, based on the fact whether they think of *yi* or *li*. Later this distinction is expanded by Mencius to the political realm. Mencius makes the distinction between *yi* (righteousness 義) and *li* (profit 利) in politics, where it is not a question of putting benefit and righteousness into a dualistic opposition, but to see whether one is searching profit for one's own (self-profit), or for the *common good* of public interest. As the following text says

> Mencius replied to King Hui of Liang, 'Why must your Majesty use the term profit? What I have to offer are nothing but humanity and righteousness. If your Majesty asks what is profitable to your country, if the great officers ask what is profitable to their families, and if the inferior officers and the common people ask what is profitable to themselves, then both the superiors and the subordinates will try to snatch the profit from one another and the country will crumble.' (Mencius, 1A.1, SB, p. 60)

Subjectivity, Alterity and Many Others

Fairly speaking, the subjectivist line of interpretation about one's learning process has its merit in emphasizing human subjectivity, because it has updated Chinese philosophy to face the challenges from European modernity. The essential characteristic of philosophy of subjectivity has been articulated by Descartes as "I think, therefore I am," and other philosophies, regardless of rationalism, empiricism or German idealism. The philosophy of subjectivity presupposed by European modernity, can be summarized as a fundamental philosophical position that takes human subjectivity, with its empirical and transcendental structure and dynamism, as the agent of one's thinking, morality, rights, values and creativity. However, in the post-modern movement of the 70s of last century, this philosophy was questioned, criticized and even denied. For example, the structuralists say that "the author (subject) is dead"; and Althusser claims that "subjectivity is an ideology." In this light, there is a radical shift from the self to the other.

The concept of "the Other" as I see it, still presupposes the dualistic opposition between the self and the other; that is the lesson why I prefer the term "many others." It is healthier to think that we human beings are born into, grow up within and responsible for many others. It were French post-modern thinkers such as Lacan, Levinas, Derrida and Deleuze, who

had effectuated the transition from subjectivity to the Other, although there were various nuances and differences. I propose to replace "the Other" by "many others," because the "Other" is a mere philosophical abstraction. In no moment of our life are we facing purely and simply the "Other." We are all born into many others and grow up among them. For instance, the Confucian concept of *wulun* (五倫 five relationships), the Daoist concept of *wanwu* (萬物 myriad things), and the Chinese Buddhist concept of *zhongsheng* (眾生 all sentient beings), all imply an undeniable idea of "many others." It is much better to think about the existence of many others and our relation with them.

Although subjectivity has been seen as relational and responsive to many others in a concrete ontology, it is still the best legacy of European modernity, and cannot be neglected if we want to have our human dignity, In terms of relatedness and responsiveness we have to make a change from the concept of the self as pure and absolute subjectivity to that of self-in-the-making. This means that our self is in the process of formation: we achieve our self when we act or create morally, artistically or in a position of public responsibility. This achievement of an act of creativity leads to a further process of formation. In this process we find some kind of subjectivity, which is relational and responsive according to Chinese philosophy. For example, regarding moral experience Mencius says "return to oneself to see its sincerity"; in terms of artistic experience, *Dao* manifests itself through an artist's eye, in landscape painting, for he/she receives inspiration from both the creative nature and one's original heart. These experiences are still subjective in the sense of a self-in-the-making which is related and responsive to many others, even to the ultimate reality, Heaven or *Dao*.

Thus, there is a great difference between European modernity and the Confucian relational and responsive subjectivity in artistic and moral experience. First, it is in being relational and responsive to many others that the Confucian subjectivity is achieved in the moral/ethical act or the artistic act of creativity. Through fulfilling one's moral and artistic subjectivity it is possible to obtain *Dao* or at least refer to the ultimate reality, whereas the European idea of subjectivity focuses merely on intellectual subjectivity and is unable to reach the ultimate reality. For example, Kantian subjectivity as shown on the level of understanding is valid in constituting empirical knowledge that reaches only phenomena and never noumena. Kant postulates free will, immortal soul and God in the context of human moral action. Indeed, these are noumena, a negative concept that one will never be able to know intellectually; however, one should still postulate them because of the nature of moral action (To act morally is to act freely…etc.). In Chinese philosophy one consciously refers to the ultimate reality in one's moral experience, knowing that one is dealing

with the ultimate, even if it is probably too strong to call it an "intellectual intuition," as Mou Zhongsan does. Nevertheless, there is a reference from moral subjectivity to the ultimate reality. The only difference between Mou's position and what I humbly sustain is that one achieves one's subjectivity in the process of being in relation and in response to many others.

In terms of the postmodern challenge to modern subjectivity, does it suffice to have an idea of intersubjectivity? I think it is not, because the concept of postmodern intersubjectivity is only an extension of subjectivity, namely, that I am a subject and recognize you also as a subject. This still belongs to European modernity. In modern times, we have already had the Hegelian concept of *Anerkennung* (recognition). However, this concept neglects the fact that other people, or many others, also have their proper languages, their unique faces (visage) and their personalities. Thus, it is not enough to move from the philosophy of subjectivity to that of intersubjectivity. It is important that the postmodernists propose to move from the concept of the self to that of the Other, but I propose to move further from the concept of the Other to that of "many others."

Despite their difference there is a merit to compare the Confucian saying of learning for oneself to modern subjectivity and traditional Chinese philosophy, despite their difference. Philosophically speaking, this is not the best way of reading this text, neither is it the most balanced view to look at the relation between the self and many others from a Confucian perspective. If we study philosophically the constitution of subjectivity, we can see that, right from the start, there are always contributions from many others on a basic level. Not only our life is given by our parents, in a certain sense life is a gift, but also other things that are most important for life come from others. For example, the language, including the term "self," by which we constitute a meaningful world, indeed comes from many others and from a cultural tradition. When we were a child, starting to learn a language, our parents and others generously and patiently talked to and taught us, only then we learned how to use words. Thus, we may say that language comes to us as a gift from many others. Tracing back to its origin, our desire for meaningfulness, more original than language, comes from our desire in the body before we can achieve a more mature form of mind; this desire by nature directs us always towards other people and other things. This form of our mind as desire cannot be denied, although it still has to be promoted into a more elevated form of mental self, such as the cognitive, moral, artistic, and even the religious and spiritual. In this light, there is a contribution from many others right from basic forms of our existence as evidenced by our desire and language.

Based upon my reflections on what Paul Ricoeur writes in his book *Oneself as Another*, I have pointed out elsewhere that there are three levels of otherness constituting our self. First, in terms of our lived body, many

others have already contributed to the formation of the self in the perceptive, affective and kinesthetic activities of our body. Our body is always related to other people and other things in its perception, affection and movement. Second, the other is constitutive of our self on its narrative level. In the personal story of each of us there are always many others intervening in the unity, integrity of what Dilthey calls "the total relatedness of one's life." Third, on the ethical level, there is always action and intention to live a good life with many others and for many others in institutions of justice.[1] An ethical life is always a life of the common good with many others. Without consideration of many others, there is no ethics at all. Only when we take into account many others in our thought and action and our common good with them, there is the dimension of ethics.

Learning to Be Human: From the Body and Its Desire Upward

As Thome Fang points out, a Confucian is a man of time. This not only means a Confucian acts in a proper time, that he lives according to the token of time, but also that he should pay attention to the change and development of a person in the process of time. This should begin from one's childhood, as Confucius says: "It is not till a child is three years old that it is allowed to leave the arms of its parents" (*Analects* 17:21). This saying of Confucius can be seen as a description of our reliance on our parents (and other significant others) during our childhood.

Let us start from the most basic level at which we become human, namely, the growth of our body in time. Although, phenomenologically speaking, it is necessary to make a distinction between "body as lived" and "body as organism," both expressions are different and yet related to the degree that we cannot totally separate them existentially. For a human person, the relation between body and mind develops over the years. This process of becoming human cannot be neglected. In the following, I will discuss the stages in which we become human.

As a new born baby, one does not have yet the corporeal unity as its body is still an organism, it is impossible to have any experience of subjectivity. It is only after the first six to eighteen months of one's life that one feels a certain sense of unity in one's body-organism that one starts to have a sense of the "I," reflected in the eyes of her mother, that one is loved by her mother or another person who brings one up. There is also the "I" as reflected in the image of the double, i.e., when the child sees another one of more or less the same age he/she sees as his/her double, just like the image reflected in a mirror. It is because of these reasons that Jacques Lacan calls this stage of our childhood the "stage of the mirror."

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[1] "La visée de la 'vie bonne' avec et pour autrui dans les institutions justes. See Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990), 202.

From three to six years old, one enters into what Eric Ericson calls a "stage of intrusion." At this stage one takes initiatives to learn and to intrude into one's tiny environment with curiosity, and develops one's trust and affective energy toward those who are close by, from parents to siblings and other significant others. As teenagers, one develops one's self-identity, looks for more intimate or new relationships, and wants to define one's role in the community, sometimes even aggressively. In this period one is looking for autonomy and with a stronger sense of subject-tivity. As a mature person, one has a more balanced relation of subjectivity and relatedness, the self among many others, and thus forms one's self in society and contributes to society through the uniqueness of one's personality.

This is a short psychological account of the developmental process which leads up to the formation of one's subjectivity. However, this account of developmental psychology needs a solid philosophical foundation. Let me say it in this way: the human mind is emerging from one's body as a dynamism and going outside of itself towards the goodness of many others as well as the self. As Mencius says, "Good is that which is desirable." The initial orientation of our desiring desire is going in the direction toward the good of the self and of many others. This is not limited to so-called good men. Even a bad man, so to speak, e.g., a robber, wants the good for him or for his children, although this is done by an evil act or object, or, in the case of a robber, by his action in depriving others from their goods in favor of his own good, and therefore is considered as an evil.

From the perspective of body/mind unity the *Doctrine of the Mean* (Centrality and Commonality) says, "the state of mind prior to its mani-festation into happiness, anger, sorrow and joyfulness, is called centrality; and when manifested in due measure, it is called harmony." This should be understood as saying that, in its original state, prior to its manifestation into happiness, anger, sorrow and joyfulness, in other words, in its tran-scendental core, the mind is called centrality. While on its empirical level, where psychological reactions are motivated by particular objects of desire, one has the states of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joyfulness. All these states require *li* (ritual) to coordinate in due measure into harmony. Normally, only the sage can achieve centrality and obtain harmony. As for human beings in general, we should relate this centrality and harmony to the mind/heart, not only to that of the sages, but also of the commoners, of men on the street. This saying should be applicable not only to adults, but also to children.

If we put this centrality back to the ordinary level, we have to recon-sider the relationship between the empirical and the transcendental. The transcendental dimension of the self, or the centrality, is a manifestation. Although it is inexhaustible in its manifestations, no centrality cannot

manifest itself. Otherwise, why should there be manifestations in a duly measured way and thereby become harmony? There should be no presupposition of any purely static and non-manifest centrality, since this is unattainable. The centrality in question is dynamic and not exhaustible in all its manifestations. A Confucian should think that his/her transcendental self is dynamic and creative in time in directing towards and in responding to many others.

We should not separate desire from the function of mind/heart, or even put them into a dualistic opposition, or take desire as merely a lower part of human mind/heart. On the contrary, we should consider desire as essential for the composition and the function of our mind/heart. Indeed, the transcendental dynamism, which, pushes all human mind/heart into action and further into the entire process of perfection, is our desiring desire. If we take both a sage and a man in the street, an adult and a child, and indeed, humans of all ages into consideration, we can reinterpret this centrality or transcendental self broadly as the starting point of the desiring desire, or the transcendental dynamism of desiring. This desiring desire aims at any desirable goods, and can evolve into much higher levels, such as *xin* (mind/heart) and *sheng* (spirit). Nevertheless, it still serves as the fundamental mode of energy. The desiring desire is always motivated by the desirable as its beginning outlet and thereby manifesting itself. This can then be concretized in a specific object, and becomes the desired desire with the desired object. Philosophically, we may discern the good as desirable and its object as desired, but in the real act of desire, they go together most of the time. In fact, what is intended is always the good as desirable; what is perceived as the desired is always a specific object of our desire. In the case of *Zhongyong*, the desired desire should be in harmony by due measures, such as self-cultivation, temperance and the ritual.

If seen from today's perspective, desiring desire is the transcendentally true state of human inner dynamism toward meaningfulness, that is, an internal energy that looks for meaning in directing towards many others, including other people, other things and abstract entities such as ideals of life. Thus the desiring desire is to be expressed through the desirable and the interpretation of the desirable as concrete desired objects, either people, or things or more abstract entities. In comparison, the presupposition of a pure and static state of non-manifest centrality is very problematic: this might be a pure, ideal and static metaphysical state. However, we should deny such a non-manifest, static ultimate reality. This supposedly pure and static metaphysical state of centrality is denied, and thus deconstructed, by Confucius himself, who says at the end of the first paragraph of the *Zhongyong* that "it is impossible to arrive at the common centrality"! This negative claim of Confucius has puzzled many readers. In fact, it is saying that, without a mystic experience of the sage in his Heaven/man

union, it is impossible to obtain the cosmological centrality that "holds heaven and earth in the right position and lets all things raise as they should be." For a commoner, there is indeed a metaphysical jump between the transcendental psychology of centrality and this cosmological effect. Except in the case of the sage's mystic experience, which penetrates from the psychological centrality of the sage into the cosmic and therefore metaphysical centrality, it is impossible to overcome this huge gap. That is why, from here at the end of first section, the text of the *Doctrine of the Mean* turns towards "sincerity," which is more accessible to everybody and achievable by everyone.

In the *Guodian Bamboo Slips*, the character of *ren* (humanness) is written in the form of body with heart, thus we can say that Confucians take it that the internal connection between body and mind is humaneness. This does not mean that one should put learning for oneself in priority, as Tu Weiming does, who takes it as the textual justification of this priority. However, in other earlier texts, *ren* is also written in the form of man and two, so that the connection between two people makes humanness. There must be some sort of creative continuity from "body and mind as humanness" to "two people as humaneness," to say that human beings should have some unity of body and mind in order to be sensitive and responsive to many others, beginning with two people. I am saying that, even if the word *ren* is composed of *sheng* (body) and *xin* (mind), this is not an etymological evidence of the primacy of learning for oneself. In fact, there is a contrasting connection between body/mind and many others. This might say that when one's body and mind are well coordinated and responding to each other, one may have both self-awareness and the ability to respond to many others, including other people and other things.

Here I would like to develop a more balanced view with regard to the human body, mind and desire. I will do this by a rereading of Dai Zen 戴震 (1724-1777) with the help of my understanding of Jacques Lacan (1901-1981),[2] a French psychoanalyst. Hence I would call the original state of the heart, or shortened as original heart (*benxin*) the "desiring desire" if seen from the perspective of its "direction towards" the most basic, fundamental forms of human mind, including humans of all ages and all types of personality. Desiring desire is related, yet different from the desirable desire that goes in the direction of the good for it. What is desirable is always good, as Mencius says, "the desirable is good." However, the desiring desire as *benxin*, and the desirable desire as beginning movement of heart (beginning heart 初心 *chuxin*) are always to be concretized and thereby interpreted in a particular object or objects. The desire that has a specific object is what I call "desired desire," which pro-

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[2] "Desire is the language of the other." Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 524, 838.

duces thereupon happiness, anger, sorrow, joyfulness, like, dislike, lust, etc. Since desiring desire is always energy to go, even unconsciously, beyond one's self-enclosure, to reach other people and other things; and the desired desire always directs to the good of something or some person, it is unselfish in its original form and its beginning movement towards good. Only in the effort to obtain the desired object and further, in enjoying the possession of the object that the "subjectivity" in the form of desired desire could become self-enclosed and thus becomes selfish. In short, the first moment, that is the original state of mind, the *benxin*, the desiring desire, and its beginning movement towards good (the *chuxin*) are unselfish; only when it fixes on an object or objects can it become a selfish desire.

Thus the desiring desire moves towards the desirable desire and then concretizes in the desired object and is thereby interpreted by it. The human *benxin* or desiring desire moves towards the good of other things or other people, and in the movement towards the realization of this good intention, one is aware of it in one's mind/heart and therefore knows the goodness of one's self. It is in this regard that we can agree with Kant that only the good will can be called good without reservation. Nevertheless, a good will, apparently pure as it is, is also related to the goodness of others, and it is through willing the good of others that we are aware of our good will. Thus we can say that the original state of a person, the *benxin* or desiring desire, is moved on the one hand by the good of related others (relatedness), which shows one's original generosity, altruism and love; and on the other hand, by the good of the self that aims at self-realization, freedom and ultimately autonomy.

As I see it, the self of an individual is always a self in the making. Even in its imagined autonomy, the self-realizing self in the making is always relative to other beings, human and non-human: a human person is relatively free and autonomous. The human person, even in searching for her autonomy, still belongs to the same realm of existence to which all other beings belong, as best shown by Confucianism.

Learning to Be Virtuous: Confucian *Ren* and *Shu*

An essential achievement of being human is becoming virtuous. There are two ways of conceiving virtue: creative and repressive. In pre-Qin era, such philosophers as Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, etc. positively conceive virtue in two ways: first, as excellence of human natural abilities; second, as harmonization of human relationship. Their concept of virtue is more creative in the sense that they take virtue to be the positive and always improving the development of human abilities and relationships. However, philosophers of the Song-Ming dynasties, like the two Cheng brothers, Zhu Xi, etc., divide human nature dualistically into physical

temperament and heavenly endowment. They think that virtue consists in repressing human nature temperament, such as bodily desire, while enhancing human nature of heavenly endowment, or, as well said by Zhu Xi, "to discard human desire and well preserve heavenly principle." I will speak more about the creative concept of virtue.

Confucius tries to revitalize the institutionalized human relationships of his time (hierarchical institutions and codes of behavior), through *li*. He traces IT back to its origin and looks at *ren* as its basis. This signifies the sensitive interconnectedness between one human being and another, between nature and heaven. *Ren* manifests the human being's inner self and responsibility, the original sense of one's ability to respond and one's sincere moral awareness. Also, *ren* means the ontological interrelatedness giving support to all social and ethical life. In my interpretation, *ren* means ontological interconnectedness and the responsiveness of human beings to many others, including beings that are not human. With *ren*, the human being has an inner dynamism that causes him/her to generously go outside of him/herself to many others without losing his/her own sense of self. That is why Confucius says that *ren* is not remote from or difficult for any human being; when an individual wills *ren*, he/she will find it already within him/herself. In saying this, Confucius lays a transcendental foundation to human being's interaction with nature, society and heaven. In this philosophical context, responsibility was understood as the ability to respond to many others, rather than a burden that one must bear, or merely the assumed liability of an agent as conceived by the philosophy of subjectivity. It means that through seeing and responding to the goodness in many others, one can achieve one's selfhood.

It is worthwhile to say something about how Confucius gave the philosophical foundation to *li* (ritual) that had already existed a long time before him but degenerated during his times. Confucius tries to revitalize *li* in the following process. He traces *li* back to the concept of *ren*, humanness or humanity, which means love, self-aware interconnectedness with and responsiveness to many others. Confucius says, "Is humanity far away? As soon as I want it, there it is right by me." Fan Chi asks about humanness. Confucius answers, "It is to love other humans" (*Analects* 12:22). "Only the man of humanity knows how to love people and hate people" (*Analects* 4:3). In response to Zi Gong's comments, Confucius says, "A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent. To be able to judge others by what is near to ourselves may be called the method of realizing humanity" (*Analects* 6:28).

Confucius derives from *ren* the concept of *yi*, righteousness, the respect for and proper actions to others. As he says: "The superior person understands rightness; the inferior man profit" (*Analects* 4:16). "The

superior person regards righteousness (*yi*) as the substance; He practices it according to propriety (*li*). He brings it forth in modesty. And he carries it to conclusion with faithfulness" (*Analects* 15:16).

From the concept of *yi*, Confucius derives *li*, the ritual, rites, proprieties, decorum, etc., the essence of which is to be understood as order in beauty and harmony. As Youzi says: "Among the functions of *li* the most valuable is that it establishes harmony. That is the beauty of the way of ancient kings, who followed it in all occasions, large or small" (*Analects* 1:12). I suppose these words of Youzi have indeed caught the essence of what Confucius thinks of *li*. For Confucius, *li*, as an overall concept of cultural ideal, means a graceful order leading to harmony, or harmony imbued with a sense of beauty.

In other words, the Confucian concept of *ren* denotes the internal relationships between human beings and all things existing in the universe (heaven and earth). By reason of *ren*, human beings can be affected by and respond to one another, and, further, by the act of *shu*, they can extend to larger realms of existence beyond themselves, to others, to family, to social community, to the state, to all under heaven, now interpreted by the term globalization. The network of this dynamic relationship cannot be said to exist in the form of substance, neither can it be said not to exist, to be nothingness. It is always present, dynamically developing, not only on the ontological level but also on the ethical and existential level.

Now, let me focus more on the virtue of *shu*. In my view, the virtues of being able to step out of one's self-enclosure and be generous to many others are the most essential in any society, in particular, in today's world of globalization. This act is the most natural, yet self-aware way of realizing the moral request of our original desiring desire. Thus, in Confucianism, *shu* could be seen as a basic virtue. Although quite often translated as "altruism" (Chan: 44), or "putting oneself in other's place" (Ames: 92), or even as "using oneself as a measure to gauge others" (Lau: 74), it is best understood and interpreted in terms of strangification, in the sense that "he who practices *shu* knows how to strangify" (*shu zhe shan tui* 恕者善推) and "extend from oneself to other people" (*tui ji ren* 推己及人).

In the *Analects*, not much is said about *shu*, though it was said by Confucius himself to be the expression to act upon till the end of one's life. "When Zigong asked, 'Is there one expression that can be acted upon till the end of one's days?' The master replied, 'There is shu 恕: do not impose on others what you yourself do not want'" (*Analects* 15:24; Roger Ames: 189).

Here *shu* was understood in the spirit of the negative golden rule, "do not impose on others what you yourself do not want." The same negative golden rule was repeated by Confucius when answering Zhonggong's question about *ren* (*Analects* 12:2, Roger Ames 153). Based on this

repetition and the fact that they have the same definition, we can see a close relationship between *ren* and *shu*. On the other hand, a positive golden rule was given in answer to the question about the concept of humanity (*ren*), also addressed to Zigong, "A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes others, wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others" (*Analects* 6: 30, Chan, p.31).

Both negative and positive golden rules are, in Confucian terms, based on a reciprocal relationship between the self and the other. With *shu*, one extends one's existence to larger circles. It is the act of going always beyond oneself to many others, from the self to the family, from the family to the community, from the community to the state and from the state to all under heaven. This is the act of "extending or strangifying from oneself to other people" (*tui ji ren* 推己及人). A Confucian existence is an ever-expanding life based on self-cultivation.

The Confucian way of life is extending one's humanity to larger circles, in the process of which one perfects one's self. Although self-cultivation takes priority over many others in the order of moral perfection, strangification or *shu* is always necessary in the order of ethical and political implementation. As Mencius says, "Hence one who extends his bounty can bring peace to the Four Seas; one who does not cannot bring peace even to his own family. There is just one thing in which the ancients greatly surpassed others, and that is the way they extended what they did" (*Mencius* 1:7, Lau: 57).

In Confucianism, the tension between the self and others is normally to be solved by reference to golden rules, both negative and positive, which are based ultimately on the principle of reciprocity. In this sense, in the Confucian world, human behaviors are necessarily regulated by *li*, even the act of going outside oneself to the other initiated by *shu* and the original generosity it implies have to be regulated by reciprocity.

The principle of reciprocity becomes a guiding principle of social and political philosophy in the *Great Learning*. There it is called the principle of measuring square (*Jiejuzhidao* 絜矩之道). There seems to be a positive version of this principle followed by a negative one. Both positive and negative versions are understood in the context where the extension from "governing the state" (*zhiguo* 治國) to making peace within all under heaven (*pingtianxia* 平天下) is explained. The positive version reads

> What is meant by saying that the peace of the world depends on the order of the state is: When the ruler treats the elders with respect, then the people will be aroused towards filial piety. When the ruler treats the aged with respect, then the people will be aroused towards brotherly respect. When the ruler treats compassionately the young and the helpless, then the common

people will not follow the opposite course. Therefore the ruler has a principle with which, as with a measuring square, he may regulate his conduct (Chan: 92).

The major point is the governance by *ren* (humanity): when the ruler governs his people with respect and humanity, his people will respond with peace and harmony. Positive reciprocity is expressed in terms of filial piety, brotherly respect, submissiveness and compassion for the young and the helpless etc., initiated by the ruler. On the other hand, there is also a negative version of the measure of square:

What a man dislikes in his superiors, let him not show it in dealing with his inferiors. What he dislikes in those in front of him, let him not show it in preceding 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 (Chan: 92).

The reciprocity here is extended analogically to the opposite: from superior to inferior, from inferior to superior; from right to left, from left to right; from front to behind, from behind to front etc.; thereby it forms a cubic relationship, not merely a square, of reciprocity, though always in a negative sense. Within this cubic structure of reciprocal relationship, attention is paid more to the horizontal, that is, from right to left, from left to right; from front to behind, from behind to front, than to the vertical relation between superior and inferior, which is mentioned only once. Nevertheless, the concept of "extended reciprocity" plays a major role in this largest extension of human relations – from the state to all under heaven.

The Person as the Ontological Foundation of Moral Life in Times of Globalization

Now, let me come up to the ontological level of my philosophical reflection on human nature. For this purpose it is necessary to take into account the current stage of human history, namely, the process of globalization. I define globalization as a historical process of border-crossing, in which human desire, human interconnectedness and universalizability are to be realized on this planet as a whole, and to be concretized in the present global free market, trans-national political order and cultural globalism. The leading element of this historical process is advanced technology, which is creating a dynamically expanding network of quick and rapid

transportation and information via the Internet, iPhone, iPad, etc. The essence of this advanced technology, on the one hand, is to connect, to establish relations, to communicate with each other and to get information in order to increase our understanding of the world, for example by driving comfortably in a well-equipped automobile, or listening to music of all kinds with earphones in an almost isolated island of sense. On the other hand, advanced technology is also increasing each individual's autonomy and self-reflection. Indeed, globalized technology has a profound effect on people's everyday life and cultural development.

Thus, in re-thinking the Kantian question "What is man?" we should avoid the one-sidedness of defining man either only by his autonomous self, as many modern Western philosophers since Descartes and Modern Neo-Confucians like Mou Zongsan do; or merely by human relatedness with other beings, as emphasized by A.N. Whitehead's concept of universal relativity (relatedness) and Chinese philosophers like Wang Yangming's concept of Feeling with the whole universe as forming one Body. Rather, we should take into account both her autonomous self and relatedness, different but complementary, when considering human nature.

Human relatedness and human freedom differ in their unity and unite in their difference. This inspires me to a philosophical insight that a person is constituted, in her innermost dynamics, by an original direction toward goodness of the self and many others. What the *Zhongyong* calls the *zhong* 中, or what Mencius called the *xin* 心, or even "original heart" (*benxin*), is thus defined as central to a human person. Confucius himself emphasizes the connection and balance between "learning for others" (為己之學) and "learning for oneself" (為人之學). He never in any way says anything that is biased on learning for one's self, because he sees *ren* as the ultimate foundation of both the self and many others, relatedness and self-realization. *Ren* is the related self-awareness or the self-aware relatedness of the human person. To learn to be human is to learn to live in this related self-awareness or the self-aware relatedness.

The impact of advanced technology on the human relatedness and human beings is ambiguous. On the positive side, the advancement of technology has promoted human freedom and extended the networks of relatedness. On the negative side, it gives rise to the abuse of free will through blind acceptance and passive determination by technical systems. In this context, if human beings want to be the master and not the slave of technology, they must restore the concept of person as the center of moral/ethical life. The problem is not how technology undermines the autonomy and relatedness of the human person, but rather how we view the advancement of technology. It should be seen as moved by the desire of the human person to promote autonomy and extend relatedness with other beings.

In terms of the positive impact of advanced technology on human being's moral/ethical life, the human person is constituted and moved by both the desire of good, both for others (relatedness) and for the self (self-realization). Such an understanding of the human person preserves the person's wholesome and innermost dynamism and avoids the one-sided philosophies, such as Kant's autonomous free will as a postulate of moral action, or Modern New Confucian Mou Zongsan's moral subjectivity as infinite free mind/heart (*zhiyou wuxian xin* 自由無限心). These philosophers see the person only from the aspect of self-realization, freedom or ultimate autonomy. However, classical Confucianism seems to underline the aspect of relatedness of the human person with nature, society and Heaven.

To avoid one-sidedness, we should understand the "person" as constituted and moved by her desire for both self-realization and relatedness. These two constituents of the human person interplay in a dialectical manner toward the full realization of humanity. The human being has to realize his/her meaningful life through the rhythmic movement of two interplaying moments: the desire for self-realization, freedom and autonomy, and the desire for connectedness, relatedness and the good of related others.

In order to realize one's desire for self-realization, one has to take distance from (*epoché,* in the phenomenological sense) all external and heterogeneous constraints coming from other things, such as nature, society, even transcendent beings, than one's own will. One must disengage oneself from all external constraints and act according to one's own free decision. It is obvious that a person's free will cannot set up norms of action against her own self-realization. On the contrary, each person tends to act in a way that enhances her self-realization to the highest degree. In this sense, we can accept the autonomous self as posited by Kant and Modern New Confucianism, but not as a mere condition of possibility or formal postulate, nor as an infinitely free subject denying any transcendent divinity. The self is autonomous in the sense that a person tends towards the full realization of her own potentiality and the fulfillment of the meaning of existence in her unique way.

It is crucial for a moral person, in her ethical life, to internalize essential moral norms and form a stable moral character. These have to be derived from the inner dynamism of human nature. In terms of the function of moral norms a person needs to conduct her action in concrete situations in order to develop his/her relatedness with other beings and realize the autonomy of his/her self. Because it is a kind of mediation, through which a person can extend her existential interconnection with other persons and beings and affirm her autonomy at least partially in concrete situations.

From each person's interrelatedness with other beings, we can set up the norm of love. This norm is summarized in what Confucius calls "to love men" (*ai ren* 愛人) (Chan: 40), or what Mencius says as "The man of humanity loves others" (*renzhe airen* 仁者愛人) (Chan: 77). Love can be defined as a tender concern for the goodness of others, which reveals and purifies one's existential relatedness with other beings. Through love, the realization of goodness of the loved one and/or that of other people can contribute to the goodness of the self.

From the norm of love we can also develop the norm of respect for life, which is quite universalizable in all civilizations. This norm is expressed, in a negative way, as the prohibition of hurting or killing any person or any sentient being. In a positive way, it is expressed as the moral demand to save others' life when threatened and to improve it.

From each person's desire for self-realization, it is possible to derive the moral norm of justice. The concept of justice has been defined by thinkers and scholars in many different ways. Confucius focuses on righteousness or moral justice, which represents mainly the moral norm that one should respect in a proper way the other human person's innermost desire and therefore that person's right to self-realization. A Confucian should be always concerned with righteousness, namely, respect for each person's right and the duty to deal with each person properly. This respect can be ultimately based on human love for the good of many others, that of *ren*, which means both humaneness and love for others. Thus, for the relatedness and responsiveness to others, we can derive the respect for others as righteousness.

With this original generosity towards other's goodness and sense of respect, there comes a situation of reciprocity in which the original/moral sense of justice becomes fairness, both in the allocation and exchange of wealth, power and other social goods. I think, what John Rawls calls "justice as fairness" is to be understood in the sense of "distributive justice," which is, in fact, secondary in comparison to moral justice, that is, distributive justice is morally significant only when it contributes toward the self-realization of the person in question. This is because if the human person's right to self-realization is not respected, there is no justice in the distribution of power and resources. The same is true of justice in exchange, which demands that commercial exchange should be in equal values. When distributive justice and justice in exchange are not respected, or even abused by violence, there shall be retributive justice. This means that retributive justice is derivative from distributive justice and justice in exchange, because often an offence against these forms of justice brings about retribution. In turn, distributive justice and justice in exchange are derivative from moral justice, because they are based on the respect for each person's right to self-realization and the demand to treat each person properly, both of which are necessary to maintain and implement distrib-

utive justice and justice in exchange. From the norm of moral justice, we may derive other relevant norms, such as respect for human rights, which can be concretized in a bill of human rights. Of course, its contents might vary from one country to another.

In the process of moral/ethical praxis, the internalization of these norms should contribute to the formation of some basic moral characters. In this time of globalization, the contemporary world needs human persons with moral characters of both commitment and critical reflection. On the one hand, love demands a moral character of commitment. This does not mean a blind engagement in actions without knowing the cause. Rather, commitment is self-conscious participation in the active realization of people's common goodness and togetherness. A Confucian is always committed to the common good, starting in his/her family and extending to the community, the state, or all under heaven.

On the other hand, justice demands a moral character of critical reflection or critique. Confucius always invites his students to think critically. For example, he praises Zi Gong for his critical questioning and critical comments:

> Zi Gong said, 'What do you think of a man who is poor and yet does not flatter, and the rich man who is not proud?' Confucius replied, 'They will do. But they are not as good as a poor man who is happy and the rich man who loves the rules of propriety.' Zi Gong said, 'The Book of Odes says, *as a thing is cut and filed, as a thing is carved and polished.* Does that not mean what you have just said?' Confucius said, 'Ah! Ci. Now I can begin to talk about the odes with you. When I have told you what has gone before, you know what is to follow' (Chan: 21-22).

Confucius encourages critical reflection and also enjoys the learning process in which "*a thing is cut and filed, carved and polished,*" because self-cultivation and learning process can advance through critical reflections. Today "critique" means a self-distancing reflection for each person to attain a just or proper degree of freedom and autonomy proportionate to one's own self-realization in this increasingly complicated and rapidly changing society.

In sum, commitment plays the role of social co-belonging to reinforce one's ontological interconnection with other beings, while critique plays the role of taking distance (distancing) from others in order to make justice possible and proper. Critique and commitment are two moments of the same dynamic movement towards the fuller realization of each person's subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

Conclusion

As argued above, we have first of all to learn to be human. This is achieved with essential contributions from many others, as demonstrated by the facts of obtaining our life, the process of learning language and the movement of our desire. We cannot attain excellence of our natural ability except in a minimally harmonious society. Or it is possible for the natural abilities of each individual to become excellent, only if we can achieve the harmonization of relationship in a society. The core Confucian virtues, such as *ren*, a self-aware interconnectedness between an individual and many others, and *shu*, altruistic extension, make clear that the relation between learning for self and learning for many others is the matter of becoming virtuous. On the ontological level, the human person's tendency towards the good of both self and others is the foundation of our moral life. These basic ideas offer us a more balanced view of the Confucian relation between self and many others, and also a non-biased interpretation of learning for self and learning for others.

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Relearning to Be Human through Love and Friendship: The Contribution of Islam and Christianity

Yasien Mohamed

Introduction

Peace in a society is not only dependent on human rights but also on right humans, not only on good citizens but also good human beings. The cultivation of virtues, including love and friendship, is essential for nurturing a peaceful society. A peaceful society is where people respect each other as ends in themselves and not as means to utilitarian ends.

The theme of love and friendship is well-known since ancient times. Aristotle devoted a whole chapter to this topic in his *Nicomachean Ethics,*[1] which has inspired later generations. This work was translated into Arabic in the ninth century by Hunayn Ibn Ishaq. The *Nicomachean Ethics* inspired classical Islamic philosophers of the eleventh century, such as al-Ghazali, and Christian philosophers of the twelfth century, such as St Thomas Aquinas. The latter scholar was inspired by the creative Islamic and philosophical synthesis of the former. I have chosen two less-famous thinkers for comparison.

This essay will compare the views of Miskawayh, an eleventh century Islamic philosopher, and Stephen Post, a contemporary Christian thinker. I have chosen these two figures as they are both inspired by Aristotelian ethics, and Post is interesting as he is inspired by modern scientific thought.

Aristotle developed a social dimension of love, where the focus is more on the character of a good man who "acts for his friend's sake, and sacrifices his own interest."[2] In Aristotle's view, the various kinds of friendship depend on knowledge of the objects of love, which are good, pleasant or useful.[3] Three kinds of friendship correspond to the objects of love.[4] The motive of friendship is either based on love for utility, pleasure,

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[1] Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, 1984).

[2] Ibid., IX, 8 (1168a, 33-4).

[3] Ibid., VIII, 2 (1155b-56a).

[4] Ibid., VIII, 3 (1156a).

or on love for the character of the person. If for character, friendship is the most lasting; if for utility or pleasure, it is short-lived.[5]

This kind of genuine friendship can only exist among good people and among equals. It does not apply to people of unequal rank, such as between a father and a son, a husband and a wife, a ruler and a subject, or a master and a slave.

A good friend is one who is motivated by genuine disinterested love for his friend. He loves his friend the way he loves himself; he would sacrifice his own interest for the sake of his friend. He loves himself in the good sense, and not in the sense of feeding his ego. Loving oneself is the first condition of Aristotelian love; without an egoistic basis man cannot extend sympathy and love to others.[6] The man of virtue deserves to be loved by those below him. For example, the teacher should be loved by the pupil. The teacher is not obliged to extend equal love to the pupil. Aristotelian love is aristocratic and elitist. The teacher should be more loved than he loves.[7] Aristotelian love and friendship presuppose reciprocity; the love is returned by the other person, but not necessarily in equal proportion. Aristotle sees friendship as an essential component of a flourishing life, and the highest friendship is between two virtuous persons, who love each other because of their goodness. Thus; we need friends to live the good life.

Although directly inspired by Aristotle, Islamic philosophers such as Miskawayh and Christian ones such as St Thomas Aquinas did not follow him blindly, rather they integrated his ideas into their own religious worldviews, and went beyond the narrow views of Aristotle. Within the Christian tradition, the idea of disinterested charitable love is known as *agape*, and hence, the love for another human being is instrumental to the love for God.[8] A similar position is taken by al-Ghazali. Like Aristotle, he holds that friendship is essential for happiness, and for engaging in the virtuous activity of benevolence. For him, Christian charity is human friendship elevated by grace to a new status.[9]

In comparison, the religiously minded views of Miskawayh and Post have broadened these perspectives and extended the concept of love and friendship beyond that of family, friends, tribe and class. Their similar notions of brotherly love extend to all people, including strangers and immigrants. They share a common monotheistic heritage and a common source of influence in Aristotle. Because they are not the best representa-

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[5] Ibid., IX, 1 (1163b-64b).

[6] Ibid., IX, 8 (1168a-69b).

[7] Ibid., VIII, 7 (1158b-59a).

[8] A. C. Grayling, *Friendship* (London: Yale University Press, 2013), 8-9.

[9] Grayling, *Friendship*, 71.

tives of their respective religious traditions, it is important to share the essential beliefs of their particular traditions.

Miskawayh's View

Miskawayh (d. 422/1030) was the first Muslim philosopher to have written a systematic ethical treatise, combining Greek ethics with Islamic teaching. Isfahani (d. 453/1060) and Nasir al-din al-Tusi (d. 673/1274) were inspired by him and made similar attempts. Miskawayh's *Tahdhib al-akhlaq (*Refinement of Character) was the first work on Islamic philosophical ethics. Inspired by Aristotle, he went on to develop an Islamic theory of virtue ethics. He was influenced by the Arabic version of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, which was translated by Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, as mentioned above.

Miskawayh quoted Aristotle extensively in his ethical treatise. He devoted a lengthy chapter on love (*mahabbah*) and friendship (*sadaqah)*, where he combines Arabic ethical terms with philosophical ones.[10] He had access to a Neoplatonic commentary on Aristotle,[11] and used it to re-interpret Aristotelian love in Neoplatonic terms. In his fifth discourse, Miskawayh covers the following areas: the need for cooperation and harmony, the various kinds of love and friendship, how love originates from human fellowship and how it is directed by the revealed Law of the Qur'an, the conduct of the good and the wicked, the virtue of beneficence, the choice of friends and the duties to them, the emergence of virtue within a social context, and the difference between human and Divine virtue.[12]

For Miskawayh, love is free, not constrained by the law. Deeds that emanate from love, emanate from the soul and any virtue of the soul is voluntary and has no limit.

The divisions of friendship are fourfold, depending on the aim of the relationship and its durability. There is friendship that is quick to develop and quick to dissolve, friendship that is quick to develop but slow to dissolve, friendship that is slow to develop and quick to dissolve, and there is friendship that is slow to develop and slow to dissolve. This division corresponds with the three-fold division of the human goals of pleasure,

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[10] Muhammad Arkoun, "Miskawayh," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, Technology, in Islam*, *VII*, ed. Ibrahim Kalin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 144.

[11] Tjitze de Boer, "Ethics and Morality (Muslim)," in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, XI*, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 507.

[12] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, ed. Constantine Zurayk (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1966), 135-173; Miskawayh, *The Refinement of Character*, trans. Constantine Zurayk (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1968), 123-154.

utility or the good.[13] Miskawayh holds that only friendship grounded in virtue will endure.

Love (*mahabbah*) is innate and applies to the whole of humanity, but friendship is confined to a few individuals. There are three kinds of love based on friendship. Each depends on the end which is sought, which may be pleasure (*ladhdhah*), the good (*khayr*), or the useful (*nafi'*). There is also a fourth kind, which is a combination (*mutarakkib minha*) of the three. Love is therefore a result of at least one of these ends.[14] We need wisdom to know what is best for the refinement of the soul.[15] Love (*mahabbah)* is therefore comprehensive, but friendship (*sadaqah*) is specific to a few persons. Friendship among the young is for pleasure and short-lived. Among the old it is for benefit and only lasts as long as the benefit lasts; whereas friendships among the virtuous are for the sake of the good hence lasting.[16]

Virtue is the key to true happiness. It comes from the soul, not from external values such as wealth and friends, although friends that are virtuous can assist in nurturing the soul.

The highest love is the mystical love for God. Ordinary human love is ennobled if subordinated to the love for God, as it is not motivated by pleasure or utility. It is a self-sacrificing love for the other, who is one's brother in humanity. This is a universal love corresponding to *agape*; but undermined by unequal relationships where the greater person is more deserving of love than the other. Miskawayh thinks that the pupil's love should be greater for the teacher, who deserves it; but the teacher needs not to reciprocate love to the same extent. The lower orders of social love, whether among family, friends or spouses, are sanctified because of the love for God.

Mystical love for God does not affect one's love on a social plane. The lower levels of love should lead to this higher love for God. The love of family, friends and spouses provides various kinds of human intimacy, which is the training ground for the love of others, including the unfamiliar and the rest of humanity. Specific forms of familiar friendships, such as love between mother and child, friend to friend, and pupil to teacher, all help towards preparing the person for the wider application of love for the unfamiliar and the stranger.

Miskawayh believes that man is innately social and requires the co-operation of others. He claims that revealed Law provides the scope for

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[13] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 136; Miskawayh, *The Refinement of Character*, 123.
[14] Ibid., 138-139; Ibid.*,* 123-124.
[15] Ibid., 154; Ibid.*,* 138.
[16] Ibid., 137-8; Ibid.*,* 135.

such interaction, which in turn fosters love in a society.[17] Human fellowship is innate, and is the source of all love, which is actualized through the right beliefs.[18] Congregational prayers and pilgrimage provide opportunities for such love to foster. Monastic renunciation is not Islamic according to Miskawayh, rather Islam promotes social unity, which is essential for the expression of love.[19]

Passionate love (*ᶜishq)* is narrow, confined to two persons, but can be praiseworthy if it is extremely good.[20] This corresponds with love as *eros*, which is based on physical attraction and sexual desire, and hence cannot be lasting. The love of the virtuous is for the sake of virtue (*khayr)*,[21] and approximates that of Divine love. This love of the virtuous is superior[22] to erotic love (*eros*) and social love.[23] "The mutual love of virtuous people is not motivated by any external pleasure or benefit, but is due to their essential similarity, namely in aiming at what is good and seeking virtue."[24] This is a relationship of equality, in which both people equally aspire to the good, and you regard your friend as another person who is equal to yourself. This kind of friendship is rare.

Friendship with a king is underscored by excess and deficiency, and so there can be no equality in this relationship. It is a paternal relationship with his subjects. The same applies to the relationship between a father and a child.

Miskawayh gives an example of fatherly love. The father identifies with the child as part of himself, for the stamp of his own human form is on the personality of this child. This is an innate feeling created by God. Miskawayh states: "A father loves his child to such an extent that he comes to desire for him [i.e. the child] all that he desires for himself and strives to educate him and to endow him with all that he himself has missed throughout his life."[25]

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[17] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 29; Miskawayh, *The Refinement,* 25; Mohd Nasir Omar, "Miskawayh on Social Ethics: love and friendship," *Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia Journal* 4, no. 1 (1996): 36-47, 39.

[18] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 140; Miskawayh, *The Refinement,* 127.

[19] Ibid., 140; Ibid., 127.

[20] Richard Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*: *essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 227-228.

[21] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 147; Miskawayh, *The Refinement,* 133.

[22] Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, 228.

[23] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 141-147; Miskawayh, *The Refinement*, 127-134; Majid Fakhry, "Ethical Theories in Islam," in *Islamic Philosophy Theology and Science: Texts and Studies VIII* eds. H. Daiber and D. Pingree (Leiden: Brill, 1991, 1994), 118.

[24] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 144-5; Miskawayh, *The Refinement,* 131.

[25] Ibid., 145; Ibid., 131.

A father's love is superior to that of his child because the father knows the child from the time that he is an embryo, and then, "as the child is brought up and grows, his father's joy in him as well as his expectations for him are strengthened. He becomes assured that his own form will endure in his child, even though his material body may vanish."[26] The child only learns to love his parents later in life, as he is still immature in his early years. Hence, God commands children to love their parents, and not parents to love their children.[27]

Mystical love for God is greater than the child's love for his parents or the disciple's love for his teacher. It is a rare love.[28] The disciple's love for his teacher is closer to this mystical love, as it is the philosophical teacher that will eventually aid the disciple to come close to God.[29] Miskawayh explains why the philosopher's love is the noblest:

> Such a [mystical] love [for God] is tied up with obedience and veneration. A man's love for his parents and the veneration and obedience he renders to them, come near to this love [of God], but no other kind of love rises to the rank of these two, except the love of disciples for the philosophers. This last-mentioned love is intermediate between the first love [that of God] and the second [that of one's parents]. The second love approximates it [love of God] as it is the cause of our sensible existence, or, in other words, of our bodies and our coming into being. As for the third love, namely [our] love of philosophers, it is nobler and superior to love for parents because the philosopher's nobility and rank become reflected in our souls. They are the cause of our real existence and with their help we attain perfect happiness.[30]

Thus, our love for the philosophical teacher is nobler than the child's love for his parents because the philosopher is not concerned with our physical, but our spiritual sustenance. He is our "spiritual father" who nurtures us in wisdom and prepares us for eternal happiness.

The love of the seeker of philosophy towards the philosopher, or of good students towards the virtuous teacher are of the same sort and follow the same line as the first love. This is because of the great good which students envision and attain, the sublime hope which cannot be realized

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[26] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 145-6; Miskawayh, *The Refinement,* 132.

[27] Ibid., 145; Ibid*.,* 131. Miskawayh has in mind a specific verse in the Qur'an that refers to the honoring of parents.

[28] Ibid., 147; Ibid*.,* 133.

[29] Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, 229; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 1831.

[30] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 148, 6-16; Miskawayh, *The Refinement,* 134.

except by the philosopher's care, nor fulfilled except by his attention, because he is a spiritual father and a human Lord, and his beneficence is divine. The philosopher rears the student in complete virtue, nurtures him with consummate wisdom and imbues him with the desire for eternal life in everlasting bliss. The philosopher is the cause of our intellectual existence and the educator of our spiritual souls.[31]

Thus, the love for God is the greatest and the pupil's love for his teacher is akin to it, because the teacher is the cause of our intellectual existence. He has a love for us more elevated than the love of parents, because the love of parents is only concerned with our physical sustenance. The love of the teacher is as pure as the sage's love for God.

Man loves his own soul and if endowed with wisdom, he will choose only what is good for his soul. All that is external to the soul is superficial and could lead to his misery if he does not focus on its divine aspect.[32] Through his focus on God, he can nurture his soul, while the external goods (wealth, health or friends) will be an aid, rather than impediment to his happiness. Friends that are virtuous and concerned with the welfare of one another can only aid in the ultimate happiness of the Hereafter.

A person who is civic by nature will realize his happiness through his friends, "he may find pleasure in them all the days of his life and they also may find pleasure in him."[33] Friendship is an external good and provides the social context to be beneficent. We are born to be social animals. A solitary existence is not conducive for virtue or happiness.[34]

Rational activity is inherent to man: it reflects the divine aspect in him. Acquired virtues and devotion to the Divine deliver man from the shackles of the material, making him happy in the Hereafter.[35] Man's humanity lies in aspiring towards a divine life. Reason enables him to pursue wealth, relatives and friends in moderation, so that he can attain supreme happiness.[36]

Stephen Post's View

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[31] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 149, 1-16; Miskawayh, *The Refinement,* 134; Abdurrahman Badawi, "Miskawayh," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M.M. Sharif (Wiesbaden: 1963), 469-479, 467.

[32] Miskawayh, *Tahdhib*, 154; Miskawayh, *The Refinement,* 138-9, 467.

[33] Ibid., 155, 10-12; Ibid.,139.

[34] Ibid., 67-68; Ibid., 150.

[35] Ibid., 169; Ibid*.,* 150.

[36] Ibid., 171; Ibid*.,* 152-153.

Altruism and Altruistic Love. In his book on *Unlimited Love*,[37] he explores the intersection of science, human experience and the underlying metaphysics of divine love. Post tries to build a scientific basis for unselfish love rooted in the Christian ethical tradition. He was inspired by Sorokin's five characteristics of unlimited love and uses Sorokin as a point of departure for his own theory of love.

Post is not an intellectual giant of the caliber of St Thomas Aquinas, who is perhaps a more fitting example for comparison with Miskawayh. Aquinas and Post were both inspired by a common source, which is Aristotelian ethics. However, Post is a contemporary Christian scholar, who is also inspired by modern science. This is what differentiates his contribution to love and friendship from the classical Christian view. He is unique in the way he has combined Christian ethics, Aristotelian ethics and modern science. His unconventional Christian perspective might not resonate positively with traditional Christians. The classical Christian view of *agape* is that God's love descends into an empty human vessel. There is also an ascending dimension to *agape*, which includes human nature's innate capacity for love, albeit biological self-love. Altruism flows out of this biological self-love, which is further elevated through *agape*. Post's two elements of love, duration and purity, are shared by Aristotle and Miskawayh. As for duration, if love is motivated by pleasure and utility it is of short duration. If motivated by virtue it is lasting. As for extensivity, this is a key element of love, and it is universal as it applies to all people. Post was inspired by Sorokin, who introduced five dimensions of love: intensity, extensivity, duration, purity and adequacy.

For Miskawayh love is confined to specific relationships where the two persons involved are not necessarily of equal status, such as the mother-child relationship, or the pupil-teacher relationship. The love is shared, but not to an equal degree. The superior person deserves greater love. Post shares the view with Miskawayh that love is limited to a few persons only, and that one cannot do justice to attempt love for all; one must be selective. With the rise of the monotheistic religions, this limited love of family, tribe or clan, became extended to a wider community, embracing all of humankind under the shadow of God. Although Miskawayh was inspired by Aristotle, his belief in God took on a universal dimension. His limitation of love did not accord with the Prophetic statement. "He is not a believer who does not love for his brother what he loves for himself." This is also a universal dimension of love, extending beyond superficial differences of class, color, clan or status.

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[37]Stephen G. Post, *Unlimited Love: Altruism, Compassion and Service* (Philadelphia and London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2003), 20-30; see also: Stephen Post, "Unlimited Love" in *Spiritual Information,* ed. Charles L. Harper (Philadelphia and London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2005), 464-470.

The Biblical statement, "Love thy neighbor as thyself,"[38] is more in line with the Prophetic statement, as it is an extensive dimension of love that includes all people. While these religious exhortations may be interpreted to apply only to the Christian or Muslim community, they can surely also be extended to other communities. For Post, self-love is the basis for other-regarding love and can be deepened through the Christian idea of *agape*.

Love can be defined in terms of what it is not. Love is not acquisitive or fleeting; it is not motivated by greed for food, drink, or material possessions; it is not mere sexual pleasure. Sexual intimacy as an expression of spirituality, provided that it is based on commitment, is provided by marriage.[39] Romantic love is based on genuine other-regarding love, but if blended with the vows of marriage in the presence of God, it will invoke a higher love and will save *eros* from becoming spiritually destructive.[40]

Unlimited love, although it includes the mutual benefit of friendship, does not include the expectation that the benefit be reciprocal. Rather than being confined to a few persons, it extends to all people. Mother Teresa is an example of such love. She cares for the destitute, the sick, the stranger, the stranded foreigner. Had she thought of reciprocation, it would have robbed her actions of all sincerity. Her love is an expression of a free soul, not a soul waiting for compensation.[41] She is a good Christian example of self-sacrifice. The sacrifice of one's life under the shadow of the cross is essential to Christian ethical life. The love for others requires a sacrifice of oneself for the sake of others. This unlimited love involves the sacrifice of life, time, effort or possessions.

This love gives freely, liberally from one's own soul, and it is not constrained by the laws of justice. The sacrifice of unlimited love is the free expression of the soul, and this is the mark of sainthood. It does not require reciprocation, as in Miskawayh or Aristotle's conception of love, nor is unlimited love confined to a few friends.

Post cites several verses from the Bible to express the meaning of unlimited love. There are two love-commandments in the Bible: The first is to love God with all one's heart;[42] the second is to love thy neighbor as thyself.[43] The second is made possible by the first: God is ultimately the source of all the love we display toward one another. God awakens in people the knowledge that they should love one another. The second love-

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[38] Mark 12:28-30; Luke 10:26-27.
[39] Post, *Unlimited Love*, 149.
[40] Ibid., 150
[41] Ibid., 151-152.
[42] Matthew 22:37-38; Mark 12:28-30; Luke 10:26-27.
[43] Mark 12:28-30; Luke 10:26-27.

commandment is illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Its clearest rendering comes from Luke 10:

> 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.…And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among the robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down the road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' 'Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed mercy on him.' And Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'[44]

There are two lessons from this parable. The first is that altruism is commanded, not as a virtue, but a duty.[45] The second is that the neighbor in the parable was a mere stranger walking down a road.[46] The love of the Good Samaritan is not directed at a Christian or a Jew, nor at a person of any particular race or class. This is the unlimited love for all persons irrespective of religious persuasion or ideological orientation.

Charles Taylor interprets the parable as an illustration of universal love. He makes a distinction between archaic religions that focused on human flourishing, and the great monotheistic religions that assert the unconditional love and benevolence of God.[47] This means that kin-altruism was born out of a specific social matrix, and members of a given group or tribe could not conceive of their identity beyond their own social context and experience. Christians learn to see themselves beyond their own religious communities and extend their love and care to the whole of humanity. Taylor refers to this process as "disembedding." He argues that the Gospel partly contributed to this disembedding and cites the example of the good Samaritan. The narrow boundaries of the past would not have

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[44] Luke 10:27-37.
[45] Ibid., 10:27.
[46] Ibid., 10:29.
[47] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (London and Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 151.

permitted this help, but the Christian notion of the Kingdom of God involved a universal solidarity rooted in the notion of *agape*.[48]

Following Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas, [and like Miskawayh] Post takes the value of family relations seriously with respect to meeting needs. Biological roles are the primary source of socially beneficial roles. The family provides a loving environment. Parents care for their children almost instinctively. This biological foundation teaches us to be altruistic towards other people beyond our own kith and kin.

This social love is elevated by *agape*, where love is ennobled through the love for God. Love and care are not motivated by pleasure or utility – they are not mere *eros* but transcend it on a spiritual level. *Agape* love for God extends to brotherly love for humanity. This unlimited love draws on *eros* and *philia* [friendship]. It is at once a fondness, a transcending of the particular, and a passion without the necessity of reciprocity.

For Post, unlimited love does not mean ignoring the self, but includes caring for the self with others in mind; this is not motivated by self-interest, but by a "totally different level of being."[49] It is not self-indulgence, but self-stewardship. The one who loves unconditionally, acts from the core of his being; he is unconditionally loved by God.[50] Post enriches his argument in favor of unlimited love with social scientific findings, which show a correlation between intrinsic religiousness and altruistic behavior.[51] Within the monotheistic traditions, the spirituality of love and compassion is supported by the perception of a God whose love is steadfast and whose mercies are tender. Compassionate love relates to the emotion of gratitude in response to the wondrous works of God vis-à-vis His created universe and the emergence of life. It is connected to the emotion of forgiveness before a God who is the all-forgiving.[52] Thus, in this spirit of compassion, love is not merely tribal, but extends to all. Exclusive love for one's group makes it difficult to extend this love to other groups, where one would tend to be more hostile towards others outside one's group. Post quotes Sorokin, who expresses this as a general law:

> If selfish love does not extend to the whole of humanity; if it is confined to one group – a given family, tribe, nation, race, religious denomination, political party, trade union, caste, social class or any part of humanity – such in-group altruism tends to generate an out-group antagonism. And the more intense and

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[48] Ibid., 158.
[49] Ibid., 42.
[50] Ibid., 43.
[51] Ibid., 57-73.
[52] Ibid., 71-72.

exclusive the in-group solidarity of its members, the more un-avoidable are the clashes between the group and the rest of humanity.[53]

Sorokin argues that what is needed is enhanced extensivity – a feature of love that extends to all of mankind. Echoing Aristotle, Post argues that parental love is the most basic, narrow form of love, yet it is also universal in that all parents give and all children receive. [54]

The foundational emotional capacities for unlimited love were formed on the parent-child axis, awaiting only the influence of moral reasoning, culture and spirituality to begin expanding them to include a wider domain. The human capacity for such love encompasses a certain image of God, or at least an opportunity for God to mold that capacity into something better. There is no more pervasive and relatively constant expression of love than its parental form, which suggests that parental love hints at Unlimited Love.[55]

Post acknowledges the evolutionary view of parental love, which is a genetically-driven procreative impulse and instinct, yet it is the most abiding expression of other-regarding emotion. How can it be extended to unlimited love or *agape*, which like God's unconditional love, loves us even though we are unlovable?[56] Theologians contrast *agape* love with the appetitive nature of *eros* and the reciprocal demands of *philia*, but have generally not considered the *eros*, or appetitive love, a basis for the continuity of *agape*. There is scientific support in evolutionary biology which asserts that the powerful nature of parental love is not calculated, but appreciated.[57] Thus, Post argues that parental love is indeed of theological importance. God as a father or mother is reflected in the human heart, and it is this parental love that teaches the child what love is. Through parental love, the child will eventually learn the meaning of God's unlimited love for all. Post integrates *agape* with less universal forms of love, such as the preferential love of *philia*, and elevates it to a higher level.

Again, *agape* does not deny the preferential love of the *philia* quality but purifies it from a sub-personal bondage. It elevates the preferential love into universal love. The preferences of friendship are not negated, nor do they exclude all the others, in a kind of aristocratic self-separation. Not everyone is a friend, but everybody is affirmed as a person.[58]

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[53] Ibid., 37.
[54] Ibid., 104.
[55] Ibid., 104.
[56] Ibid., 106.
[57] Ibid., 107.
[58] Ibid., 113.

Post associates this love with parental love, especially the evolutionary biology's emphasis on the powerful drive of motherly love, which demonstrates a sense of progression in the maturity of love from a mere instinct, to the mutuality of friendship (*philia*), to the unconditional love of *agape*. Post shares with Miskawayh the acknowledgement of the power of parental love. This instinctive love is the seed of the universal love for God and humanity.

Now we will examine more closely Post's notion of unlimited love. Having already alluded to the Good Samaritan who exemplifies such a universal love, Post refers to extensivity as one of the five dimensions of love. This is not the place to elaborate on all five dimensions, but the notion of extensivity is pertinent to the notion of unlimited love. Such a love is not fleeting but lasting, as it is based on understanding and care for the other. *Agape* in the Christian context is the limitless love of God, and Post uses the term unlimited love for *agape*:

> It [*agape*] suggests a form of love that rises above every conceivable limit to embrace all of humanity in joy, creativity, care and generativity; it lies at the heart of all valid and worthwhile spiritual, religious and derivative philosophical traditions; it is often associated with a divine presence that underlies the cosmos and makes life a meaningful gift. Participation in unlimited love is considered the fullest experience of spirituality, giving rise to inner peace and kindness, as well as active works of love towards humanity. It is the opposite of hatred and destructiveness, and is expressed in various ways, including empathy, generosity, care and forgiveness.[59]

Post raises the question: If humans go through life with loving kindness, are they not one with God? He cites the New Testament, "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them."[60] He further states that when we love our neighbor we also participate in God at the level of human nature and at the level of God.[61]

Unlimited love at its highest is God's love for humanity, and we can participate in this love to varying degrees, which means we are in fact participating in *agape*. Post does not agree with the view that unselfish love is purely a divine gift, and that because human nature is locked in an egoism (*eros*), it cannot express this love by itself.[62] He argues that science makes it plausible to believe that our natural capacities for un-

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[59] Post, *Unlimited Love*, 56.
[60] 1 John 7-8.
[61] Post, "Unlimited Love," 464.
[62] Ibid., 465.

selfish, generous love, can be elevated, strengthened and universalized by divine grace, that is, transmuted into *agape*. The human being is not a passive vehicle through which *agape* flows, but rather, unlimited divine love does flow, but not through a passive vehicle.[63] "It is the enlivening, quickening, and transposing non-*eros* capacities that are already part of human motivational structure."[64] For Post, unlimited love is deemed the highest virtue and "a creative presence underlying and integral to all of reality: participation in unlimited love constitutes the fullest experience of spirituality."[65]

Post tries to present a Christian ethical perspective on love's extensivity, and at the same time he draws upon science to support the view that love is itself rooted in our very nature, and so is the basis for unlimited love. Thus, *agape* is not something detached from the human reality, but extends that reality to all humankind. Parental love sees it as the evolutionary basis for the extensiveness of love to embrace the child who is genetically unknown and foreign. He makes reference to the example of adoption.[66]

Love implies a concern for another, and this is demonstrated by parents, even if it means the sacrifice of their life for their offspring. Christianity is partly an attempt to extend such affection to the whole of humanity, including the foreigner, the weak and the enemy. In monotheistic faiths, divine love is parental; our love for God is filial, and our love for one another is brotherly. Unlimited love is to love every person as a member of the family of God.[67]

Post shares with Miskawayh the notion that biological love is the point of departure for social love towards other people. Thus, family love provides the model and inspiration for love of the other, including the stranger.[68]

> What unlimited love we achieve in life is shaped by what we have learned from others through their generosity […] Transposing this to a spiritual level, early Christians confessed: 'We love because he loved us first.'[69] It is natural for a child to respond to in loving ways to parental love. So, too, spiritual persons, who perceive themselves as loved by God, respond in loving attitudes. As they gain insight into God's faithful love for

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[63] Ibid., 466.
[64] Ibid., 466.
[65] Ibid., 469.
[66] Post, *Unlimited Love*, 117-129.
[67] Ibid., 130.
[68] Ibid., 128.
[69] John 4:19.

every person without exception, they also wish to love and serve others in this same spirit.[70]

The contribution of monotheistic religions is that they have extended the love of tribal altruism to the whole of humanity. The spiritual elevation of compassion lifted it above the narrow confines of kin-altruism to love for humankind.[71] The Greek notion of love was supplanted by the Christian *agape*, which was more extensive and includes all people. The parable of the Samaritan[72] is a model of love's extensivity.

This Christian love is not supererogatory, but essential. Jesus commands us to act like the good Samaritan. If it is essential to show kindness to the Jew, then by extension, we should show kindness to all strangers, all foreigners, no matter what race or religion. The parable tells that to love one's neighbor is also to love a stranger: the Jew was a stranger, unknown to the good Samaritan, who cared for him without any expectation of reward. This is really a moral challenge. It is unlike the reciprocal relationship of *philia* or friendship, which involves a mutual benefit. Since all people are the children of God, unlimited love implies that all people are worthy of love.

Conclusion

The foregoing comparison between Miskawayh and Post indicates that true friendship is not based on utility, but on benevolent love, where you wish your friend well at all times whether in prosperity or in poverty, in good fortune or in bad. It is based on a love for its own sake, not for the sake of something else. This love is not an act of duty of the law, nor is it for show or prestige, but rooted in sincere intentions, to care for the other person, no matter what the circumstances. They both recognize the fact that love based on lower desires or utility is fleeting. True love, although based on virtue, does not negate the mundane forms of love, but elevates these lower levels, by subordinating them to the love for God and directing them to be a means for happiness in this world and the next.

Lasting friendship for both Miskawayh and Post is based on virtue, not mere utility and pleasure. However, for Miskawayh, under the influence of Aristotelian partialism, friendship is reciprocal; in unequal relationships, the superior person is more deserving of love and not obliged to reciprocate with love in the same measure. Contrary to this position, Post's Christian conception of *agape* propounds a view that there is unlimited love for all humans, as exemplified by the parable of the Good

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[70] Post, *Unlimited Love*, 130.
[71] Ibid., 131.
[72] Luke 10:37.

Samaritan. Miskawayh's friendship in unequal relationships, and the idea that one party is more deserving of love is pushed aside in favor of the universal equal regard for all. The Good Samaritan helped a stranger in need; he did not think of the person's race, color, or creed. Since all people are the children of God, unlimited love implies that all people are worthy of love.

Miskawayh's notion of God's love for man and man's love for God has its roots in the Qur'ān. Love (*wadūd*) is an attribute of God; every chapter of the Qur'ān opens with the Mercy of God, not His justice. All other lower loves such as wealth and friends are real only in relation to divine love. Post shares with Miskawayh the notion that the highest love is for God, and when this is acknowledged, the ordinary love of human relationships is ennobled beyond measure. Human love, inspired by the love for God, is nobler. It is brotherly love for humanity. This is a universal love corresponding to *agape*.

Both Miskawayh and Post emphasize the biological aspect of parental love, which is the starting point of love, and from which the child learns to love other people. Miskawayh gives the example of the father's love, where the father identifies with the child as part of himself, and that the stamp of his own human form is on the personality of this child. This is an innate feeling created by God. The father's love is superior to that of the child because he knows him from the time that the child is a baby. The child only learns to love his parents later in life. Hence, God commands children to love their parents, and not parents to love their children, because the parental love is instinctive, but the love of the child is acquired. Through parental love the child can eventually learn the meaning of God's unlimited love for all. Post acknowledges the evolutionary view of parental love, which is a genetically driven procreative impulse and instinct. It is this instinctive love which nurtures the child to develop love for other people. It is the basis for the continuity of *agape*, and teaches the child what love is and eventually the meaning of God's unlimited love for all. Thus, both Miskawayh and Post emphasize the scientific basis of love, whereby self-love, starting with the parents, is transformed into the love for all.

Democratic laws of justice and human rights are essential for regulating society, but they are not sufficient for the moral formation of it. Whereas justice is concerned with what is outwardly right, virtues such as love and friendship are concerned with one's inward moral disposition. If we revive the virtues of love and friendship contained in Islam and Christianity, and rearticulate them for our times, we will learn to be good humans and good citizens.

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Part III

The Value of Self-awareness of Life

7.
In Search of "Universal" Values to Live By

Bo R. Meinertsen

Introduction

Life in an increasingly globalized world creates a new challenge for how we should live. By "how we should live" I understand as which *values* we should live by. It is no longer good enough to just single out our favorite values from our own culture and live by them. The values at issue here can be ethical values that concern how an individual should conduct him- or herself, or they can be political ones that concern how large groups and societies should organize themselves. Either way, to my mind, the values we should live by ought to be *universal*, i.e., shared across cultures. I call them "universal values to live by." For brevity, I shall just speak of "universal" values. Other things being equal, the more cultures or culturally significant values included in this quest for "universal" values, the more plausible it is.

Someone might object to a project like this that the philosophical search for "universal" values should be dissociated from the question of how one should live. The former concerns a matter that is objectively true, while the latter concerns an issue that is not. Indeed, in many contexts, especially in the West, how one should live is regarded as highly specific to the individual, provided that certain minimal expectations of not harming others are met.

However, while I recognize that the question of how one should live in this sense is a personal matter, as it were, as opposed to an objective one, I do think living an *examined life* is best done in conjunction with a quest for "universal" values, precisely because our world is becoming so globalized. The world confronts us with an extraordinary diversity of cultures, and a good way of finding common ground among the diverse and often conflicting cultures is to identify what they have in common. By definition, "universal" values are values that we share with people from other cultures. I define values as desired goals and ideals that we strive for, and if this is right, it seems that "universal" values could offer the needed common ground in a quite powerful, strong sense. At any rate, that is my own main motivation for attempting to find "universal" values.

This position is rather unorthodox. Indeed, it is not unusual to encounter the totally opposite position that (one's own) values are to be entirely bracketed in intercultural dialogue to better meet the other parties

of the dialogue.[1] This opinion often goes hand in hand with relativism about values. Although I reject this relativism, I have a sympathy for the stance – when the values are diverse and appear to be mutually incompatible, as is so often the case in intercultural dialogue. Alternatively, some authors may propose highly minimal lists of shared values, such as human dignity, "respect for culture" and "reverence for earth,"[2] or "harmony between societies and different groups."[3] I sympathize with this view, especially in our conflict-ridden world where these minimal values are regularly violated. However, by definition "universal" values are shared by all cultures, so there is no justification for bracketing them or being "relativist" about them.

Three Problems with Understanding "Universal" Values

We face at least three problems when trying to understand "universal" values. First, since there is a great variation in the values considered important to each culture and the number of cultures, the net number of values to take into account are rather high. Indeed, it is so high that there arguably are too many candidate values to be included in any feasible list of "universal" values. Thus the number needs to be somehow restricted. How to do this? Perhaps we can include only the values that are paradigmatic to each culture. This would presumably limit the number of candidate values. Unfortunately, it would bring in a new complication in return to this, namely, the task of distinguishing paradigmatic from non-paradigmatic values. As a way to sidestep this complication, we might instead consider different (current) *civilizations*, rather than cultures. On one influential view, there are only seven or eight current civilizations.[4] What is more, this strategy prima facie has the added bonus of strengthening the project, since by ascending from cultures to civilizations, we move from the particular to the more general.

Second, even if this helps, we now face the further problem that often central values of different civilizations are – or at least appear to be – *incompatible*. This is a problem reflected by Huntington's notorious expression of the "clash of civilizations."[5] For example, the view of the income-

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[1] Ulrich Diehl, "On the Art of Intercultural Dialogue: Some Forms, Conditions and Structures," in *Peace and Intercultural Dialogue,* eds. P.N. Liechtenstein and C.M. Guye (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2005), 128-129.

[2] Jagdish S. Gundara, *Interculturalism, Education and Inclusion* (London: SAGE, 2000), 147-148.

[3] Qing Wang, "Interculturalism, Intercultural Education, and Chinese Society," *Frontiers of Education in China* 12 (2017): 326-328.

[4] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 21.

[5] Ibid., 320-321.

patibility between Western civilization and East Asian civilization, Tu Weiming emphasizes the gap between Western "Enlightenment 'universal' values" (instrumental rationality, liberty, rights-consciousness, due process of law, privacy, individualism) and "Asian 'universal' values" (sympathy, distributive justice, duty-consciousness, ritual, public-spiritedness, group orientation).[6] This incompatibility calls for "civilizational dialogue," as Tu rightly contends.[7] Or consider another related example of individual autonomy of Western civilization in contrast to familial dependence of many non-Western civilizations. In Western civilization, in most cases the individual has the last word on a large range of decisions concerning his or her life. By contrast, in most non-Western civilizations, the last word is often that of the family. I had a striking experience of this contrast in my own life in China when, a few years ago, I was to have some minor surgery in Shanghai. I was taken aback when asked by a local friend and senior adviser if my family had given their consent to the procedure. When I expressed my bewilderment, he immediately recognized that he had, in effect, for a moment forgotten about the difference in civilizational values.

At any rate, there is finally a third problem, in addition to the two difficulties of the vastness and the incompatibility of values. Now, we have limited the search for values to manageable number of candidates, thanks to the restriction to civilizations. Let us assume that we can deal with this problem successfully. We have also recognized that we need to engage in civilizational dialogue to accommodate the incompatibility of values. Even if this is feasible theoretically, so to speak, it is unrealistic in practice. Most people belong only to one civilization and it is doubtful if one can be impartial to the values of another civilization when these are incompatible with those of one's own. True, nowadays, more and more people are gaining cross-cultural and even cross-civilizational experience. But due to limitations of time and other factors, such experience will always be random and rather narrow relative to an ideal civilizational dialogue.

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[6] Tu Weiming. "Implications of the Rise of 'Confucian' East Asia," *Daedalus* 129 (2000): 196-198, 217.

[7] Ibid., 207. Note that most – but not all – of the values mentioned by Tu Weiming are more political than ethical, in the sense I introduced these terms above. However, the "universal" values I shall consider in the remaining sections of this paper include only ethical ones. The reason is that I consider political values to be less fundamental than ethical ones to which they in my view are ultimately reducible. If this is correct – something I shall not go into here – the arguments of this paper hopefully apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to political values as well.

Candidates for "Universal" Values

Now we remain stuck with the dual problems of not only incompatibility between core values of different cultures or civilizations, but also limited and random experience of them. How to solve these problems? I suggest we look at the empirical research into "universal" values. This is research in the social sciences, especially cultural anthropology and psychology, which study values found in all cultures. To observe first that one can distinguish the claim between a candidate for a "universal" value as universally (generally) held and a candidate that *ought* to be universally held irrespective of whether or not it, in fact, is so. One might call values in the first sense "empirical universal values" and "true universal values" in the second sense. This is an important distinction, because it is merely a descriptive task to single out the former. By contrast, the assertion of which values are truly universal is a normative endeavor. I am inclined to think that there probably are few if any empirical universal values that are not truly universal. In this paper I shall not go into the controversial normative debate of arguing for or against any alleged empirical universal value, or their being true universal. Instead, I shall simply assume that the empirical universal values I consider are true universal ones and hence continue to speak of "universal" values without qualification.

Several *prima facie* plausible sources for obtaining a list of "universal" values are available. Some well-known examples are Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's value orientation theory,[8] the Rokeach value survey[9] and, in particular, the cultural dimensions theory of Hofstede.[10] However, none of these theories have been as influential in cross-cultural psychology as the work of Shalom H. Schwartz.[11] Since I consider psychology in general and cross-cultural psychology in particular to be an excellent companion to intercultural philosophy, his work is indispensable to this paper. It is, of course, not a sufficient source for the search for "universal" values: I shall also make use of work in the field of positive psychology.

Let us first consider Schwartz. Schwartz conducted studies which included surveys of more than 25,000 people across a total of 44 countries. Based on these studies, he argues that there are 56 specific empirically "universal" values. This is a rather large number for practical purposes,

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[8] Florence R. Kluckhohn and Fred L. Strodtbeck, *Variations in Value Orientations* (Evanston, IL: Row Peterson, 1961).

[9] Milton Rokeach, *Understanding Human Values: Individual and Societal* (New York: The Free Press, 1979).

[10] Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions and Organizations across Nations* (London: Sage Publications, 2001).

[11] Shalom H. Schwartz. "Are There Universal Aspects in the Structure and Contents of Human Values?" *Journal of Social Issues* 50 (1994): 19-45.

but fortunately he claims they fall into just 10 types: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity and security. He describes each of these ten basic values by its central motivational goal, as follows:

> Power: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
> Achievement: Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
> Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.
> Stimulation: Excitement, novelty and challenge in life.
> Self-Direction: Independent thought and action – choosing, creating, exploring.
> Universalism: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of *all* people and for nature.
> Benevolence: Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact.
> Tradition: Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide.
> Conformity: Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
> Security: Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships and of self.[12]

The second example of research into "universal" values we shall consider is found in Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman.[13] Seligman, one of the most influential psychologists of the 20th century, is perhaps best known in recent years as the founder of the positive psychology movement. Peterson and Seligman's work does not have the vast empirical range that Schwartz's does, but it is still cross-culturally very well-researched. Moreover, it is also philosophically informed in addition to empirical material, for this research considers a number of major philosophers and traditions of thought (e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Judeo-Christianity and Confucianism). Peterson and Seligman speak of "character strengths" and "virtues," arguing for a classification with six "core virtues" made up of 24 character strengths. What exactly is a virtue? Roughly, it is character trait that disposes a person to do what is right and not to

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[12] Ibid., 22.

[13] Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

do what is wrong.[14] Strictly speaking, a virtue is thus different from a value. One might say that it is a relation between a value and the person possessing the virtue. However, for the purposes of this paper, this distinction can be ignored. Thus, I consider the values associated with character traits and virtues to correspond to values in the general sense relevant here.

Briefly, the six core virtues, along with the 24 character traits behind them, are as follows:

> Wisdom and knowledge: creativity, curiosity, ability to think critically, love of learning, having a wise perspective on matters;
> Courage: bravery, perseverance, honesty, enthusiasm;
> Humanity: love, kindness, social intelligence;
> Justice: teamwork, fairness, leadership;
> Temperance: forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation;
> Transcendence: appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality.

One of the necessary conditions for something being a character trait is that it should be ubiquitous in the sense of being widely recognized across cultures. And indeed, it is plausible that these virtues and character strengths are "universally" acknowledged. For instance, Park et al.[15] report how the test for them – the so-called Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VAI-IS) – has been successfully administered to individuals in 40 countries.[16]

Let me end this section with an important proviso. Of course, even if I am right that the values mentioned above are "universal," there remain significant cultural or civilizational differences in how important they are considered to be relative to each other. The problem of value incompatibility is thus still with us, although it is now a problem among different ranking of values, as it were. For example, to use two of Schwartz's

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[14] It seems to me that this "thin" definition of virtue coheres with Aristotle's "thicker" definition of it, for whom, according to my understanding, a virtue is a tendency of character to act in accordance with practical reason towards worthy ends. Moreover, a virtue in Aristotle is occupying a state of a "golden mean" between two extremes, between two vices, viz. excess and deficiency. Aristotle's cardinal virtues, prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, are in his view primary in guiding the individual toward that golden mean in particular situations.

[15] Nansook Park, Christopher Peterson, Martin E. P. Seligman, and Tracy A. Steen. "Positive Psychology Progress: An Empirical Validation of Interventions." *American Psychologist* 60 (2005): 410-421.

[16] This was with the English-language version of the test, which obviously is a limitation in the present context. However, Shima et al. (2006) successfully applied a translated version of the VIA-IS to a sample of young adults in Japan.

values, if one culture or civilization ranks Tradition as more important than Self-Direction, while another culture or civilization holds the opposite, then there could *still* be a "clash of civilizations" over value judgment. My own suggestion for a list of "universal" values, which includes just six such values, will take this fact into account.

Concluding Remarks: A New List of "Universal" Values to Live By

Thus far, we have obtained two lists of "universal" values from social science. I shall select from them four values "directly," according to whether they meet the following two criteria: (i) ethical, rather than political or socio-economic; and (ii) correlated with reduction in "clashes" and conflicts between different civilizations. The motivation for the first criterion is that, as mentioned above, I consider political (and socio-economic) values to be less fundamental than ethical ones, because in my view the former are founded on the latter. This is not to say that political values are not important, they, of course, are; it is just to say that a very brief list, like the one at issue here, will not include them. The reason I embrace the second criterion is the fact that the problem of incompatibility of values is still with us, though hopefully in a much milder form than what Tu maintains. The four values chosen directly are wisdom, benevolence, gratitude and appreciation of beauty.

In addition to these, we need values that are particularly suited for overcoming conflicts and clashes, that is, values that meet criterion (ii) above manifestly. Neither of the two lists, presented in the previous section, includes this. Hence, I suggest to add *respect* and *tolerance*. Fortunately, these values clearly seem to be close cousins of Schwartz's Universalism on the one hand, and Peterson and Seligman's Humanity on the other. Thus, the list I propose looks like this:

Wisdom and Knowledge – cognitive strengths that involve acquisition and use of knowledge.

Respect for uniqueness of individuals, communities and nature.

Tolerance towards different ways of living and mentalities, cultural, religious, ethnic, gender, age and social groups.

Benevolence as interpersonal strength that involve tending and befriending others.

Gratitude as being thankful for good things that are commonly taken for granted.

Appreciation of Beauty (of nature and art/artefacts) as well as appreciating excellence in various areas of life, from nature to art, from

small everyday experiences to grand events, from mathematics to science.[17]

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[17] For comments on an earlier draft of this paper, I am grateful to an audience at the 2017 conference 'Re-learning to Be Human for Global Times: Self-awareness of Life in a New Era' at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and especially to William Barbieri, Peter Jonkers and the late Vincent Shen.

8.

Reflections on and Implications of Hofstede's Individualism and Collectivism Dimension

Li Qin[*]

Introduction

The contrasting features of individualism and collectivism have always been a central concern for researchers. To a certain extent, it is commonly assumed that Western societies (e.g. US and UK) are individualism-oriented, whereas some Asian regions (e.g. China, Singapore) are collectivism-oriented. Geert Hofstede[1] made a unique contribution to this assumption by devising a visual score to compare the individualism/ collectivism dimension in different cultures. His model is highly influential and directly facilitated the comparative cultural and cross-cultural research in the ensuing 30 years. Building on his work, subsequent researchers introduced their theoretical or practical insights into this debate along with their attempts to overcome the limitations of Hofstede's framework. This paper does not aim to provide a comprehensive definition of culture or the individualism/collectivism index. Rather, it makes an effort to rethink Hofstede's model and its implications for evidence-based research, thereby contributing to the comprehension of the long-standing dichotomy of individualism/collectivism.

The Contrasting Tradition of Individualism/Collectivism

The root of the term "individualism" can be found in the French Revolution. It was originally coined to describe the negative influence of individual rights on the well-being of the common-wealth, which was doomed to "crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality."[2] It was used to describe a worldview opposed to the common good of most people.

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[1] Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980).

[2] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the revolution in France* (Garden City NY: Anchor Press. 1973; Original work published 1790), 109.

Individualism, viewed as a Western hallmark, can also be traced back to Alexis de Tocqueville's classic analysis of America: "Such folks owe no man anything and hardly expect anything from anybody. They form the habit of thinking of themselves in isolation and imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands."[3] Steven Lukes links individualism with individual rights and freedom, equal opportunity and limited government, the value of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as well as to the fact that people think of themselves as separate and independent individuals, different from others.[4]

Indeed, there is a long tradition of contrasting a focus on the individual and on the collective. For example, Emile Durkheim distinguishes *organic solidarity* (similar to individualism) and *mechanical solidarity* (similar to collectivism). The former refers to temporary relationships that are based on contracts among dissimilar others, while the latter to the relationships that are built on common bonds and obligations among similar others.[5] Max Weber contrasts individual-focused Western European Protestantism with collective-focused Catholicism.[6] He sees the former as promoting autonomy and pursuit of the maximum of personal interests, the latter as permanent and hierarchical relationships.

Individualism/Collectivism Dimension in Hofstede's Cultural Framework

The past few decades have witnessed the increase in cross-cultural research based on national differences in the culture of individualism/collectivism, which is, in a large part, attributed to the highly influential work of Geert Hofstede.[7] In his ground-breaking effort, Hofstede and his colleagues surveyed samples of employees within subsidiaries of a large multinational corporation (IBM) across more than 50 countries. The survey was conducted twice around 1968 and 1972, and produced a total of more than 116,000 questionnaires. On the basis of the different samples' responses to these questionnaires, Hofstede developed a cultural model

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3 Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Garden City NY: Anchor Press, 1969; Original work published, 1835), 508.

4 Steven Lukes, "Durkheim's 'Individualism and the Intellectuals'," *Political Studies* 17, no. 1 (1969): 14-30.

5 Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1933; Original work published 1887)

6 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Routledge, 2013).

7 Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions and Organizations across Nations* (Beverly Hills: Sage publications, 2001); Geert Hofstede, "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context," *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* 2.1 (2011): 8.

which identifies four initial dimensions to understand differences in national cultures: Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/ Feminism and Uncertainty Avoidance. Later on, he added a fifth dimension after conducting an international survey with Chinese employees and managers. The fifth dimension, derived from Chinese Confucian dynamism, is Long-term/Short-term Orientation. Hofstede's model provides measurement scales from 0 to 100 for each dimension, and each country can find a position on each scale or index. These five dimensions are empirically verifiable, and each country could be positioned somewhere between these two poles. Hofstede's work has been updated and expanded since 2001, and is nowadays one of the most widely cited works by scholars and practitioners.

In his book *Culture's Consequences,* Hofstede summarizes the above five dimensions as follows:[8]

1. Power Distance refers to the less powerful members of a society accept that power is distributed unequally.

2. Individualism versus Collectivism refers to how strong individuals in a society are integrated into groups.

3. Masculinity versus Femininity not merely refers to the distribution of values between women and men, but to what motivates or drives people in a society to be the best (Masculine) or to like what they do (Feminine).

4. Uncertainty Avoidance refers to that the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have to create some beliefs and institutions to help them avoid the unknown future.

5. Long Term versus Short Term orientation refers to how society has to maintain some links with its past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future.

Among the four argued parallels, the dimension of individualism and collectivism emerges as the most dominant in the literature, especially among psychologists and cross-cultural researchers. [9] According to Hofstede's work in 1980 and 2001,[10] individualism is characterized by valuing autonomy and placing one's personal goals above those of others, whereas collectivism values the group interests for the reason of that the individual is embedded it and expected to put its goals above his/herself. This means that individualism can be defined as a preference for a loosely-

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[8] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences*.

[9] Daphna Oyserman, Heather M. Coon and Markus Kemmelmeier, "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism: Evaluation of Theoretical Assumptions and Meta-analyses," *Psychological Bulletin* 128, no. 1 (2002): 3.

[10] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences*; Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values*.

knit social framework in which people act in accordance with their own preferences and choices. Its opposite pole, collectivism, represents a preference to a tightly-knit framework in which individuals act more in accordance with other people's expectations in exchange for protection and loyalty. It is argued that a nation's position on this dimension can be defined in terms of people's self-image as "I" or "we." More details can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Major differences between Individualism and Collectivism Dimension

Individualism	Collectivism
Everyone is supposed to take care of him- or herself and his or her immediate family only.	People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty.
"I" – consciousness	"We" - consciousness
Right to privacy	Stress on belonging
Speaking one's mind is healthy.	Harmony should always be maintained.
Others are classified as individuals.	Others classified as in-group or out-group.
Personal opinion is expected: one person one vote	Opinions and votes are predetermined by in-group.
Transgression of norms leads to guilt feelings.	Transgression of norms leads to shame feelings.
Purpose of education is to learn how to learn.	Purpose of education is to learn how to do.
Task prevails over relationship.	Relationship prevails over task.

Source: Geert Hofstede, "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context," *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* 2.1 (2011): 8.

The Individualism/Collectivism Index Score

The Individualism/Collectivism index score, also called I/C dimension or Individualism index, is one of the most important contributions of Hofstede, because it provides a visual score to compare the individualism/ collectivism dimension in different cultures.

In Hofstede's model, it is assumed that individualism/collectivism forms a single and opposing continuum,[11] according to which low individualism is always accompanied with high collectivism. Hofstede describes it as a polarising Individualism/Collectivism dimension and defines the two poles as follows, "Individualism stands for a society in which the ties

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[11] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values*.

between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after her/his immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty."[12]

In Hofstede's study of 2010, Individualism index scores are listed for 76 countries. It is suggested that individualism tends to prevail in developed and Western countries, while collectivism in less developed and Eastern countries; Japan takes a middle position on this dimension. This result can be viewed in the following selected individualism index score across countries in the world (Fig.1).

Figure 1. Hofstede's Individualism Index Score across countries
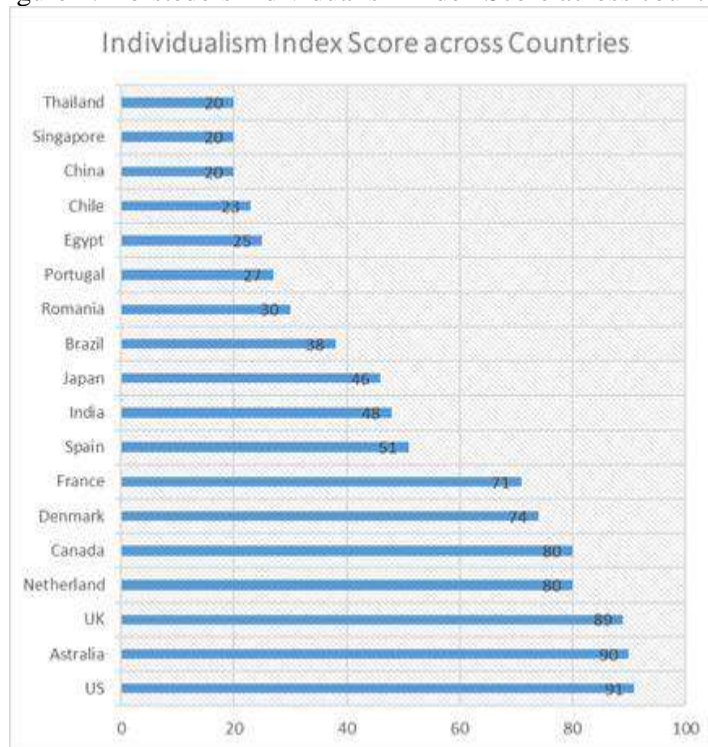
Source: Data collected from https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/, accessed on 17th May, 2019.

Typically, this Individualism index has been used to compare national differences especially among East Asians, Europeans and North

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[12] Hofstede, "Dimensionalizing Cultures," 225.

Americans [13] and as well as among countries within Europe.[14] Apart from such between-country differences, it also has been recognized that there can also be substantial within-country variation on this dimension.[15]

It is necessary to note that in a later section of this paper, evidence of the implications of this Individualism and Collectivism dimension mainly stems from Europe, resulting from a comparison of the Individualism indexes of Portugal and Britain, Spain and the Netherlands. Therefore, the I-C index scores of major European countries are listed here (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. Hofstede's Individualism Index Score within the EU
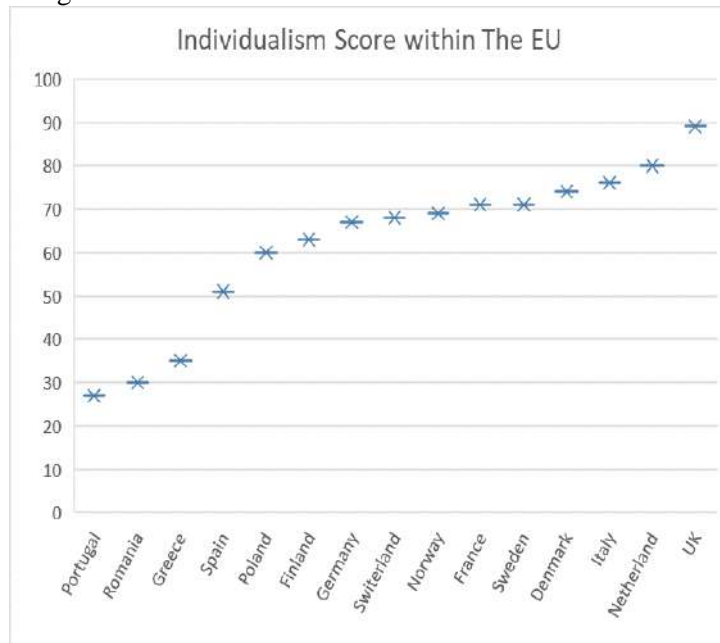
Source: Data collected from https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/, accessed on 17th May, 2019.

Subsequent Research in the Individualism/Collectivism Dimension

Hofstede's approach of dimensionalizing individualist and collectivist societies has attracted wide attention as well as critical questioning

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[13] Darrin R. Lehman, Chi-yue Chiu and Mark Schaller, "Psychology and Culture," *Annual Review of Psychology* 55 (2004): 689-714.

[14] France Höllinger and Max Haller, "Kinship and Social Networks in Modern Societies: A Cross-cultural Comparison among Seven Nations," *European Sociological Review* 6, no. 2 (1990): 103-124.

[15] Oyserman a.o., "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism," 3.

since the publication of *Cultural Consequence* (1980). More researchers have joined this debate, which directly facilitated a rapidly expanding body of cultural and cross-cultural research in the ensuing 30 years. Among the reflections on Hofstede's theory, three of them play a significant role and push the debate on individualism/collectivism to a new height both academically and practically.

Hazel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama propose a theory of self-construals[16] – an independent and an interdependent view of the self. They distinguish these two views of the self and point out that the significant differences between them lie in the role that is assigned to the other in the construction of the self. Although others and the surrounding social context are important in both construals, others in the interdependent self are included only in the boundaries of the self, because relations with others in specific contexts are the defining features of the self. The sense of individuality that accompanies an interdependent self includes an attentiveness and responsiveness to others that one either explicitly or implicitly assumes will be reciprocated by these others as well as the wilful management of one's other-focused feelings and desires so as to maintain and further the reciprocal interpersonal relationships.[17]

In terms of an independent construal of the self, others are less centrally implicated in one's current self-definition or identity. Certainly, others are important for social comparison and reflected appraisal, and in their role as the targets of one's actions, yet at any given moment, the self is assumed to be a complete, whole and autonomous entity without others. The defining features of an independent self are attributes, abilities, traits, desires and motives that may have been social products but are also assumed to be the source of the individual's behaviour, because he/she has become the self-contained individual. The sense of individuality that accompanies this construal of the self includes a sense of oneself as an agent, as a product of one's action.[18]

Based on the different construals of the self, these authors develop a view that cultural values of individualism and collectivism distinguish in their relative emphasis on independence versus interdependence with one's group. Further, they note that many Asian cultures have distinct conceptions of individuality that insist on the fundamental relatedness of individuals to each other. The emphasis is on being related to others, fitting in and harmonious interdependence with surrounding people. By contrast, American culture neither assumes nor values such an overt

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[16] Hazel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation," *Psychological Review* 98.2 (1991): 224-253.

[17] Markus and Shinobu, "Culture and the Self," 245-246.

[18] Ibid., 246.

connectedness with others. Rather, people seek to maintain their independence from others by attending to the self and by discovering and expressing their unique inner traits and preferences which persist across contexts, as individuals are motivated to determine their own actions and express themselves through their personal choices.[19] In contrast to the individualistic values, people in collectivist societies view the self as inherently interdependent with the group to which they belong. Therefore, instead of seeking independence and uniqueness, people are being motivated to fit in and maintain harmonious relations with others in collectivist cultures.

Shalom Schwartz defines individualistic societies as fundamentally contractual, which consist of narrow primary groups and negotiated social relations, and have specific obligations and expectations focusing on the achievement of status. In contrast, collectivist societies are viewed as communal which are characterized by diffused and mutual obligations and expectations based on ascribed statuses. In collectivistic societies, social units with common fate, goals and values are central; the personal is simply a component of the social. The in-group is the key unit for analysis.[20] In Schwartz' three polar value dimensions formed by seven cultural orientations (egalitarianism, harmony, embeddedness, master, hierarchy, intelligent autonomy and affective autonomy), he employs the dimensions of autonomy versus embeddedness values and of egalitarianism versus hierarchy values in order to further develop his research on the individualism/collectivism issue. The first dimension emphasizes autonomous choice and cultivation of individuals' unique ideas and preferences, rather than following and preserving traditional and externally imposed ideas and preferences. The second dimension focuses on the voluntary regulation of behaviour based on equality rather than regulation of behaviour through submission to role expectations built on existing hierarchies. Taking the family as an example, Schwartz proposes that if family members see themselves as inseparable parts of a family collectively and identify themselves with their family interests, this collectiveness can function smoothly, no matter how large the household size is. In turn, these practices and norms foster cultural embeddedness and hierarchy in society. Embeddedness values promote commitment to the in-group, sanctify group interest and continuity and place slight emphasis on individual choices. However, in an autonomous society, women are encouraged to develop their own capabilities and follow their own preferences, because

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[19] Hazel Rose Markus and Kitayama Shinobu, "The Cultural Construction of Self and Emotion: Implications for Social Behaviour," *Emotions in Social Psychology: Essential Reading* (2001): 119-137.

[20] Shalom Schwartz, "Individualism-collectivism: Critique and Proposed Refinements," *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology* 21.2 (1990): 139-157.

the culture in such a society emphasizes autonomy rather than embeddedness. Similarly, in cultures which emphasize the egalitarian rather than the hierarchical, role-based regulation of interdependence and work are likely to promote greater equality.[21] Material and intellectual resources free women from their dependence on the support of their families, enable them to strike out on their own and demand more equal opportunities.

Another important research that cannot be ignored is Ronald Inglehart's two cultural dimension theory, that is, traditional versus secular-rational. This theory similarly focuses on the individual/collective change during the shift from a traditional to a modern and industrialized society. His first traditional/secular-rational dimension centrally concerns orientations towards authority.[22] Inglehart's description implies that, in traditional societies, people's ties to their religious, national and family groups are the source of meaning in their lives – a core aspect of embeddedness. The second dimension, survival/self-expression, contrasts societies in which people primarily focus on economic and physical security (survival) and those in which quality-of-life issues are central (self-expression). The demands of more freedom of judgement, innovation and autonomous decision-making equip these people with relevant communication and information-processing skills. Trust, tolerance, subjective well–being, political activism and the environmental issue are what people are concerned about. At the survival pole, people feel threatened by and are intolerant of those who are different (e.g. ethnically or in sexual preference) or who seek cultural change (e.g. women's movements). At the self-expression pole, difference and change are accepted and even seen as enriching; out-groups are increasingly seen as a merit of equal rights.

Implications of the Individualism/Collectivism Dimension

When Hofstede's *Cultural Consequences* appeared in 1980, it represented a new paradigm in cross-cultural research due to its methodology of dealing with large scale survey-based data at a national level and quantifying differences between national cultures with reference to the scores of these dimensions. By the 1990s this paradigm had been adopted by many researchers, including social psychologists, and inspired a large body of cross-cultural research. It is also a fact that this model was overwhelmingly used in organizational or management research, partly due to its organizational origin. However, the implication of the individualism/

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[21] Shalom Schwartz, "A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations: Explication and Applications," *Comparative Sociology* 5.2-3 (2006): 137-182.

[22] Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

collectivism dimension is more than that, especially because of the trend towards increasing cross-disciplinary cooperation in order to solve complex problems that we are facing nowadays. It is beyond the scope of this paper to review all the evidence, hence the following section will explore the application of Hofstede's Individualism/Collectivism dimension in a few multidisciplinary examples that I came across in the process of my research.

Of particular interest is the link that was found between national individualism/collectivism scores and loneliness. Loneliness, with recognized consequences for physical and mental health, is a prevalent social issue across the world today. The study of this issue is now at the heart of a prolific area of multidisciplinary research.[23] But questions regarding which kind of society has a relatively higher level of loneliness among its members, especially among elderly people, and how these societies differ in their tackling it, are not readily apparent. But the Individualism and Collectivism dimension can shed a new light on these questions.

1. In which society are individuals more likely to feel lonely? There are distinctively different opinions on this issue. On the one hand, it is argued that people in individualistic societies are more likely to experience loneliness compared with collectivistic ones, since they tend to live independently and the traditional ties to family are relatively weaker. Especially among older adults, the proportion of those living alone or in institutions rather than with family members, is higher; this potentially increases the risk of loneliness. On the other hand, however, some argue that, since collectivistic societies value in-groups interests highly, the lack of such ties is likely to cause negative emotions of being isolated, and thus, increases feelings of loneliness. This means that individuals in collectivistic societies are more likely to feel lonely when there are not enough connections or support available.

Evidence from the perspective of cultural individualism/collectivism dimension could shed some light on this controversial issue. In a study using data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) Wave 2, encompassing adults aged 50 years and over in Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, it was found that "Older adults in the southern and central European countries were generally lonelier than their peers in the northern and western

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[23] Valerie A Lykes and Markus Kemmelmeier, "What Predicts Loneliness? Cultural Difference between Individualistic and Collectivistic Societies in Europe," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 45, no. 3 (2014): 468-490.

European countries."[24] Detailed figures in the level of loneliness reveals that societies with higher reports of loneliness are Italy (25.4), Poland (20), Spain (15.9), Greece (15.6), the Czech Republic (15.6) and lower level of loneliness reported by senior citizens in Denmark (6.3), Switzerland (8.0), the Netherlands (8.3), Germany (8.5) and Sweden (10.1). This contrast indicates that countries in the Mediterranean region and in Central Europe have the highest pervasiveness of loneliness.

When we draw a comparison with the Individualism index in Fig.2, it appears that, to large extent, countries with a lower Individualism index score (which means a higher collectivism-orientation), such as Spain, Greece and Italy, are linked to higher levels of loneliness among people aged 50 years old and over. This means that residents of collectivistic societies are more likely to feel lonely than those in individualistic societies. It can be explained by the fact that the cultural changes that have taken place in Europe since the 1960s have influenced the system of values and social norms cherished by both young and older adults. The past decades have shown a decline in normative control on behavioural patterns, which enables people to fulfil their personal wishes and preferences to a much greater level than their peers who were able to do so in the past. These changes are linked to processes of individualization, during which individuals have the opportunity to decide what kind of life they want to pursue and how they wish to organize their lives.

Another empirical evidence is from a recent study conducted by Valerie Lykes and Markus Kemmelmeier.[25] They analysed two large-scale and multinational social surveys in Europe, and found that levels of loneliness among older adults were higher in collectivistic societies than in individualistic ones, although different societies have different predictors of loneliness.[26] Their findings are consistent with other research employing different datasets. For example, a study analysing the World Health Organization Eleven Country Study on Health Care of the Elderly confirmed that northern and western European countries, which are often characterized as individualistic, exhibited lower levels of loneliness than southern and central/eastern ones, often characterized as collectivistic. The result can also be echoed by the other side of the coin. Nan Stevens and Gerben Westerhof, when comparing Dutch and German older adults – two countries with similar individualism index scores (see Fig. 2), found

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[24] Tineke Fokkema, Jenny De Jong Gierveld and Pearl A. Dykstra, "Cross-national Differences in Older Adult Loneliness," *The Journal of Psychology* 146, no. 1-2 (2012), 201.

[25] Lykes a.o, "What Predicts Loneliness?," 468-490.

[26] Ibid.

no obvious differences in levels of loneliness between them.[27] The possible explanation would be that because strong interpersonal ties are normative, loneliness is effectively a psychological response when an individual does not meet the cultural expectations.

2. What kind of interaction in life predicts loneliness in different cultures? Social interaction has been proved to be able to reduce the feeling of loneliness by a large body of research, but the type of social interaction being favoured by most people in different societies may differ greatly. For example, in a study of the meaning of social interactions, the authors provided the simple slope for the country with the highest individualism index score within the EU, viz. Great Britain, and the most collectivistic one on the other side, viz. Portugal. They found that the frequency of contact with family was linked to less loneliness in Portugal, but not in Great Britain. Conversely, the frequency of contact with friends was more strongly associated with lower loneliness in individualistic Great Britain than in more collectivistic Portugal.[28]

This can also be used to explain why assistance need is more strongly related to loneliness in individualistic than collectivistic societies.[29] After statistically analysing country-level individualism and assistance received, the researchers found that in more individualistic societies, receiving assistance was associated with higher levels of loneliness. A possible explanation may be that individuals who are not in control of their independence and self-determination feel lonelier. In other words, having to rely on others is incompatible with the ideal of personal independence and self-determination, which are critical values in individualistic societies. By contrast, having someone who can be there to provide assistance is not related to loneliness in collectivist societies. The reason is that an individualist society values independence and freedom of choice, while needing assistance might signify people's loss, especially loss of independence and self-determination, thus lead to an increased level of loneliness for those in need of assistance.

3. What kind of social support do people need? Emotional or instrumental? According to Marta Rodrigues, Jenny Gierveld and Jose Buz, the functioning of social relationships, including exchanges of emotional and instrumental support, depends on social norms and the value attributed to

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[27] Nan Stevens and Gerben J. Westerhof, "Marriage, Social Integration, and Loneliness in the Second Half of Life: A Comparison of Dutch and German Men and Women," *Research on Aging* 28.6 (2006): 713-729.

[28] Lykes a.o., "What Predicts Loneliness?," 468-490.

[29] Ibid.

such exchanges in a given culture.[30] In this sense, when people are in a state of loneliness, the kind of social support that can effectively reduce the feeling of loneliness would be different.

It has been observed that culture affects the meaning of social support In societies where an independent construction of the self is prevalent, emotional social support is more favourable, because talking about personal matters is seen as the main way to gain a sense of connectedness, hence to lead to less feeling of loneliness.[31] Conversely, in more interdependent societies individuals have the sense of being already sufficiently connected to others, and therefore do not feel there is much need to invest more time and energy in the exchange of emotional support. Rather, the preferred kind of social support is instrumental, such as providing practical help when needed.

Hollinger and Haller propose that this theoretical perspective could be applied to the European context, where more interdependent cultural norms and values have been found in the South and more independent-related cultural norms in Northern parts of Europe.[32]

Fig.2 indicates, when comparing the levels of Individualism index in Europe, Spain with the relatively lower score in this index (51) is more collectivism-oriented than the Netherlands, which has a high score on the Individualism index (81). Recent empirical studies comparing Spain and the Netherlands in prevalent values have found that collectivism-related values were perceived as more important by Spanish respondents, while individualism-related values were considered as more important by the Dutch.[33] The researchers concluded that in Southern European countries, such as Spain, societal norms encourage interpersonal familial interaction. This can explain that most Spanish older adults maintain strong family ties and expect to receive instrumental support from their children when help is needed; whereas in the Netherlands, independence is highly valued and older adults try to keep their independence, thus emotional support is preferred over instrumental support in moments of need.

This finding is consistent with the following theoretical perspective: in cultures where the notion of independence is more dominant, the provision of emotional support is the main defining feature of a "friend,"

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[30] Marta M. Rodrigues, Jenny De Jong Gierveld, and Jose Buz, "Loneliness and the Exchange of Social Support among Older Adults in Spain and the Netherlands," *Ageing & Society* 34, no. 2 (2014): 330-354.

[31] Lykes a.o., "What Predicts Loneliness?," 468-490.

[32] Höllinger a.o., "Kinship and Social Networks," 103-124.

[33] Rodrigues a.o., "Loneliness and the Exchange of Social Support," 330-354.

while in those characterized by interdependence the provision of instrumental support is a central feature in the definition of a "friend."[34]

In sum, the above empirical evidence from the Individualism/Collectivism index score confirm that, first, individuals in more collectivistic societies are lonelier. Second, culture has an influence on the kind of interaction preferred in a given society. In more collectivistic countries, more frequent interaction with family can act as a buffer against loneliness. Yet in more individualistic countries, frequent interaction with friends was linked to less loneliness. Third, the kind of preferred social support is associated with the level of individualism in a society. A high score on the I-C dimension (high individualism) means that emotional support is what people consider as being protective against loneliness; whereas a low score on the I-C dimension (high collectivism) means that instrumental support, including practical and financial help, is what is preferred.

Beyond the Individualism and Collectivism Dichotomy

Along with its wide application, the Individualism and Collectivism dimension has been under severe criticism. In essence, the theoretical difference between individualism and collectivism is a dichotomy between different cultures and societies. The core assumption of individualism is that individuals are independent of one another, collectivism, by contrast, largely means that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals. From this distinction, theorists discern a number of plausible consequences or implications of the two poles. For example, according to Schwartz's theory, collectivist societies are communal and characterized by mutual obligations and expectations based on ascribed statuses. In these societies, social units with common fate, goals and values are central; the personal is simply a component of the social, and the in-group is the key unit of analysis.[35] This description focuses on collectivism as a social way of being oriented toward in-groups and away from out-groups.[36] In terms of the importance of in-groups (family, clan, ethnic or religious group), it has been suggested that collectivism is a diverse construct, which combines with culturally different kinds and levels of groups. Moreover,

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[34] Glenn Adams and Victoria C. Plaut, "The Cultural Grounding of Personal Relationship: Friendship in North American and West African Worlds," *Personal Relationships* 10, no. 3 (2003): 333-347.

[35] Schwartz, "A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations," 137-182.

[36] Daphna Oyserman, "The Lens of Personhood: Viewing the Self and Others in a Multicultural Society," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65.5 (1993): 993.

recent applied research indicates that a simple typology does not do justice to the complexity of regional- and country-level social patterns.[37]

In this sense, it seems more reasonable to view societies in different ways as they make collective- or individual-oriented value choices. This means that any given society is likely to have at least some representation of both individualistic and collectivistic worldviews. Also, it has to be admitted that this formulation leaves open the question of whether in all societies individualism (more on the independent individual) and collectivism (more on duty and obligation to in-groups) necessarily carry with them all the related constructs described in this paper. Thus, for example, a focus on personal achievement may be multiply determined and not always be related to individualistic values, just as seeking the advice of in-group members may be multiply influenced and not always be related to collectivistic values.

Conclusion

Theoretically, the core element of individualism is the assumption that individuals are independent of one another; collectivism, by contrast, largely means that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals. Starting from the contrasting features of individualism and collectivism, this paper reflects on Hofstede's work in this field, with a focus on his Individualism/Collectivism index (I-C index). Hofstede's insight into the differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures provides a perspective to conduct cross-cultural study and directly facilitates a large body of related research after the publication of his work *Cultural Consequences* (1980). Specifically, his Individualism index provides visual scores of varying degrees of Individualism in different societies. The implication of Hofstede's Individualism index score is the focus of the last part of this paper. Empirical studies from different European societies have demonstrated that the Individualism and Collectivism dimension can shed light to some extent on the understanding of complicated social issues. For example, it can serve as a perspective to understand why people in collectivistic societies are more likely to feel lonely compared with individualistic ones, and what kind of social support (emotional support or instrumental support) and interaction (contact with family or friends) can perform as buffer against loneliness in different societies. With the deepening of cross-cultural research, there may be a shift away from the divergence of the individualism/collectivism model to the convergence feature of this model.

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[37] Oyserman a.o., "Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism," 3.

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9.

Relearning to Be at Peace:
Exploring Alternative Conceptions

Balaganapathi Devarakonda[1]

Self-awareness of Life in the New Era

The term "life," in general, may refer either to the broadest conception of all forms of life (both in metaphysical and empirical forms) or to an individuated one. However, within the fold of the discussion on self-awareness, life has to be understood as an individuated one. Self-awareness involves consciousness of and attention to one's awareness. Even if we are focusing on the individuated life, the difficulty lies in comprehending the life of the individual in its totality and addressing it with reference to self-awareness. In order to resolve this difficulty, one has to locate a particular aspect of life that has implications for self-awareness of both individuated and extended forms of life. Considering peace to be one such aspect of life, the present paper delves into the concept of "peace" to explicate self-awareness of life in the new era. The paper assumes that one of the necessary conditions for self-awareness of life, in both its extended and its individuated meaning, is the prevalence of peace or peaceful co-existence.[2]

It is not that human beings were not aware of the importance of peace in earlier times. Though there were attempts to understand, analyze, further develop and articulate conceptions of peace in various cultures across the continents and throughout history, the present multicultural and technology-driven global village, where interactions between individuals, groups, cultures, religions and political systems are more intense, unavoidable and immediate, requires a conception, which benefits from the experiences of the past, helps to resolve the present conflicts and provides the necessary framework for the future. In other words, there is a need for

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[1] I benefitted from the comments provided by Dr Mahalakshmi Bhamidipati and Ms Anuradha K during the course of finalizing the paper. I am indebted to Prof. Peter Jonkers for his editorial comments and corrections.

[2] One may contrarily argue that self-awareness is possible even in violent situations. Though this may be considered, one should nevertheless be aware of the distinction between self-awareness that is facilitated by peace and the self-awareness that is forcefully imposed by violence. In other words, the former is facilitated by the self, whereas the latter is imposed by the other. I assume that the awareness that is facilitated by self is more appropriately called self-awareness than anything else.

relearning to be at peace in the present competitive and intensely inter-active global world.

Following the exposition of the general dominant conception of peace as it is presently available in terms of absence of war or violence and freedom from oppression, the paper proceeds to point out the limitations of this dominant conception. Limitations in terms of binary conception, obsession with external peace alone and ideas that peace at the group level is the precondition for individual peace will be discussed. In the course of this discussion, distinctions will be made between positive and negative, internal and external, individual and group forms of peace. It will be argued that the present dominant understanding of peace is negative, external and group oriented. An alternative perspective on peace is presented by the Indian tradition, where peace is understood to be positively, internally and individually oriented. This perspective is developed by exploring the fundamental teachings of Buddha, the four noble truths and the *brahma-viharas*.

The Dominant Conception of Peace

Peace, one of the universally acclaimed human values, has been a well debated in social and individual life from varied perspectives in the East as well as in the West. Mapping contemporary discussions on the concept of peace provides us with a rich discourse.[3] However, this discourse is mostly confined to only one dominant perspective, which has usurped all discussions on peace exhaustively. This section will discuss it before pointing out its limitations.

The dominant view understands peace in terms of absence of war, freedom from oppression and disturbance, endowed with calmness and something that is required for empirical prosperity and development. This view assumes that we are essentially at war with ourselves and therefore with one another. It considers related conceptions such as pacifism, serenity and harmlessness as a state of repose and freedom from turmoil

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[3] In the early period of the development of peace research as a new field during the 1950's and 1960's, researchers showed only minor and restricted interest in the history of peace ideas. There were limited attempts to bring out the in-depth historical perspectives from various cultures around the world then. This was pointed out by Johan Galtung in his "Social Cosmology and the Concept of Peace," *Journal of Peace Research* 18 (1981): 183, "Whereas in earlier ages the greatest spirits of humankind were working on problems of peace, in our age there is certainly a dearth of such efforts." There was a growing interest to discover cultural aspects of peace ideas in a historical perspective from ancient times. In recent decades, peace research has moved from historical to comparative and other empirical perspectives as per the demands of the time.

or agitation, excitement or disturbance.[4] It articulates peace in opposition to violence and war, or as a means of settling disputes and an attitude or policy of nonresistance and calmness. All these notions related to peace have limitations, because they specify only functional circumstances in terms of attitudinal, behavioral and structural conditions. Definitions that are available also do not elaborate the holistic needs of peace and societies, but only specify relative forms of peace and nonviolence. In this light, what is required is an integral conception.

The dominant form of this divergent pattern stresses that the individual can live in peace only when there is social or political peace. This view rightly understands peace to be either social or political by pointing out that peace is freedom from disturbance and oppression. It assumes that peace is a state of tranquility or quietness facilitated by a homogenous state without any divergence and difference.

For instance, Immanuel Kant in his *Perpetual Peace* writes: "The goal of history is a world-order regulated by law which is grounded in federalism of free states. Such a federal organization will make for perpetual peace and such political organization, inner and outer, is the only condition in which the original capacities of the race can be developed to their completion."[5] He views the ideal of peace to be grounded in the authority of reason itself – reason functioning in its practical form. He understands the impossibility of experiencing the comprehensive account of this perpetual peace when he states: "Perpetual peace is a standard or goal to be approached by gradual, perhaps by an infinite process."

Along with this Kantian account, let me also present a sociological one, especially that of Johan Galtung, which consists in limiting itself to external peace alone. Sociologists, currently engaged in peace research, often make the distinction between "negative peace," or the Western view of peace as the absence of war, and "positive peace," or that state of relations idealized by a social cosmology. Although I also want to maintain this distinction, I differ in the very understanding of the conceptions of peace from the sociologists. While the positive and negative concepts of peace have been part of Western civilization from the beginning, the terms

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[4] It is unfortunate that the mind associates the word "Peace" with death, the static, inactivity, and the word "War" with action. The word "War" should in reality mean death, and the word "Peace" should mean life and healthy activity. Unless we can give the word "Peace" a dynamic sense, an active meaning, and a progressive character, we better find another word or a phrase that truly denotes the normal peaceful activity of nations that we are concerned about when we pray for peace.

[5] A.C. Armstrong, "Kant's Philosophy of Peace and War," *The Journal of Philosophy,* 28 (1931): 199.

were popularized by Johan Galtung,[6] who defined negative peace as the absence of personal violence and positive peace as the absence of structural violence. In short, positive peace means "social justice"; it is a positive state of affairs. But one must not forget that both negative and positive forms of peace, on this account, are limited to external peace alone. It is a response to the violence that the system or structure does to an individual. In this particular sense, the distinction drawn by sociologists collapses both forms of peace as invariably negative in conception.

On the basis of the available theoretical models, there are various ways of practicing peace that scholars have identified and analyzed in order to recognize the most suitable one. In this context, the analysis of Gray Cox[7] is relevant for our discussion, as it represents the dominant perspective of peace. Cox examines three ways of practicing peace: the Gandhian practice of satyagraha, the Quaker process of reaching consensus, and the process of "principled negotiation" developed at the Harvard Law School's Negotiation Project. The Quaker practice, Cox argues, works best within a particular community of those who share a common set of values. The "principled negotiation" project operates most effectively among those, perhaps strangers, who do not share common values or commitments, but who seek to reach some resolution without resorting to violence. Satyagraha is employed in the event of facing a powerful adversary who is unwilling either to communicate or to yield, and yet is willing to employ violence at his or her discretion. These methods, according to Cox, represent different practices of peace, any one of which might be appropriate for a given situation. This three-way approach of practicing peace is useful and beneficial only when we consider it from external perspective. But the use of any of these ways of the practice of peace, except Satyagraha as developed by Gandhi, requires a kind of state of stability, which should not be an external imposition. Gandhi in his conception of the Satyagraha practice integrates both internal and external forms of peace. Only when an individual is at peace with him/herself, he/she can be open to, accept and participate in the practice of peace. Thus, these dominant theoretical and practical models of peace require openness, which is taken for granted and hence not established.

In sum, there have been internal and external, and positive and negative ways of understanding peace. Peace, it is often said, can be attained through both force and love. Since all these understandings of peace refer to various aspects of human life, some scholars feel that it might be worth considering the proposition that peace is not completely established until

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[6] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research,* 3 (1969) develops this distinction.

[7] Gray Cox, *The Ways of Peace: A Philosophy of Peace as Action* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

these different dimensions of life are all fulfilled. If one considers alternative understandings of peace from various cultures, one may find an integral conception that encompasses the above varied dimensions of peace.

Limitations of the Dominant Perspective on Peace

There are three major limitations to this dominant perspective, namely, its binary conception, its obsession with external peace alone and its presumption of moving from the group to the individual. Let me explain each one of them. Peace is understood, as already observed, only in terms of the absence of war or disturbance. As per the binary conception, in order to understand a concept one has to identify its opposite and then conceive it in terms of absence of the opposite. The explanation of peace in terms of absence of war falls under this category, representing the concept in a negative sense, sometimes even away from its essential nature. It is worth noting the view of Emanuel Adler, who points out the epistemological problem of conceptualizing peace in terms of absence of war: "Epistemologically speaking, however, peace merely as the absence of war is an oxymoron; we cannot positively define something as the opposite of something else."[8]

Further, there is a kind of obsession involved in the dominant conception for external peace, which articulates it only in terms of peace between two peoples, groups, nations, cultures, states, etc. Though external peace is an important and integral part of the conception of peace, its limitations is to be considered the absolute.

Consequently, the dominant perspective means that only when peace is restored at the level of a group, or a society, or a state, the individual can live a peaceful life. In this sense, peace at a group level guarantees peace on an individual level. It opines that in order for an individual to be at peace, one has to be a part of a group; that group should be happy. However, group peace is difficult to achieve, unless it is imposed through some external agency. This leads to an understanding of peace only in terms of something that is governed and externally imposed on a group and thereby on an individual. Thus, the view of external power which facilitates peace is dominant.

In order to go beyond the limitations of the dominant perspective, one has to go deep into the essence of oneself, through which he/she proceeds further to the essence of all human beings. In contrast to the dominant view, the other possible perspective reverses the place of the

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[8] Emanuel Adler, "Condition(s) of Peace," *Review of International Studies,* 24 (1998): 166.

individual and emphasizes that it is the peace of the individual that in fact contributes to the peace of the group, either social or political.

I want to argue that what is required for an individual to be at peace with oneself means to relearn to be at peace. Peace essentially implies the expression of freedom. For the purpose of relearning to be at peace in the contemporary global world, one needs to go beyond the binary conceptions of peace and obsession with external peace alone. In order to do this, I will explore the alternative conceptions of peace that are available in the Indian philosophical tradition. The Buddhist conception provides a fertile space for the exploration of the alternative way of understanding peace.

A Buddhist Perspective of Peace

Among the Indian philosophical traditions Yoga, Jainism and Buddhism stand apart from others in stressing the significance of "being with oneself." Awareness of subjectivity, namely "being with oneself," is an essential requirement of self-responsibility for all actions, thoughts and relations. Among these three systems, Yoga encourages each individual to be with him/herself in practicing *ashtāngayōga* (yoga with seven steps) in a systematic way to improve his/her inner capabilities. Buddhism and Jainism, while stressing the importance of "being with oneself" as a prerequisite of self-improvement and self-realization, argue that one has to move beyond self-improvement in order to help others in their efforts. Buddhism is unique in emphasizing "being with oneself" as a necessary prerequisite for "being with others," and thus establishing its own sangha to train its followers, who can then teach other laymen. In essence, the awareness of subjectivity in Buddhism is a precondition for the extension of subjectivity to others. Consequently, what is being affirmed is the movement from the individual to society. Society can be called peaceful only when each individual acts voluntarily in a peaceful manner while extending their subjectivity. Peace cannot be imposed, as this leads to contradiction and hence to violence itself.

This Indian framework of prioritizing the self-awareness and its extension to others presents us with an alternative conception of peace.[9] Let us have a look at Buddhism and its framework on the conception of peace in contrast to the dominant conception of peace discussed above. The teachings of four noble truths (*ārya satyā*) and the ethical conception of

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[9] This perspective is not equal to the Western conception of individualism. It differs from the latter in prioritizing the self-awareness of the individual over the awareness of others by the way of the extension of subjectivity. Modern Western individualism does not merely prioritize the individual over the other, but rather it places the individual at the center of understanding every phenomenon of human life.

four immeasurables (*brahma vihāras*) all promote a particular notion of peace, which differ from the dominant perspective.

Let us articulate the conception of peace that can be drawn from the teaching of the four noble truths. After Buddha developed, in the first noble truth, the facticity of suffering (*duhkha*) as a state of agony and un-satisfactoriness, he pointed out the cause of suffering in the second noble truth, from which the causal perspective of dependent origination (*pratītya samutpāda*) is specified. The tendency of *craving* is identified as the cause of human suffering. Craving is rooted primarily within the psychological state of the individual. Thus Buddha states that the actual root of all suffering is to be found in the mind itself. The solution to the problem of suffering must also be found in the mind itself, and this is articulated in the third noble truth, namely, that the "cessation of *dukkha* comes with the cessation of craving." Buddhism believes that the cause of suffering lies not in external events or circumstances, but rather in the way the individual perceives, reacts and interprets them. In this light, Buddhism locates the cause of the suffering within the individual. It emphatically argues that suffering is an outcome of craving that emerges from three poisons (*kléśās*), namely, delusion (*mōha*), greed (*rāgā*) and aversion (*dvésha*). These can be avoided only through internal culture of each individual. The fourth noble truth prescribes the way for cessation in the form of an eight-fold path (*ashtānga mārga*). The state of suffering is a state devoid of peace. What is being taught to achieve is cessation of suffering as a state of peace and happiness. The cause of suffering lies in our craving for external objects and in our misplaced presumption that achieving them would lead us to the life of happiness and peace. Hence, the issue of suffering and life devoid of peace is to be addressed primarily at the individual level and with an inward perspective. Unless the individual is at peace with him/herself, addressing his/her own craving, no external aspect can endow him/her with peace and happiness. The eight-fold path that is prescribed by Buddha in his fourth noble truth to overcome suffering explicitly claims that it is through internal cultivation that an individual removes the state of suffering in life. Right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation, all the eight phases are primarily prescribed to stress that suffering in the world can be avoided only if the efforts are at the individual level through self-cultivation. Buddhism does not prescribe this path in a linear way, in the sense that one has to pass through each of the phases, one after the other. Rather, these phases are to be practiced in a cumulative way, so that all eight can be exercised simultaneously. This simultaneous practice of all the phases cultivates the individual internally as well as enabling him/her "being with oneself" and leaves space for extending the subjectivity of the individual to the other as "being with others."

Buddhism does not reject the external peace that is celebrated by the dominant perspective discussed earlier, rather it advocates that it is possible only for external peace from the internal peace of the individual. As peaceful coexistence of individuals falls under the sphere of social philosophy, Buddhism bases its social philosophy on psychological ethics. It argues that unless an individual establishes him/herself in moral conduct (*sīla*), no progress either of empirical or spiritual peace is possible. It is one's own inner purification that enables one to develop and maintain a harmonious relation with both human and nonhuman beings. Thus, it is the inner culture of peace of the individual that enables the external peace of institutions, whether they be social, religious or political. This aspect is well explicated by Wijesekera when he points out that "In Buddhism […] the primary emphasis is on the individual aspect of peace and its social consequences are held to follow only from the center of the individual's own psychology. The most prominent word for peace, *śānti* (Skr. *śānti*), denotes essentially the absence of conflict in the individual psychology, and in the fundamental sense refers to the absolute state of mental quietude expressed by the term *Nirvana* (Pali *nibbana*). In the Pali canon it is characterized as the 'Haven of Peace' (*śānti-padam*). One of the early texts of Budddhism, the *Sutta-Nipāta*, refers to 'internal peace' (*ajjhatta-śānti*) as resulting from the elimination of ideological and other conflicts of the mind (verse 837)."[10] This is clear that, states Wijesekera, as per Buddhism, it is the inner aspect of peace that consequently enables social peace. Furthermore, the peace of the community, according to Buddhism, depends on the peaceful mindedness of individual members of the community, from which it can be extended to the whole world. Buddha, thus, regards peace as a subjective quality and places it at the center of social ethics. In Wijesekera's words, "A socio-moral act, according to Buddhism, gains the greater part of its practical validity from the purity of its source which is no other than the psychology of the individual responsible for its conception and execution."[11]

After locating the root of social ethics in psychology of the individual, Buddhism prescribes four cardinal virtues that are to be cultivated by each individual. These cardinal virtues, in fact, are states of thought and feeling that are referred to as four *brahma-vihārās* or sublime moods or immeasurable (pali *appamaññā*). They are, *metta* (benevolence, friendly feeling), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (empathetic joy) and *upekkha* (equanimity). Since all social relationships are based on one of these moral attitudes (*vihārās),* they are considered to be representing the highest

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[10] O.H. De A. Wijesekera, "The Concept of Peace as the Central Notion of Buddhist Social Philosophy" *Archiv Für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie*, 46 (1960): 494.

[11] Ibid., 495.

(*brahma*) conditions of social well-being. *Metta*, which is translated as friendliness or universal love, is the basic attitude without which peace and goodwill among people can never be achieved. It is used in opposition to *vyapada* (malevolence) and *himsa* (violence). These two antisocial tendencies limit the possibility of peaceful coexistence. By directing people to get away from these two tendencies and encouraging them to develop *metta*, Buddhism argues for cohesive social living cultivated through individual peace. *Karuna*, the second immeasurable, which is translated variously as sympathy, compassion and mercy, can be better understood through other similar terms in classical Indian literature, such as *anukampa* and *dayā*, which emphasize the psychological aspect of the individual in sharing and participating in the suffering of fellow beings in order to help them overcome it. What is being emphasized in *karuna* is the psychological state that individuals should cultivate themselves to participate in the elimination of the suffering of others. *Mudita*, the third immeasurable is explained in Pali tradition as "the desire to see others rejoicing in their happiness and feel happy with them." As presented appropriately by Wijesekera: "This basic attitude is meant to counteract all feelings of jealousy and rivalry in social dealings. Hence it is as significant for social concord and peace as the other two Brahma-viharas."[12] *Upekkha*, the fourth immeasurable, suggests that the individual must be free from all personal bias and selfishness. It is equanimity, a mental attitude with a social application and an altruistic value. A person who is free from personal bias can cultivate an attitude of equanimity towards all, thus paving the way for peaceful coexistence. These four sublime attitudes can purify the mind and help the individual in being peaceful with him/herself, which further contributes positively to the extension of subjectivity for the sake of peaceful coexistence of humanity. These four are intricate to the individual human personality in making him/her a social being. Human subjectivity cultivated by these four immeasurable is no longer restricted to his/her own self, but rather gets extended inclusively to the subjectivity of others. This is an appropriate way of understanding social being and social ethics. Such an understanding of ontological of social being can enable peaceful coexistence of all people.

Buddhism is considered to be a practical religion of peace and non-violence. The four *Brahma-viharas*, viz. benevolence (*metta*), compassion (*karuna*), empathetic joy (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upekkha*), are ingredients of right mindfulness and intended to promote peace. Furthermore, the Bodhisattva ideal, such as unselfish and sacrificing spirit, the compassionate and benevolent attitude of the Buddha towards whole mankind, and the principles of Ahimsa or non-violence, forbearance and humanitarian outlook, tends to promote peace.

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[12] Ibid., 497-8.

The problem of peace – whether individual or social – is essentially a problem of mind, according to Buddhism. The positive state of the human mind, which comprehends joy and happiness, is borne out of selfless love for all sentient beings of the universe. Human beings yearn for peace because happiness is the ultimate goal of all living beings, and in the quest for happiness, an intelligent being finds that it is not available as long as one's mind is not at peace.

As a social code, Buddhism leads us to peace, understanding and integration. Buddha tries to inculcate in his followers the sense of service and understanding with love and compassion by ways of separating man from passion and elevating a humanistic tendency in man with the help of morality, compassion (*Karuna)* and equanimity. Peace and integrity as the central themes of Buddhism are indispensable for securing the integral growth and stability of any human civilization. Buddha aims at the ethical perfection of not just the Buddhist order, but the moral integrity of all subjects of the state which alone can pave the way for peace, internal or external.

As pointed out earlier, peace is *śanti* in the Indian tradition, which means the state of inner tranquility. Buddhism firmly believes that unless greed, hatred and ignorance are successfully transcended, the inner peace of mind cannot be achieved. It is by overcoming these delusions and inner poisons (*kléśas*) that the path towards peace is being initiated. It must be noted that the state of controlling these impulses is not a static and private inner peace. Rather, it is limitlessly dynamic, expansive and evolutionary in its nature, so that it can further be extended externally.

By constantly being mindful of your own thoughts, words and actions and trying to purify them we can be on the path towards peaceful co-existence. No matter how just our cause, and how right our ideas are, if they are accompanied by anger and hate, they will only generate more anger and hate. If our minds are infested with emotions of war, even if we have a noble goal to pursue, it would aid the cause of violence. Buddhist teachings about *karma* indicate unequivocally that a moral life is fundamentally a necessary prerequisite for ridding our minds of negative emotions, for transforming them into selfless compassion for all. Constantly being mindful of our mental attitudes can help the individual unconsciously to move away from violent acts and take active part in creating a world of peaceful coexistence. In this sense, Buddhism considers the problem of peace as the problem of mind. It is the mindfulness of thoughts followed by words and actions that leads to peace. This peace at the individual level facilitates the cultivation of virtues such as *karuna* and *samata* that pave the way for the external peace among the individuals, cultures and social institutions. Thus peace would not be externally imposed, but rather internally extended. On this Wijesekera says well, when he sums up the Buddhist perspective "In the ultimate analysis, therefore,

peace is a psychological condition or attitude, a function of individual thought and feeling. Thus, peace in general social sense is only the end result of cultivation of peace-mindedness by the individual who is the ultimate unit of social community."[13] Essential to Buddhism is the psychological attitude of individuals which results in peace in its external form.

The above conception of peace from a Buddhist perspective provides an alternative conception in stressing the importance of inner peace. It emphasizes that the positive aspects and the possibility of external peace are based on inner peace of individuals. However, let me point out an extension to this Buddhist perspective, which came out from one of the most influential modern Indian thinkers, Gandhi, who attempted to reconcile internal and external perspectives of peace by going one step beyond Buddhism. "In Gandhi's theory of peace," as pointed out by Anima, "human values take great prominence. Nonviolence (*ahimsa*) is a way of life rather than a tactic, and, together with the search for truth (*satyagraha*), makes the difference between passive submission to injustice and an active struggle against it. This struggle excludes both physical violence and casting the opponent in the role of the enemy, and hence presupposes compassion and self-criticism. The notion of welfare to all (*sarvodaya*) also sees peace as incompatible with exploitation or inequality of wealth. Peace is not seen as an end state, but as a continuous revolutionary process, where ends cannot be separated from means."[14] Peace is not seen as an end, in the Gandhian perspective, rather it is viewed as a continuous process where means and ends cannot be separated. This conception of peace moves beyond the Buddhist perspective in the sense that it does not consider peace to be a mere psychological state, but rather an external reality that is an outcome of a dynamic and continuous process. In consonance with the Buddhist perspective, Gandhi views that it is inner peace that contributes substantially to the possibility of external peace.

Conclusion

In sum, the discussion, the dominant perspective of the West lays stress on a negative, external and imposed peace, which has inherent limitations as has been pointed out. Against this background, this paper argues for the need to investigate alternative perspectives. The Buddhist conception of peace provides one such alternative, which is discussed systematically by exploring into two fundamental teachings of Buddha, i.e., the four noble truths and the *brahma-vihāras*. The alternative conception argues that it is required to begin with the individual to attain peace with oneself,

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Anima Bose, "A Gandhian Perspective on Peace," *Journal of Peace Research*, 18 (1981): 159.

so that one can contribute further to the external peace of the community, society and the state. This classical conception of peace, which has been stressed by different ancient traditions around the world, is subdued by the dominant view which gained prominence in modernity.[15] What is required now is to relearn to be at peace with oneself, so that one can contribute to the peace of humanity at large.

It would be significant at this juncture to delve into the concept of "re-learning." Re-learning would be preceded by learning, which thus something buried in the past. Re-learning, in general, may happen to regain lost knowledge, or to come out of the learning that is misguided, or to learn something that is insufficiently learnt. However, with respect to the knowledge of peace, which was thought and articulated by the classical traditions of the world as the inter-generational transmission, there is always a possibility that people are easily carried away by dominant conceptions in epistemologies of many generations. The dominant conception, though alien to human nature, has exerted a prominent influence in the course of intergenerational transmission over certain generations. This has led to the neglect of the knowledge systems developed on the basis of the essentials of human nature.

Thus, although living in peace is the classical and natural conception of human life from the internal to the external, it has been forgotten and replaced by the dominant perspective of peace as absence of war. In the new era, what is required to be human is to re-learn that "to be human is to live at peace": peace that proceeds from internal to external; peace that is not absence of war but inner tranquility; peace that is not an end but dynamic process where ends and means cannot be differentiated. One can be aware of one's life in present times by learning to be at peace – peace with oneself and thereby at peace with the other(s).

Let me conclude the discussion with the statement of one of the prominent modern Indian philosophers, Jiddu Krishnamurti, whose statement resonates the classical conceptions of peace around the world, which have been left into oblivion.

What will bring peace is inward transformation, which will lead to outward action. Inward transformation is not isolation, is not withdrawal from outward action. On the contrary, there can be right action only when there is right thinking and there is no right thinking when there is no self-knowledge. Without knowing yourself, there is no peace.[16]

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[15] I am not interested here in investigating the beginning of this perspective in modern times In fact, this can be a theme of further research.

[16] J. Krishnamurti, *Individual and Society: The Bondage of Conditioning* (California, Krishnamirti Foundation of America, 1995), 183.

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Human Dignity and Intercultural Dialogue: Problems and Prospects

William A. Barbieri Jr.

The Rise of Human Dignity in the Twentieth Century

Today, *human dignity* is enshrined as a cardinal value in international documents of the United Nations, in global human rights treaties and manifestos and in national legal systems including, prominently, the German, South African, Israeli and Chinese constitutions. Thus, Article 1 of the German *Grundgesetz* states, "*Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar*" ("Human dignity shall be inviolable"), while the Chinese constitution's Article 38 states, "The personal dignity of citizens of the People's Republic of China is inviolable." Human dignity serves as a moral touchstone for global religious organizations such as the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches and for many non-governmental organizations and commissions on questions of bioethics and related fields. The distinguished German sociologist Hans Joas has gone so far as to suggest that over the last century or so, a successful "value generalization" (in the sense of Max Weber) has taken place establishing the universal validity of the notion of human dignity and institutionalizing political subscription to its validity.[1]

By way of introduction I want to make three points about this situation. First, the rhetorical and legal power of dignity is hardly rivaled at present by any other like moral concepts such as, for example, freedom or equality. Human rights, it is true, is a comparably powerful normative notion of its own accord, but these rights are presented in many of the contexts I have cited as themselves founded on, and hence derivative from, human dignity.[2] Therefore we can say that human dignity is the pre-eminent ethico-political value operating on the international stage at present.

Second, the rise to political and legal prominence of human dignity has been surprisingly precipitous, dating only to the mid- to late 1930s. Of course, it is not the case that discourses about dignity did not previously exist; indeed, contemporary conceptions of dignity draw on long

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[1] Hans Joas, *The Sacredness of the Person: A New Genealogy of Human Rights* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013).

[2] Mark P. Lagon and Anthony Clark Arend, *Human Dignity and the Future of Global Institutions* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014).

and complex traditions of thought and debate.[3] However, the recent history has been marked by a decisive shift from older hierarchical conceptions to one presenting human dignity as both egalitarian and inherent in human personhood. These are the decisive features of universal human dignity as it is invoked in legal, political, moral and religious arenas today.

Third, the development and enshrinement of human dignity – the history and prehistory of the current conception – is largely, though not exclusively, a Western affair. We can see this if we trace the historical evolution of the term "dignity." For the sake of convenience and at the risk of oversimplifying, we can identify five noteworthy layers of meaning that have been sedimented into this overall process of development. (1) To begin with, the ancient Greeks, with their term *axioma*, and the Romans, who translated this term as *dignitas*, denoted a hierarchical, aristocratic conception of the worthiness of certain people thought to deserve to rule. (2) The Stoic writer and statesman Cicero introduced the idea of *human* dignity, a status uniquely held by humanity in virtue of the capacity of reason. (3) Meanwhile, Jewish and then Christian theology developed a conception of the value of the human person linked to the condition of having been created in the *imago Dei* ("in the image and likeness of God"). (4) In the early modern period, Pico della Mirandola influentially introduced the notion that the special worth of humans inhered in their unique power to freely determine their own nature. (5) During the Enlightenment Immanuel Kant proposed that an inviolable human dignity was rooted in and inseparable from, the human capacity for moral freedom and self-legislation. It is this last understanding of human dignity as intrinsic, inalienable and held equally by all that is at the core of the modern global law and much of the rhetoric of human dignity.

Although human dignity has evolved in its meaning and implications, in its development in the West it can also be said to have exhibited certain persistent characteristic features. These are exhibited nicely in Scott Cutler Shershow's tripartite semantic model of dignity. Across the centuries, he notes, dignity "unites (or…*aspires* to unite) three related but distinct things: intrinsic worth, fitness, or value; high rank or status; and an impressiveness or distinction of style, gesture, bearing and comportment."[4] Although one or the other has at times received greater emphasis, the three elements of *rank*, *status* and *bearing* have been constants in discourse about dignity.

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[3] See, e.g., Marcus Düwell et al., eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of Human Dignity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and Remy Debes, ed., *Dignity: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[4] Scott Cutler Shershow, *Deconstructing Dignity: A Critique of the Right-to-Die Debate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 31.

Another constant theme in the philosophy of dignity has been the distinctiveness of humans vis-à-vis all other species. In what, precisely, this distinctiveness inheres is a question that has been much contested, however, and disagreements on this issue have contributed to the emergence of broadly different "liberal" and "conservative" interpretations of human dignity. Working in a broadly Kantian vein, liberal notions tend to emphasize the capacities of reason or autonomy as grounding the unique value of human beings, and as a result prize concomitant rights of liberty, choice and consent. Conservative conceptions, for their part, characteristically articulate what accounts for the specialness of human persons in terms of creation theologies or philosophies of natural law, and as a result are more receptive than their liberal counterparts to restrictions on individual liberties in the name of an objective moral order. Despite their differences, proponents of the liberal and conservative strands of thinking would nonetheless both subscribe equally to the contemporary globalized legal-ethical notion of human dignity according to which *human beings possess a unique worth that (1) sets them apart from other beings and (2) requires that they be treated in some ways and not be treated in other ways*.

Something like this fundamental understanding was incorporated into the opening clause of the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world…" As noted, this language is compatible with both the liberal philosophical heritage mediated by Kant and the more conservative Christian line of thought formulated most compellingly by Catholic thinkers, and it can certainly be thought of as a product of "Western" civilization. At the same time, it is very much worth noting that this document was in important ways the result of an intercultural exchange. The committee that drafted it had a diverse international membership, and according to numerous accounts the most influential contributors were Charles Malik, a Greek Orthodox Christian from Lebanon; Eleanor Roosevelt, an American Christian; Rene Cassin, a secular Jewish Frenchman; Peng-Chun Chang, a Chinese Confucian; and Hansa Mehta, a Hindu from India.[5] Adopting a strategy that was arguably decisive to the successful reception of the document, these collaborators studiously ignored the question of dignity's metaphysical or religious foundations even as they cited it as the ground of the practical consensus they arrived at regarding universal human rights.

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[5] Glenn Hughes, "The Concept of Dignity in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 39, no. 1 (2011): 1–24.

Intercultural Challenges Faced by Human Dignity and Dignity Language

In spite of the consistent assertion in international documents and legal instruments that human dignity is a universal value, it must be acknowledged that the discourse of dignity is not equally well anchored in all societies. Does that situation present a serious obstacle to the task of developing intercultural support for the cultivation and protection of human dignity? In this section, I trace a few difficulties for the project of developing intercultural understandings regarding dignity's character and implications.

Before approaching this specific topic, it is necessary briefly to address two much-discussed criticisms that skeptics have recently made regarding the language of human dignity in general, namely, (1) that the rhetoric of dignity is redundant (inasmuch as it can be identified with human *autonomy*) and hence unnecessary and (2) that the concept of dignity is self-contradictory, hopelessly polysemic, or hopelessly vague and hence useless. These criticisms are succinctly rendered in the medical ethicist Ruth Macklin's famous charge that "appeals to dignity are either vague restatements of other, more precise, notions or mere slogans that add nothing to an understanding of the topic."[6] These are not idle contentions, and they do speak to difficulties that often bedevil debates about the requirements of human dignity, but in the end neither line of criticism is dispositive. Let us consider each in turn.

The first charge is that human dignity is often invoked, in bioethical debates for example, in place of other established terms of art that offer greater precision. Dignity could be circumscribed into these other terms, says Macklin, "without any loss of content," and is therefore redundant. But her very examples belie this conclusion: by alternately noting that appeals to dignity can overlap with "respect for persons," "respect for autonomy," or "respect for the wishes of the living," she implicitly acknowledges that dignity cannot simply be reduced to or identified with any one of these quite different concepts.[7] Rather, it is an inherently complex concept that not only addresses the interconnections among these and other principles, but, importantly, also invokes their normative context—their grounding in what is thought to give human beings their distinctive worth. Thus, although it is true that dignity is sometimes employed rhetorically in a reductionistic or truncated manner – as in, for example, the "death

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[6] Ruth Macklin, "Dignity Is a Useless Concept," *British Medical Journal* 327 (2003): 1419-20; see also Steven Pinker, "The Stupidity of Dignity," *The New Republic*, May 28, 2008.

[7] Macklin, "Dignity," 1419.

with dignity" debate – the claim that invocations of dignity amount to nothing more than assertions of autonomy rights is hardly plausible.

The other charge of vagueness has some traction precisely because its complex character makes possible appeals to human dignity in several distinct contexts. But these different contexts can be analytically distinguished in ways that preserve their underlying coherence. Thus, very specific applications of dignity, for example in the right of detainees not to be subjected to humiliating treatment or of refugees to have access to humane, "dignified" living conditions, operate at a different level from the assertion of the inestimable and equal worth of human beings that serves as the foundation of human rights in general. At both levels, there are now bodies of national and international jurisprudence that in fact specify aspects of the content and attendant practical implications of human dignity. It remains true that arguments invoking dignity can be found on both sides of the transnational debate about assisted suicide, and that bioethicists disagree about the relevance of human dignity to questions of reproductive technology and other issues. However, these differences, far from being rooted in purely rhetorical constructions or incommensurable intellectual assumptions, turn on differing interpretations of aspects of dignity that can be located in a single, albeit admittedly complicated, philosophical and religious tradition. Of course, the presence of contending interpretations of a concept by no means automatically invalidates it.

I presume, therefore, that human dignity is a distinctive and meaningful, if not simple or univocal, concept, and that it can function usefully in philosophical, political, legal and religious debate. In light of my concern with intercultural debate and understanding, I want here to highlight three additional challenges: one internal, one interreligious and one cross-cultural.

The internal challenge takes the form of contending invocations of human dignity rooted in conflicting cultural assumptions present within the broad tradition of dignitarian thought in the West. Especially in the US, divergent interpretations of dignity and its requirements have been activated in the so-called culture wars, pitting what might be called traditional-embodied conceptions against autonomy-based views. Thus we have, on the one hand, arguments against abortion and euthanasia premised on theological claims about human dignity.[8] These are countered, on the other hand, by the "death with dignity" movement in favor of legalizing physician-assisted suicide, or the "Dignity USA" campaign in favor of the rights of gay, lesbian and transgender persons. To this division we could add the split between those who conceive of human dignity as purely an attribute of individual persons, and those who argue that human dig-

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[8] Mark L. Movsesian, "Of Human Dignities," *Notre Dame Law Review* 91, no. 4 (2015-2016): 1517-51.

nity should also be thought of as an attribute of collectivities – either the species as a whole, or other large-scale groups such as peoples, states, or religious communities. After all, it has become accepted in some quarters that such entities can possess collective human rights or be conceived of as collective agents.[9] In part, these sorts of disputes revolve around both the secular-religious distinction and the liberal conservative political divide that are at the heart of processes of modernization in Western societies. At the same time, it can also be said that they are likely products of the kind of internal value diversity that marks most complex traditions. In any case, the question persists of whether some measure of consensus about the requirements of dignity can be forged out of the cultural disagreements that bedevil modern dignity debates.

The interreligious challenge revolves around the question of how well human dignity, with its deep roots in Greco-Roman, Christian and Enlightenment thought, can be translated into, or find rough equivalents within, the idioms and intellectual structures of other religious systems. The rise of a putatively universal value of human dignity has produced inquiries into analogues in other religious traditions, with rather diverse results. Where the prevailing Western discourse strongly reflects the influence of Christian theology and Kantian philosophy by highlighting the notions of individuality, human uniqueness vis-à-vis other life forms, reason, moral autonomy and inviolability, other traditions strike other notes. The table below charts various notions from major traditions that display similarities or points of contact with central aspects of human dignity. The traditions canvassed here exhibit both differences from one another and internal divergences.[10]

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[9] Micha Werner, "Individual and Collective Dignity," in Düwell et al., eds., *The Cambridge Handbook*, 343-52.

[10] Sources: Ping-cheung Lo, "Confucian Ethic of Death with Dignity and Its Contemporary Relevance," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 19 (1999): 313-33; Doron Shultziner, "A Jewish Conception of Human Dignity: Philosophy and Its Ethical Implications for Israeli Supreme Court Decisions," *Journal of Religions Ethics* 34, no. 4 (2006): 663-83; Pilgrim W. K. Lo, "Human Dignity – A Theological and Confucian Discussion," *Dialog* 48, no. 2 (2009): 168-78; Matthias Morgenstern and Katell Berthelot, eds., *The Quest for a Common Humanity: Human Dignity and Otherness in the Religious Traditions of the Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Düwell et al., eds., *The Cambridge Handbook*; Peimin Ni, "Seek and You Will Find It; Let Go and You Will Lose It: Exploring a Confucian Approach to Human Dignity," *Dao* 13 (2014): 173-98; Erin M. Cline, "Confucianism, Human Dignity, and Reverence for Life," *Dao* 15 (2016): 607-17; and Qianfan Zhang, *Human Dignity in Classical Chinese Philosophy: Confucianism, Mohism, and Daoism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Tradition	Key Concepts	Themes
Judaism	*Kevod ha'adam* (human dignity) *B'tselem Elohim* (in the image of God) *Kevod ha beriyot* (dignity of creatures/people)	Divine root of human worth Pro-procreation Sanctity of life
Islam	*Karamat al-insan* (treat with deference, honor) *Takrim* (God's dignifying action) *Khalifat* (deputy, viceregent)	Gradations of righteousness Reward of security and comfort Source in God and religion of Islam
Hinduism	*Atman* (soul)– *Brahman* (Being) *Manusmrti* (Laws of Manu) *Karma* (in the *Gita*)	Individualistic element Social class-related component Selfless action devoted to God
Buddhism	*Arhat* (Theravada) *Tathagatagarbha* (seed of Buddhahood)	Elitist conception Inherent, egalitarian, interspecies
Confucianism	*Zunyan* (dignity)*, renge* (moral personality) *De* (virtue): *ren* (humanity)*, yi* (righteousness) *Junzi* (gentleman)*, tai* (dignified ease)	Potential to be fully human Individually attainable, alienable Social character
Daoism	*Dao* (Way), *De* (presence of *Dao*) *Wuwei* (inaction, abstinence)	Acquired, cumulative, ecological Bodiliness

We see here significant differences from hegemonic Western conceptions with respect to social ontology (individual vs. social), religious grounding (secular vs. divine), scope (human only vs. other life forms or all of nature, mode of attribution (inborn vs. acquired) and so on. Hence the challenge: can the Western moral and international-legal conceptions be successfully integrated into these traditions?

Finally, the cross-cultural challenge is presented by the presence of what some call broad civilizational divergences with respect to the mores and normative patterns of contemporary societies. Without necessarily subscribing to the picture of a "clash of civilizations" famously advanced by Samuel Huntington, we can recognize that human dignity does not uniformly map onto how perceptions of self-worth are conceived or regulated in different cultural assemblages around the world. Rather, some distinctive and competing cultural systems of self-worth challenge the primacy of dignity as a language for addressing the value, status and basis of respect for persons. Contemporary legal and political theories drawing on

research in social psychology propose that there are broad, in some cases potentially incompatible differences between dignity cultures, honor cultures and face cultures.[11] According to this research, in (predominantly Asian) "face" societies, self-worth is determined largely by collective or social factors; in (mostly North Atlantic) "dignity" societies, self-worth is primarily established by and located in individuals; and in (Middle Eastern and other traditional) "honor" societies, self-worth is linked to a complex interaction of social conventions and personal agency. The implication of this schema is that much of the cultural content addressed via dignity language in Western societies – such as having one's inherent dignity violated, or acting in an undignified manner – may be conceived of and regulated quite differently elsewhere, for example in terms of "losing face" (in face cultures) or being dishonored (in honor cultures). Because both honor and face cultures link self-worth in some measure to contingent social factors, and indeed often prioritize collective self-worth over regard for individuals, the question arises of to what extent such societies can integrate the modern notion of human dignity as universal, inherent, individual and hence not socially dependent. As Jörg Friedrichs points out, in international relations actors working in a dignity framework often fail to understand how their actions impact and are perceived in face and honor societies.[12] The challenge therefore arises of whether or not common legal and political foundations can be established for effectively promoting and protecting the international norms of human dignity across different cultures of self-worth.

Intercultural Opportunities to Promote Common Understandings of Human Dignity

Ensconced as it is in legal documents, international treaties, professional codes and religious doctrines, human dignity language is here to stay. In the face of that fact, we are well-advised to devote our attention and energy to intercultural efforts to forge understanding and cooperation with respect to human dignity. This program is important for a number of

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[11] On these distinctions see Young-Hoon Kim and Dov Cohen, "Information, Perspective, and Judgments about the Self in Face and Dignity Cultures," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 36, no. 4 (2010): 537 –50; Angela K.-Y. Leung and Dov Cohen, "Within- and Between-Culture Variation: Individual Differences and the Cultural Logics of Honor, Face, and Dignity Cultures," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100, no. 3 (2011): 507–26; Xiaoying Qi, "Face: A Chinese Concept in a Global Sociology," *Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (2011): 279-95; and Jörg Friedrichs, "An Intercultural Theory of International Relations: How Self-Worth Underlies Politics Among Nations," *International Theory* 8, no. 1 (2016): 63-96.

[12] Friedrichs, "An Intercultural Theory," 81-84.

reasons. At the applied level at which humanitarian agencies and other actors engage in the work of protecting human rights and dignity, such efforts are vital to forging understandings and collaborative relationships in the face of cultural differences. At the legal and political levels, both nationally and internationally, this work can help avoid misunderstandings, stabilize international relations and strengthen the institutions of constitutional and international law. And finally, this undertaking can help realize the special potential of human dignity discourse, as a milieu that uniquely mediates between religious and secular-philosophical conceptions of human value, for contributing to a global ethic that anchors and informs those other levels. I close by discussing a few points regarding opportunities for advancing this intercultural program.

First, it is useful to mention some caveats about intercultural work.[13] To begin with, *intercultural* dialogue and cooperation needs to be distinguished from *comparative* work. This is in part because where comparative research presumes the separateness of cultures, an intercultural perspective assumes their interpenetration. It is also in part because where comparative work privileges the tasks of description and comparison, an intercultural approach takes aim at making normative judgments and producing creative insights and new understandings. Despite these differences, however, comparative study remains an indispensable precursor to intercultural work. A second point to emphasize regarding intercultural engagement is that it is to be distinguished as well from *multi*culturalism, inasmuch as it eschews relativism and strives not only for respect for differences but also for the appreciation of general, common values. In addition, an intercultural perspective recognizes not only that cultures are never static, but that they are usually involved in mutually transforming one another. Lastly, intercultural engagement is also to be distinguished from interreligious dialogue – although there is certainly significant overlap between the two undertakings.

With this broad understanding of intercultural work in mind, we can appreciate some opportunities for bringing this framework to bear in response to the challenges I identified above with respect to understandings of human dignity.

For starters, there is good reason to expect that even quite novel moral ideas encountered in other cultures will resonate with internal themes in any given complex cultural system. This dynamic is, as Anthony Appiah has argued, an important factor in how moral shifts affecting practices such as dueling or foot-binding occur over time,[14] and the table I set

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[13] One instructional treatment of this topic is Harm Goris, ed., *Bodiliness and Human Dignity: An Intercultural Approach* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2006).

[14] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).

out above suggests that it can apply to the case of human dignity. As my brief overview of traditions reflects, ethico-religious cultures often contain as marginal or minor elements values and beliefs endorsed more prominently in other cultures. So, for example, we should not expect that "face" or "honor" cultures encounter ideas about dignity as wholly novel or alien, with no base of similar ideas. As a result, we can and should expect that even quite different cultural formations will have internal elements with the aid of which internally anchored understandings of human dignity can be constructed.

Secondly, I think a case can be made – interculturally – that shared intercultural learning about dignity is an undertaking that brings many benefits, not least among them that the process itself enhances human dignity. One such benefit is that intercultural encounter regarding dignity offers participants the opportunity, through critical conversation and debate, to refine and strengthen their arguments for their existing commitments. Likewise, this practice tends to introduce new perspectives that can complement, supplement, or improve upon older ones. Moreover, intercultural discourse about human dignity carries the prospect of uncovering deeply shared, potentially universal normative commitments, thereby contributing further to the process of "value generalization" identified by Hans Joas. Finally, I would maintain that the intercultural process is, in and of itself, a practice that manifests and enhances human dignity, inasmuch as it embodies attributes closely related to the distinctive value and status of human being. I have in mind here values – linked to human dignity by thinkers including Pico della Mirandola and Francis Bacon – such as the spirit of inquiry, an appreciation of the other, the exercise of intellectual virtues and a capacity for self-reflexivity.

The final opportunity I will mention for advancing intercultural understanding of human dignity stems from new research in the emerging scholarly field known as visual ethics.[15] This avenue of inquiry investigates the ways in which pictures and images can directly *present* – as opposed to *representing* in ways mediated by the linguistic, discursive and intertextual constellations of culture – content related to morality and values. This approach promises to be especially useful for explorations of the dimension of dignity described above as having to do with *bearing*: with the way that dignity is manifested in appearance, posture, carriage, gesture and behavior. Images that either *show* dignity or index it by displaying *violations* of dignity have the potential to help identify the sort of universal features of the human that constitute one of the goals of intercultural dialogue. In that way, visual ethics may provide a sort of lingua franca for unearthing commonalities associated with human dignity while

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[15] William A. Barbieri Jr., "One Good Turn Deserves Another: Comment on Visual Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 45 (Spring 2017): 194-205.

helping to remedy our underdeveloped appreciation of its aesthetic and bodily dimensions.

Whether it be in the form of internal moral critique, transcultural dialogue, or visual ethics – the three approaches I have briefly sketched here – it is clear that intercultural work has the potential to make significant contributions to the promotion of human dignity. To illustrate the significance of this work we can consider the role of human dignity in the field of migration and refugee work today – a field that by definition is deeply embroiled in cultural tensions and intersections. In this field, patterns of movement and the juridical status of migrants are regulated by general international norms rooted in universal human dignity, while many aspects of policies of acceptance and assistance for "forced" migrants in particular are conditioned by more particular conceptions of dignity having to do with humiliation and affronts to personal autonomy. [16] However, what counts as humiliation, dignified treatment, or proper respect for individual freedom depends in part on one's cultural context, and can vary between sending and receiving countries. These features of international migration underscore the importance of intercultural learning that can shore up cosmopolitan rationales for the rights of migrants, strengthen the legal and political institutions designed to administer them, and help resolve difficulties that can arise in humanitarian work with migrants in the field. In the arena of migration, internal moral critique is playing an important role in showing the relevance of migration histories to the modern emergence of the universal human rights ideal. The visual ethics of migration, as manifested both in critiques of the invisibility of culturally "other" migrants in the media and in the luminous displays of the dignity of refugees in the photography of Sebastião Salgado, provides one means of building bridges across cultural divides. Perhaps most importantly, transcultural dialogue is becoming an important component of efforts to ascertain and uphold the dignity of migrants at the various stages of their journeys. In migration as in other fields, these sorts of intercultural work richly deserve to be supported, because in our present climate human dignity can certainly use any help it can get.

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[16] William A. Barbieri Jr., "The Migrant *Imago*: Migration and the Ethics of Human Dignity," in Peter Phan, ed., *Christian Theology in the Age of Migration* (New York: Lexington Books, forthcoming).

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11.
Humanism Revisited

Seema Bose

Introduction

Dwelling on whence we have come, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud have both assailed and enlightened us in various ways. Human vulnerabilities and also potentialities have been exposed. We no longer accept the concept of a fixed 'human nature', which the eighteenth century took for granted. There is a strange parallel between our starting point and the way Protagoras reacts to skeptical doubt and the contemporary humanist reaction to something even more daunting, namely, disillusionment with the world in which economies are propelled by trading in armaments and drugs and glee is expressed when new ballistic missiles are invented.

A stream of humanist thinking can yet wind its way through the thickets of circumstance and the fossilized institutions which have been of our own making, to say nothing of the explosive effects produced by politicized travesties of religion. Two thinkers, Giuseppe Mazzini and Peter Kropotkin, who come from very different backgrounds, remind us of the positive possibilities which need to be embodied in the future destinies of human beings in spite of the crooked timber of humanity.

Giuseppe Mazzini: Duty, Self-Rule and Association

Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) was an Italian revolutionary nationalist. After the failure of the Italian revolutions of 1820 and 1821, Italy split into several states and continued to remain under the Austrian rule. At a very young age Mazzini realized that one ought to struggle for the freedom of one's own country. Initially he was associated with the Carbonari but later realized that it had no definite plan to unite the country. So he felt that "instead of wasting time and energy in the endeavor to galvanize a corpse, it would be better to address himself to the living, and seek to found a new edifice upon a new basis."[1] He was arrested in 1830, and after his release from prison he formed a new society called Young Italy. He spent several years in prison and in exile. He was influenced by British thinkers, and during a stay in London he learnt about liberalism.

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[1] H.C. Irwin, "The Life and Writings of Joseph Mazzini," *Calcutta Review* 56 (1873): 112, 306.

"Italy united, free, democratic and republican was the only absorbing passion of his life; an ideal to be pursued at all costs and by all means."[2] Through his writings he could convey the political problems of the unity and independence of Italy and raise public awareness of the issues involved. He asked the people of Italy to "arise in all strength and energy of self-devotion."[3] He believed that "You have to have liberty and everything that is indispensable for the moral and material nourishment of life. Personal liberty; liberty of locomotion; liberty of religious belief; liberty of opinion on all subjects; liberty of expressing opinion through the press or by any other peaceful method; liberty of association so as to be able to cultivate your own minds by contact with the minds of others; liberty of trade in all the productions of our brains and hands."[4] He further reiterated, "But of what value were these acknowledged rights to those who lacked the means to practice them? What had liberty to teach mean to those who had neither the time nor the means to learn? Who cared about liberty of commerce if you had nothing to sell, no capital, no credit? […] What was liberty for those who had to contend with hunger if not an illusion, a bitter irony?"[5] These existing pertinent problems need to be addressed. Despite his insistence on individual rights, he prioritized the philosophy of duty, as individualism ignores duty. He believed that "The theory of rights enables us to rise and overthrow obstacles, but not to found a strong and lasting accord between all the elements which compose the nation."[6] He referred to "duty which bids everyone work continually, and with self-sacrifice for the cause of Truth."[7] Rights "cannot exist except as a consequence of duties fulfilled and one must begin with the latter in order to arrive at the former."[8] He wrote: "every right you have can only spring from a duty fulfilled."[9] "Life is a mission; duty, therefore, its highest law."[10]

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[2] H. Temperly and A.J. Grant, *Europe in the Ninetieth and Twentieth Centuries* (UK: Longman Group Ltd., 1952), 226.

[3] Giuseppe Mazzini, *Life and Writings of Joseph Mazzini* (London: Smith Elder and Co., 1866), 47.

[4] Nadia Urbinati, "Mazzini and the Making of the Republican Ideology," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17, no.2 (2012): 201.

[5] Sauro Mattarelli, "Duties and Rights in the Thought of Giuseppe Mazzini," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 13, no. 4 (2008): 482.

[6] Giuseppe Mazzini, *The Duties of Man,* Everyman ed. (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1907), 15.

[7] Mazzini, *The Duties of Man,* 3.

[8] Margaret Chatterjee, *Gandhi's Diagnostic Approach Rethought: Exploring a Perspective on His Life and Work* (New Delhi: Promilla and Co., Publishers in association with Bibliophile South Asia, 2007), 59.

[9] Mazzini. *The Duties of Man,* 3.

[10] Irwin, "The Life and Writings of Joseph Mazzini," 112, 312.

He always emphasized the need for harmony between self-choosing and right-acting. He wrote: "You have taught a man that society was instituted to secure his individual rights; now imagine asking him to sacrifice his individual interest, in order to achieve his country's freedom. This man will coldly calculate the loss and probable gains and will derive from his calculation the norm of his action."[11] Mazzini considered "our cause not as one of simple reaction, or of material well-being; or of mere rights to be recognized."[12] "But there are things which constitute your individual being and are essential to human life. And over these not even the People had any right. No majority, no collective force can rob you of that which makes you man."[13] Gandhi said: "Mazzini has shown in his writings on the duty of man that every man must learn how to rule himself."[14] To Mazzini it is of utmost importance that man must learn to govern himself well in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to the other. Fostering a sense of duty and moral responsibility of all working for each and each for all must be the objective of a true reform. Michael Ignatieff expressed somewhat similar sentiments when he wrote: "Being human is an accomplishment like playing an instrument. It takes practice. The best of us is historical; the best of us is fragile. Being human is a second nature which history taught us, and which terror and deprivation can batter us into forgetting."[15] Education is considered by Mazzini as the "first duty"[16] since it helps man in rightly choosing between good and evil.

Progressive development can only be accomplished through association, collective cooperation of people and combined labor. "You and I is an entirely different thing from either you or I."[17] Since "duty lies in a collective labor, everyone should measure his powers and see what part of this labor falls to him."[18] Mazzini said: "We are all Cosmopolitans, if by Cosmopolitanism we understand the love and brotherhood of all, and the destruction of all barriers which separate the Peoples."[19] "Mazzini wanted the republic to be the city of all."[20] It is work that binds the whole of humanity. "Humanity is a single body and ought to be governed by a single

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[11] Urbinati, "Mazzini and the Making of the Republican Ideology," 190.

[12] Giuseppe Mazzini, *Letters* (Westport CT: Hyperion Press, 1979), 76.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Chatterjee, *Gandhi's Diagnostic Approach Rethought*, 57.

[15] Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers* (Vintage, 1994), 141-142.

[16] Michael Huggins, "The Nation and Giuseppe Mazzini," *New Hibernia Review* 17, no. 3 (autumn 2013): 20.

[17] Swan M. Burnett, "Giuseppe Mazzini – Idealist. A Chapter in the Evolution of Societal Science," *American Anthropologist* 2 no. 3 (1900): 516.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Urbinati. "Mazzini and the Making of the Republican Ideology," 191.

[20] Ibid., 192.

Law."[21] "The law of life cannot be *wholly* accomplished except by the united work of *all.* And for every great advance, for every discovery of a portion of that law, history shows a corresponding extension of human association, a wider contact between peoples and peoples."[22]

Rehabilitation of work should be such that "I may become more just and equal for all." This can be achieved through "the association between capital and labor, in such ways that will make it possible for all of you to acquire capital and change from being wage-earners into workers who are free and independent of arbitrary power of others."[23] Throughout his life Mazzini yearned for "righteousness, which could not brook injustice, inhumanity and slavery anywhere."[24]

Mazzini: Beyond Nationalism

For Mazzini "a nation is a living task."[25] "Every people before occupying itself with Humanity, must constitute itself a nation."[26] Just as individuals are the citizens of a nation, "nations are the individuals of humanity."[27] Instead of conquering and occupying, he insisted on the equality of nations. He fought for Italy's redemption and independence and his ultimate goal was unification of Italy. He said: "I worship God, together with an idea which I think has come from God: Italy one; Italy an angel of moral unity and progressive polity to the nations of Europe."[28] He believed in an all pervasive divinity since "There is but one God; all men are the sons of God."[29] Mazzini went beyond nationalism and embraced universal brotherhood. Gandhi wrote: "Although he dedicated his whole life to the service of Italy, he was so broad-minded that he could be regarded a citizen of every country."[30] As Mazzini wrote in his *Duties of Man,* "Wheresoever you may be, in center of whatsoever people circumstances may have placed you, be ever ready to combat for the liberty of that

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[21] Mazzini, *The Duties of Man,* 46.

[22] Mazzini, *The Duties of Man,* 69.

[23] Urbinati, "Mazzini and the Making of the Republican Ideology," 194.

[24] Mausumi Dey, "Impress of Mazzini on Mahatma Gandhi: A Comparative Analysis," *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies* 1 no. 10 (2014): 46.

[25] Sydney M. Brown, "Mazzini and Dante," *Political Science Quarterly* 42, no 1 (March 1927): 81.

[26] Brown, "Mazzini and Dante," 82.

[27] Mazzini, *The Duties of Man,* 241.

[28] A Chandler, "Mazzini's Political Philosophy," *The Economic Review* 2, no 1 (1892): 65.

[29] E.A. Venturi, "Religious Republicanism," *The Contemporary Review* 18 (August 1871): 200.

[30] Chatterjee, *Gandhi's Diagnostic Approach Rethought*, 56.

people, should it be necessary."[31] Since "wheresoever there existed a human being, there existed a brother, with a soul immortal as his own, destined, like himself, to ascend towards the Creator, and on whom he was bound to bestow love, a knowledge of the faith, and help and counsel where needed."[32] Being an altruist he realized that "he also is my brother, therefore, I have need to consider him. I cannot rise if he fall – and I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto me."[33]

He had faith in God, rejected all forms of sectarianism and was known for his phrase "God and the People." To Mazzini the attempt to prove the existence of God "would seem blasphemous as the denial appears madness, […] humanity has been able to transform, to disfigure, never to suppress His holy name. The underlying light of faith in God pierces through all the imposture and corruption wherein men have darkened His name."[34] He believed that "only the worship of God and of Truth can convert hopes into facts"[35] since power rests with the people. Both individual conscience and common consent of fellow-beings are completely necessary for reaching truth. "God has given you both the consent of your fellow-men and your own conscience, even as two wings wherewith to elevate yourselves towards Him. Why persist in cutting off one of them? […] Both are sacred."[36] Unfortunately, the advent of monarchy in Italy in 1870 ruined all his hopes and dreams.

Peter Kropotkin: Life and Works

Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) was born in Moscow in a royal family. At the age of twelve he renounced his aristocratic birthright and gave up his princely title. Besides his military training he studied zoology, mathematics and geography. In 1871 he did not accept the secretaryship of the Russian Geographical Society, because he wanted to dedicate his life to fight against poverty, injustice and misery prevalent in society. He felt, "What right had I to these highest joys, when all around me was nothing but misery and struggle for a moldy bit of bread. When whatever I should spent to enable me to live in that world of higher emotions must needs be taken from the very mouths of those who grew the wheat and had not

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[31] Faderica Falchi, "Beyond National Borders; 'Italian' Patriots United in the Name of Giuseppe Mazzini: Emilie Ashurst Margaret Fuller and Jessie White Mario," *Women's Historical Review* 24, no. 1 (2015): 33.

[32] Venturi, "Religious Republicanism," 201.

[33] Burnett, "Giuseppe Mazzini Giuseppe Mazzini – Idealist. A Chapter in the Evolution of Societal Science," 503.

[34] Venturi, "Religious Republicanism," 193.

[35] Mazzini, *The Duties of Man,* 3.

[36] Venturi, "Religious Republicanism, 196.

bread enough for their children."[37] He appealed to the youth to join "the never ceasing struggle for truth, justice and equality among the people, whose gratitude you will earn – what nobler career can the youth of all the nations deserve than this."[38] He remained in exile for forty years and returned to Russia after the Russian Revolution of 1917. During his long period of exile he wrote several books which include *The Conquest of Bread* (1892), *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1899) and *Mutual Aid* (1902).

Kropotkin: Mutual Aid

Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Karl Kessler's lecture "On the Law of Mutual Aid" had a profound impact on Kropotkin. He felt that Darwin's followers misrepresented Darwin's theory of evolution. Kropotkin emphasized that Darwin himself acknowledged in the *The Descent of Man* the role of cooperation rather than competition in the struggle for existence. Darwin wrote: "The social instincts, which must have been acquired by man in a very rude state, and probably even by his early ape-like progenitors, still give the impulse to some of his best actions. A tribe including many members who from possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage and sympathy, were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection."[39] Though Kropotkin admitted that human beings are competitive by nature and also accepted "the opposed tendencies of human nature: the narrow-egoist and social,"[40] but for him mutual aid has been "the chief factor of evolution."[41] He insisted that one must give up feelings "which induce man to subdue other men in order to utilize them for his individual ends" and to cultivate those which "induce human beings to unite for attaining common ends by common effort."[42]

He believed in "close dependency of everyone's happiness upon the happiness of all; and the sense of justice, or equity, which brings the individual to consider the rights of every other individual as equal to his

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[37] Peter Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (Boston, 1899), 240.

[38] Roger N. Baldwin, ed., *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets* (New York, 1927), 261, 279.

[39] Charles Marsh, "Social Harmony Paradigm and Natural Selection: Darwin, Kropotkin and the Metatheory of Mutual Aid," *Journal of Public Relation Research* 25 no. 5 (2013): 481.

[40] Peter Kropotkin, *Ethics: Origin and Development* (New York: Black Rose Books, 1992), 7.

[41] Peter Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (New York, 1908), 44.

[42] Kropotkin, *Ethics: Origin and Development* (New York: Black Rose Books, 1924), 22.

own."[43] Such a society based on the principle of "each for all and all for each" would be a just society. He was utterly disappointed with the Bolshevik capture of power of the state. He believed that violence is one of the maladies afflicting society. The key to tackling the problems of society lies in a revolution within man himself. Since "we all know that without uprightness, or self-respect, or sympathy and mutual aid, humankind must perish, as perish the few races of animals living by rapine, or the slave-keeping ants."[44]

Kropotkin: Egalitarianism

Kropotkin condemned those who did not contribute to society. For him, an ideal society would be such where there would be free distribution of goods and abolition of the wage system. He prioritized the needs of a human being over his contributions and achievements in society. "One person wishes to ride one thousand kilometers, another one – five hundred: these are strictly personal needs and there is no reason to make the first person pay twice as much as the second person due to the greater intensity of his or her need."[45] Though some of his suggestions were not economically viable, his concern about fulfilling human needs and mutual cooperation reflects his deep humanistic ideals. He believed that the products are the outcome of work of past and present generations which contribute to the common good. Yesterday's struggles can bear a new harvest today as he pointed to alternatives which could be ours tomorrow. "Generations of people that were born and died in poverty [so wrote Kropotkin] exploited and kicked around by their masters, falling down under the burden of work, left us huge heritage […]. Each machine has a similar history: a number of sleepless nights, fighting poverty, disappointments and raptures, partial improvements, performed by several generations of unnamed employees. Each new invention is the result of thousand other inventions."[46] He gave a vision of a world where humanity will reign supremely and there would be no divide between haves and have-nots as justice is impossible without equality. "Eight working hours for an owner is eight hours too many. We know that our society is evil not because a worker works ten, twelve or fourteen hours, but because the owner exists."[47]

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[43] Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1972), 22.

[44] Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (London, 1972), 49.

[45] Katarzyna Duda, "Principles of Independent Anarchistic Ethics in the Doctrine of Peter Kropotkin," *Kultura I Wartości,* no. 14 (2015): 75-76.

[46] Ibid., 76.

[47] Ibid., 77.

For him, in his ideal society there would be no gap between mental and manual labor both in industry and agriculture. No wonder his work *The Conquest of Bread* bears the sub-title "Industry combined with agriculture and brainwork with manual work." Youth can acquire both the skills through integral education, which includes training in both mental and manual skills. He insisted on self-sufficiency which could be attained through irrigation and local food production as Russia had a large peasant population. He was able to acknowledge that advanced agricultural techniques can decrease the drudgery of the workers. Being an optimist, he had tremendous faith in human capabilities despite certain inhuman conduct. He believed that humans are innately good. "We not I – is the normal form of life. It is life itself."[48] "We" calls for a transcending of "I". This an ideal for which the world must strive. This was his rejoinder to his radical sceptic contemporaries, for such skepticism was self-defeating. His message is as relevant today as it was in his own lifetime. How different would it be even almost a century after, when rampant inequalities are on the increase and people are still oppressed. Aiming at making humanity more humane world-wide remains a long-term task for the future.

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[48] Kropotkin, *Ethics: Origin and Development* (New York: Black Rose Books, 1992), 41, 60.

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Part IV

Self-awareness of Life: Specific Questions

12.

Reality, Life and the Limits of Objective Knowledge

Dan Chițoiu

Introduction

The notion of reality has been the subject of a continuous inquiry and debate as much in science as in philosophy. It was considered that an "objective" or "rational" approach is the only way to get veridic knowledge about reality. Such considerations were applied also to the understanding of life; in this sense life was pretty much described in the terms provided by science. Nowadays it is obvious that there is something more and proper to what we call "life," escaping the traditional models of inquiry, which rely on certain assumptions about the nature of reality.

Starting from these facts, I will propose an evaluation of some assumptions that guided investigations of reality in the past, which were based on *objectivity* as a definitory criterion of research and understanding.

A Change of Paradigm

In science we are now in a time of changing paradigms and even of crisis not only in explanations but also in identifying norms of scientific rigor. The meaning of *rigor* is disputed because another decisive concept, viz. *objectivity,* for the articulation of modern discourses (not only of scientific, but also of philosophical and to a certain extent, of theological discourse) is revised. The second half of the last century was the start of an extraordinary challenge for the discursive canon which had begun to function at the beginning of Modernity. Science imposed *Reality* as a key term in the understanding of all things; in a similar way, actual theological discourses also introduced the term and phenomenology made use of it. The traditional language of ontology was criticized or even rejected because of its semantic difficulties.

In order to understand the explanatory paradigms introduced by Modernity, we should start by indicating the point of reference that is the Aristotelian model of science and its critique. Aristotle was especially interested in the formal rules according to which concepts can be used; thus he inaugurated a language that met scientific requirements. He established the scientific concepts based on the empirical data obtained by the senses. He stated that all moving bodies which are not activated by any

force will eventually stop. He considered this a fundamental principle. According to his observation living beings have all kinds of shapes and different qualities; hence he claimed that the idea of various fundamental shapes is a reference point of his philosophy. Aristotelian science presupposes the existence of a great abundance and a variety of shapes, because he stresses more the qualitative descriptions than the quantitative considerations. This model remained strong until the modern era, more precisely until the 17th Century.

The change of paradigm began in Galileo Galilei's time. At that time, the dominant paradigm was that of *hierarchy*, according to which there are fundamental and non-fundamental concepts. The latter have to be explained in terms of the former, so the description of the physical world can be entirely made by a few basic notions connected together by quantitative laws. As we know, in classical physics, just as in all other sciences, this conception eventually prevailed.

From the Cartesian-Galilean perspective, basic concepts (which are not derived) are either obvious or at least idealizations of them. They are "clear and distinct ideas," as Descartes stated, and their unquestionable validity is fully guaranteed by common sense (e.g. by God). Indeed, Galilei, Descartes and Newton brought mathematics into physics, but what they did was that they used mathematics first of all to give *a quantitative content* to objects designated by familiar concepts (with the validity guaranteed by common sense). The involvement of mathematics into physics modified the manner of describing the world: *to know* means to eliminate the sensible, the concrete, in favor of the characteristics considered essential for an object, because these characteristics are describable from a mathematical point of view.[1] It is an important step forward in terms of possibilities offered by this paradigm for scientific research, but it is also a step backward. The step forward is that it provides an explanation of nature/reality as well as the possibility of technological exploitation of its properties, through the means of mathematical instruments. However, there is also a straying away from the understanding of *life*, from what can be understood beyond essential characteristics and properties of objects. Even today, in many fields of research, it is possible to describe processes only according to familiar concepts, which is considered the most productive way to reach proper results. For example in molecular biology, the molecules can be described as having rigid shapes and a mechanical behavior. This approach proves its viability especially by making truthful predictions. Nevertheless, the idea that this paradigm can offer an ultimate explanation and that there is nothing left but its assessing possibility is also a great risk.

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[1] Michel Henry, *I Am the Truth. Toward a Philosophy of Christianity,* trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 153.

The Multitudinous Paradigm and the Quest for Objectivity

The vision of the world created by classical science can be called "multitudinous": matter, which constitutes the world, is actually a myriad of simple elements, atoms or particles, which are all in a relationship by means of fields. The classical perspective states that the interaction among elements is made by forces which decrease when the distance increases.[2] The assumption involved in this kind of investigation is that the complete knowledge of parts realizes that of the whole, that fundamentally the whole is nothing else but a composition of parts. This assumption is properly described from the multitudinous perspective. According to the multitudinous method, the number of properties considered intrinsic is limited; these properties are so-called primary qualities, from which all other properties which compose the sensitive world are originated.

The only acceptable research method from a rational point of view for Antiquity and Middle Ages in the West was the one from the universal to the particular. According to this method, research started with constituting an ontological conception and then inferred from it all related aspects by means of purely logical instruments. If this vision can be described as centered on explaining the intrinsic properties of things, then Galilei introduced an objectivity centered more on the law than on the phenomenon. The meaning of objectivity in the new paradigm was the identification of natural laws as the fundamental structure of reality. Besides that, Galilei started his research in a totally different way. Unlike medieval people, who believed that an authentic knowledge of "what really is" came from observation, Galilei claimed that some aspects of reality should be ignored as secondary and somehow illusory. The role of mathematics was not to establish connections between simple notions, which are neither primary products nor syntheses of thinking, but what we obtain from our experience. This vision of an *ontology* was formulated for the first time by Descartes, who analyzed and offered a justification to this kind of realism based on the *Cogito*. He formulated the ontological argument in order to prove the existence of an infinite Being, which is incapable of cheating us. Consequently, the affirmation was that anything is true to the extent that we clearly know that it is true. This implies that the notions of shape, size and movement are true because they are clear. Unlike Descartes, Galilei stated and involved the principle of relative movement, which bears the name of Galilean relativity. This principle played an extremely important role in directing scientific research as was the case of the classical paradigm of physics.[3] The hard core of the

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[2] Bernard d`Espagnat, *On Physics and Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 17.

[3] Ibid., 34.

Galilean physics is the assertion of *objectivity*, that is, reality is independent from us, so measurements do not interfere with phenomena. This thesis became *the central thesis* of every kind of modern sciences.

The Blissful View as Ultimate Instance

Although this way of describing reality and objectivity constituted one of the fundamental assumptions of the Modern rationality paradigm, there was another assumption with a comparable influence in the Western cultural model. It began with Augustine. Starting from other grounds, namely those of *Revelation*, he articulated the interrogation of *the ultimate instance* as a question about the ultimate experience of Christian life. Questions, such as what can be reached as the maximum of Christian experience and what is the maximum to get in knowing God? actually pose the problem of truthfulness, too.

Augustine considered that *esse* is not an act, but a disposition and has a static character. Unchangeability, a concept of Platonic inspiration, is designed to indicate the simplicity and the self-identity of God.[4] God does not *have* existence, but He *is* existence, He is self-existence, *ipsum esse*. Augustine discussed an intellectual view as *the blissful view,* that is, the blessed ones will enjoy in heaven. He admitted the possibility of *a direct/ blissful view* of God in this life. This can be summarized as follows: because of the fact that God is the divine essence in the ultimate instance, He can be seen directly only through an *intellectual view.*[5] This kind of view, *the ultimate instance view,* is only and exclusively a function of intellect.

The radical possibility of the intellect to achieve the *blissful view* will constitute an important element in the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, for whom God is the supreme intelligible object. Nevertheless, he maintained that a created intellect, even when it is enlightened by the divine light, cannot understand God as He understands Himself; the Divine Being can be seen, but not understood. Since each of the blessed ones can have the blissful view, their entire natural capacity (possibility) to see is fulfilled.[6] Their view is not a succession but implies the understanding of created beings since the creatures which are seen in the divine being are as a whole. Being a witness to such view means being a witness to eternity, and the one who enjoys and takes part in eternal life.[7]

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[4] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, VIII, 6.
[5] David Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 224.
[6] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 59.4.
[7] Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West,* 250.

Unlike the East, where God is not understood as belonging to the category of being but above being, the West took over Aquinas's understanding of God as the supreme intelligible object. The description of intellectual capacities, especially the power to view the divine being, became subsequently a central premise of what was called *metaphysics* in philosophy. In Western modernity two understandings of what could be the *ultimate instance* were co-existing, namely *multitudinousness* and *blissful view.* The former is a paradigm overturn, which includes all sciences (with great consequences in physics); the latter an ultimate goal shared. Both views were drawn from the Thomistic theological tradition as well as metaphysical speculation (which dominated a good interval in the history of the Western philosophy). Various analyses about the two types of assumptions can be made, but what matters is that they had been the basis for the articulation of the Western cultural model until the 19th century. Both views shared a gnoseological optimism, which emphasized the capacities of the intellect to reach truth unequivocally. This optimism started to be doubted in the mid of the 20th century. The experimental research in physics with its rationalist-positivist optimism had to give up the classical explanatory model in order to offer a more coherent explanation by including a strange dimension of reality newly discovered: *the quantum reality*.

The Quantum Reality: "Something"

According to Bernard d`Espagnat, physics is an empirical science and understood as the synthesis of a communicable experience. Although this synthesis is a description of reality, it makes us pay more attention to physical realism. However, the actual results achieved in physics do not support this statement. Some physicists claimed that science is actually a description of experiments and thus leaves behind the question of whether reality is described; while others adopt an empirical position based on realistic evidence. This position also contains difficulties.[8]

There are important differences between these two positions. First, a statement can be objective if certain conditions that strictly adhere to the realistic version are fulfilled. Second, the realistic perspective of explanation refers to the existence of objects and their properties, but in the other version, there are no motivations for a construction along these lines because physics is nothing but a sum of the human experience. Third, the people who discovered quantum mechanics stated that their theory is a complete description of reality. They also claimed the principle of completeness: the wave function (the state vector) of a quantum object incurporates all the values which, according to physical realism, correspond to

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[8] d`Espagnat, *On Physics and Philosophy,* 48.

the structure and dynamic property of the object; there are no additional variables, or if present, they are noted as being "hidden." Those who claimed that physics is nothing but a synthetic description of our knowledge cannot say such thing. A proclamation that an entity is presumed to be "inaccessible" because it does not exist physically is open to critiques. This would be similar to an argument stating that the entity exists.

Thus, there appears a serious problem in the paradigm of physical realism. This also affects its more refined version, which is based on the data of quantum mechanics. In current studies of physics, there often arises the question of "the real nature," and of what is called "Something," in a rather negative tone. The role assigned to *Something* suggests the presence of an integrity, a whole, and a thesis that is totally unknown to classical physics. In addition, the theory of the quantum field refutes the multitudinous perspective of classical physics. The particles have no longer played the role of being the constitutive material of universe; the only reality which can be conceived is what it would constitute as being *something* in basic reality.[9] Such concepts as the non-separability and non-localization are indicative in this reality model. The theory of non-separability states that, strictly speaking, there are no distinct objects. Our senses do not reveal the real constituency of the universe. These notions appear to be dramatic differences with the classical view of the world, for there has no longer been an appeal to familiar concepts. Rather, a link must be established between the multitudinousness and a holistic vision and a recognition of the necessity to renounce objectivist language.

This dramatic change of vision then leads to multiple consequences, one of which is most radical because it needs to use a different language. It is not just to adapt the concepts with which physicists work in order to model their theories, but rather to change the overall world vision, which would imply a return back to classical ontology. Thus, it is necessary to better indicate *Something*, i.e., the imposed term for *Reality*, although there have been discussions regarding the concept's semantics.

The notion of reality is considered to be totally *independent* from our possible ways of knowledge *per-se*, and correlates with the hypothesis that we have access to what we call "reality" – it is deemed as reality *if and only if* we can say something true about it. These days, the concept of reality includes within its semantic area *the representation with* which we build what is independent from us. It starts from a phenomenon that stems from human experience and can be built without a direct reference to the *per-se* reality. The present semantics pertaining to the concept of reality in physics contains two major versions which correspond to the realistic and the representational description respectively.

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[9] Ibid., 17.

Nevertheless, the other notion of reality is also accepted. One particular meaning that played an important role for a long time is *objectivist realism*, which was postulated by Galilean ontology. This version of realism is based on the importance given to a group of human impressions whose relative stability leads to the consideration of these impressions as real. The objective state of any physical system is specified in each moment by a discreet or continuous set of known and unknown real numbers, and can be either cognizable or non-cognizable; for instance, time and space are real, the localization notion works.

Other versions regarding the usage of the reality notion include *mathematical realism* (the reality notion independent from us has consistency and is cognoscible, but can only be described by mathematical means), *ontological realism* (through the means provided by science, we can acquire an exact and exhaustive knowledge of the ultimate reality; it is a version with extreme claims), and *physical realism* (science is qualified for the qualitative description of reality "as it is").[10] The most radical meaning of the reality notion is called *real*, and is about a reality independent from mind (some people also include empirical reality here, but it is a weakening of the "hard" significance of the concept). There has been another difference between *reality* and *real*. The former refers to what enters the field of our experience and are within the power of actual or virtual investigation; whereas the latter is what reality would be beyond this possibility, the "Something." In connection with this kind of distinction, the concept of an *ultimate reality is* formulated*, in which there is a designated limit, the border that our knowledge, with all the possibilities available, has over the real at *a certain historical moment*. Ultimate reality does not have specific content, but is always constituted from stages of human knowledge at a historical time over the "Something." With the aforementioned definitions, we can now find out whether the crucial aspect of the discussion about reality in contemporary science is connected to the questions: To which point and to what extent can we talk about a human experience constituting reality? And at what point and to what extent, can we talk about knowing reality as it is?

Aristotle's Energeia Revised: The Other European Paradigm

The thesis of *the blissful view* can be interpreted as a variant of radical gnoseological optimism, and has been illustrated in recent physics by ontological realism. Indeed, the presupposition that God is the supreme intelligible object has remained a decisive stance in the articulation of the theological and philosophical Western Medieval discourse. This can also be found in Barlaam, the Calabrese monk who started the famous con-

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[10] Ibid., 28.

troversy in the 14th century, known as the Hesychast Dispute. Barlaam's position, which was similar to the majority of the Latin West, is that only the intellect is capable of the supreme knowledge act, and has the ascesis required in suspending the activities of senses and passions in order to allow the intellect to reach this ultimate knowledge. The questionable aspect of this view for those who practiced this method (called hesychast or *Jesus' prayer*) was that God's view *is done with the eyes of the body*. Gregory Palamas, an Athonite monk, came to the defense and sought to justify the hesychast practice. However, the defense of the hesychast position required explanations which could not be made in the terminological context of time. Palamas found himself in the situation where he needed to re-signify or re-explain certain terms, such as an explanation of the meanings that hesychasm had for God's view, which emphasizes the light or God's manifestations rather than of His essence. The goal of the hesychast practice is the view of Tabor's light as an active process pertaining to the continuous revelation of the one who is beyond "Being." Herein laid the rejection of any possibility in directly knowing the Divine nature, essentially to characterize and define God. As such, the gnoseological stake is obvious: ultimate knowledge (just like the knowledge of any kind) involves man as a whole, not just the intellect. The knowledge act has the dimension of a *relationship* between man and God (understood as a dynamic process and not as an essential view of a stable nature). In fact, anti-essentialism which corresponds to the anti-realist position can be found in modern physics.

A decisive term in explaining the non-essentialism of the hesychast doctrine is *energeia*, which Palamas partly derived from Aristotle. Previous Byzantine authors also used it in the process of looking for a proper term for the light of Transfiguration. Palamas's decision to use Aristotle's concept of *Energeia*[11] can be better understood nowadays with the help of studies (like that of David Bradshaw), which reveal the spectacular complexity and the nuances of this term. This term also received an exceptional usage since Aristotle's times. According to Aristotle *energeia* means a kind of activity with its own goal, and can exist only within a state of fulfillment. It is both the substantial cause and the thorough reality regardless of the appearances it takes. For these reasons, Aristotle finds *energeia* to be worthy of the highest appellation possible, that of Divinity. However, Palamas did so cautiously in using the notion of *energeia* to create a distinction from essence or nature, because the theological vocabulary of that time was deeply marked by the essentialist categories of the Greek philosophy, which were used to express the existential reality of The Supreme Being.

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[11] Bradshaw, *Aristotle East and West,* 231.

In this sense, it is understandable that Palamas used the term to explain a critical aspect of his doctrine: the significance of Ultimate Reality, that is, what content can be given to the notion of reality when the situation of ultimate instance is looked for. When discussing the divine light (as *energeia*), Palamas stated that it is a natural rather than a created symbol. He argued that a natural symbol always accompanies what it symbolizes, and its existence depends on the latter, just like an aurora accompanies the sunset, and heat accompanies the burning power of fire. The innate association makes them inexplicably linked. If *energeia* or the divine light has this meaning, then what we call a natural (or physical) reality has a much larger significance. In this view, reality is constituted by experience in the most radical way: ultimate reality is the human experience of the uncreated energies. Any statement that aims at something beyond the content of this experience, such as the direct knowledge of an essence, is thus rejected. At the same time, gnoseological pessimism is also rejected. The Supreme Personal Reality is cognizable due to its transcendence, it makes itself known through these manifestations that we term *energeia*.

Thus, physical reality is not static or inert, but matter plus energy. It is something that can be described as an *active, live process*, in which we can find the presence and the intentionality of a Person, a property with a *natural* dimension.

Unexpected Similarities and the Search for a New Paradigm

In quantum mechanics, as well as in the hesychast doctrine, major difficulties tend to arise when formulating adequate terms to sufficiently indicate the content of ultimate instant reality, as well as when attempting to gain access to it. For example, when Palamas explained that uncreated energies do not have a hypostasis or their own existence but result from the divine hypostases and from the *signs* of God's existence. He also claimed that if divine essence does not have a distinct energy, it would be non-existent and would be only be a product of the imagination.[12] Palamas further stated that energies cannot be separated from the essence but cannot be identical to it either. They are not the divine essence, but "something else," other than God.[13] This "Something" exists as energies and cannot be identified with the Divine Person nor with its essence. To some extent, it is similar to the "Something" described by Bernard d`Espagnat. Experiments in quantum physics have led to the renouncing of *physical realism;* the hesychast controversy has further led to the need of verifyability in the spiritual experience, and of the appeal to experience. Thus,

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[12] John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 216.

[13] Ibid., 225.

the two investigated methods have converged the similar position towards reality, which aims at a much-larger vision. Reality is much more dynamic and complex than what was described by these paradigms. *Life* is also part of reality. Rather than solely functioning on a biological level, life is a constituent of reality on many levels and has active forms of manifestation even in the ultimate aspects of what we term as "reality".

Conclusion

The enlarged paradigm involved in the understanding of the nature of reality should include a much broader and deeper understanding of *life*. There have been some notable attempts in philosophy to rethink the definition of life and its higher meanings, as Michel Henry did. Henry situated life as the most important concept of his phenomenological approach in the human, the world and ultimately in reality. In his radical interpretation of the body as the phenomenological matter of life and its self-revelation, the French philosopher saw life as a place *to reveal* the body.[14] This perspective views that the body does not irrevocably reveal life, but rather life reveals the body. It brings forth an extremely different narrative of what is proper to life and what is the real nature of life. In Henry's phenomenology, life should not be understood as simply being a mere biological function, but the ultimate aspect of reality.

On the other hand, a striking fact is that the sciences of life as a fully developed scientific branch have been struggling to understand the very nature of life from a biological point of view. While we are able to explain the amazing complexity and self-organization of living organisms, the nature of biological life and what makes an organism alive has yet to be adequately understood. Scientifically speaking, discerning between a dead or a living organism is a task that has yet to be accomplished. Mechanisms that are crucial for sustaining life are not the very fact/nature of life.

Understanding the nature of life should be an interdisciplinary task. It should not leave out any kinds of investigation or discourse, such as theology or diverse forms of spirituality. Spiritual and cultural traditions have accumulated many observations and reflections on life, hence have a much broader understanding of the meaning of life. They are an inestimable resource for understanding life. We can further understand what it means to say that we are *alive* by creating linguistic and operational bridges among the diverse approaches of life's multifaceted nature. It is a

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[14] Michel Henry, *Incarnation: A Philosophy of Flesh (Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 195.

task for us all to understand the meaning of life, particularly on a planet where various forms of life are endangered.

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13.

The Concept of Education in Tagore and Confucius: A Comparative Analysis

Prakriti Mukherjee

Introduction

Great civilizations are respected not because they fought well with other nations or had material wealth but because their cultural traits inevitably include a system of ideas they produced, especifically the idea of Man and the World. In the process, these cultures successfully developed systems of ethics and methods of preparing human beings to cultivate virtues already present in Man. These methods often took the shape of their characteristic systems of education. Needless to say, such developments are products of human efforts to create a harmonious society, but some individuals stood out in their enormous contributions.

In civilizations as India or China, although the system of education developed in ancient times, many interpreters interpreted the ancient wisdom in order to create new knowledge and its applications to shape the idea of Man and society. Confucius was one of such interpreters who probably produced the most relevant system of education and the idea of ethics, which greatly inspired many people throughout history and is still inspiring Chinese society today.

Rabindranath Tagore, though born in India almost two thousand years later, played a similar role in Indian society. Tagore was the product of recent history who not only thought to interpret ancient wisdom so as to make it relevant to the present time, but also succeeded in categorically projecting a concept of Man and the World and, by doing so, formulated a highly respected system of education. Tagore's concept of education was different from the school education started by the British in India, when India was a colony of the British Empire (1858-1947). As recommended by Lord Macauley, British Raj initiated an education system which had nothing to do with Indian traditional learning but set up schools within the periphery of a building separated from nature. The sole intention of such a system was to create a kind of educated class which would know English, develop an English taste and then serve the Raj as intermediary between the government and the people. In such a system there was no scope for human development. The educated class was meant to be instruments of the state to rule the rest of India.

As a child Tagore was sent to school but failed to persist with such a kind of education, instead he developed a distinct dislike for the city of

Calcutta, then a center place of business and bureaucracy. When grown up, he decided to initiate a completely new system of education based on his own interpretation of ancient Indian wisdom, with the aim of developing human creativity and a harmonious relationship with Nature. In his analysis, the ultimate essence of Man is harmony and an ever widening consciousness based on the surplus already present in Man. For Tagore the aim of education is to create a sense of ethics and other social concerns, rather than to focus on any test, or preaching of teachers, but to inculcate a sense of belonging to Nature. Education is a path of self-discovery through which the pupil discovers the harmony in the world.[1]

The Concept of Education

The concept of education Confucius initiated in China is also considered to be a novel system with a rather pragmatic outlook. Confucius is seen as one of the most famous teachers in the history of China. Initially he wanted to be a good and renowned administrator of King Zhou; as things changed in his life, he discovered that becoming a successful administrator was not his goal for life. Perhaps such a failure led him to become a good and famous teacher in his later life. In one of his analects he says

> Since the age of 15, I have devoted myself to learning; since 30, I have been well established; since 40, I have understood many things and have no longer been confused; since 50, I have known my heaven-sent duty; since 60, I have been able to distinguish right and wrong in other people's words; and since 70, I have been able to do what I intend freely without breaking the rules.[2]

This is quite similar to what Indian sages (from the Upanishadic period) thought of the way human beings should live their lives. In Tagore's interpretation, human development begins with animal instincts and a minimal knowledge for self-preservation. This is an existence in a world of necessity. But man inevitably goes for a second birth "where necessity

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[1] "When we understand this truth in a disinterested spirit, it teaches us to respect all the differences in man that are real, yet remain conscious of our oneness; and to know that perfection of unity is not in uniformity, but in harmony." See Rabindranath Tagore, "Creative Unity," in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 2, ed. S.K. Das (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 2012), 557.

[2] 子曰: "吾十有五而志于学,三十而立,四十而不惑,五十而知天命,六十耳顺,七十而从心所欲,不逾矩. Confucius. "Analects," in *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. 1, ed. J. Legge (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 146.

of a fight with himself has introduced an element into man's personality which is character. From the life of desire it guides man to the life of purpose. This life is the life of the moral world."[3]

Tagore, like Confucius, does not stop at the moral existence of man, because man's endeavor does not stop at moral existence either. He goes on to say "We know that when intellect is freed from the bondage of interest it discovers the world of Universal reasons with which we must be in harmony fully to satisfy our needs in the same manner when will is freed from its limitation, when it becomes good […], when its scope is extended to all men and all time, it discerns a world transcending the moral world of the humanity."[4] It is through this transcendent discipline of moral life that man finds ultimate truth. For Tagore, even goodness finds its meaning in the ultimate truth. Elsewhere he claims that this truth is in harmony, in turn, the realization of that harmony is divinity. There is no divinity beyond the world and man. Divinity is divinity of human personality and in this world only.[5]

Although both Tagore and Confucius failed to come to terms with their contemporary ideologies of education, there are some differences. As we know, Tagore is also considered as one of the most famous educationists in India. He was born as the youngest son of Tagore family, a zamindar family who was originally called 'Thakur', but later 'Tagore', due to the British preference. The great family came to be known as "Tagore family."

According to the tradition at that time, when the child Rabindranath was about 8 years old, he could not stay with his mother because he was considered a grown up boy and given in the care of household helpers. His father, Devendranath, was not available, as he used to be away in Himalayas for his meditation or busy with his own work. The poor young Tagore used to sit inside, looking around in the small world outside his window and would love to explore his imagination, to transcend the limited world. As said earlier, he never continued his studies in school. Whatever he learnt, he learnt it from the house tutors appointed by his father.

Irrespective of their life conditions, both Confucius and Tagore turned out to be path-breaking teachers and developed a distinctive and beautiful educational system. Although these extraordinary personalities differ a lot in their methods and even messages, but, they both fought against the traditional concept of education of their times. In terms of Confucius

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[3] Rabindranath Tagore, "Personality," in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore,* Vol. 2, ed. S.K. Das (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 2012), 378.

[4] Idem, 379.

[5] Rabindranath Tagore, "Religion of Man," in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore,* Vol. 3, ed. S.K. Das (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 2012), 89.

the educational system at his time was only meant for royal families and did not concern about common people and even had no respect for teachers. Teachers before Confucius never had the chance to become teachers of commoners; students had no opportunity to have access to a teacher if they were not regular students in school. The Confucian concept of education and the later 100 schools of thought changed this system. They articulated that anyone could become a teacher and that people could choose their own teachers.

While for young Tagore it was a teacher who taught him within the confines of his house, and the young student learned from the teacher whatever he was supposed to know. Nature did not have any role in the process of learning. It was a one-way affair – the knowledge must come from the guru, the teacher. Tagore's family tried to send him to several schools in Kolkata, but that did not work. Later he was sent to Cambridge, United Kingdom. He found that the situation was the same there, and he decided to come back to India.

As a grown up young man, Tagore was taken to various cultural activities in Kolkata spearheaded by his family, especially the Brahmo movement which was to spread the message of reformed Vedanta – a reinterpretation of old school of thought known as *Advaita Vedanta*. Later he came to stay in a lonely place, Santiniketan, away from Kolkata, where his father had set up an Ashram (hermitage) for Brahmo Samaj. There he decided to start a school with only five students. The guiding spirit was to revolt against the then prevalent system of city education. Tagore chose two ideas as sacrosanct: (1) the ideal of Tapovan – the old idea of learning within Nature, and (2) freedom from rote learning.

This idea of Tapovan evolved further, that is, gradually to learn while experiencing; nature taking the center stage; to enjoy freedom while growing up. Tagore thought that experience is to create the world, and the more the child experiences, the more the horizon expands. There is more enjoyment in expanding the horizon as freedom lies in the expansion and in relating oneself with the outer world. This is also the activity of the self, because only in experience we realize the self and hence achieve freedom. For Tagore education is not only a way of learning but a path to freedom as well as self-discovery.

Being a Good Teacher

Both Confucius and Tagore mentioned various ways through which a student can understand the concept of being a disciple. Both of them argued that we remain a student during our entire lifetime. For Confucius, another analect fits here: "Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When

you know something to say that you know it, when you do not know it, say that you don't know – that is knowledge."[6]

This very idea of studentship is not well accepted nowadays, even though, it is an important question in our life. Usually, we think that we have acquired a good amount of knowledge, enough for us to become a knowledgeable person. But according to Tagore and Confucius this is a wrong idea. We never stop learning in our life and remain student throughout our life. In another analect Confucius says: "Is it not a source of pleasure to learn and practice from time to time what one has learnt? Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant/faraway places? Is he not a superior man who does not feel hurt even if others do not know him?"[7]

Here Confucius discusses friendship. According to him a friend is a person who is equally knowledgeable and helps us to practice our own knowledge. Tagore did the same thing when he started the school. He wrote many books, even for Kindergarten, but he never thought that this was his job. He enjoyed writing text books for children, even the elder people became interested in these books. Teaching for Tagore was communicating and knowing students. Failure of the student for Tagore was also the failure of the teacher. An author of a Chinese children's book once said that writing children's books is the most difficult task for an author. Becoming a good mentor or teacher is one of the most difficult tasks in the world. But Tagore and Confucius did it.

There are significant differences between Tagore's and Confucius' concept of Man and his place in society, as well as values of life in social life and individual conducts. In the *Analects* the concept of benevolence "ren" (仁) is central and anyone has the potential to achieve it. Although there are various translations of ren (仁), zhi (知), zhong (忠), cheng (诚), they are the qualities of a superior or ideal person junzi (君子). Confucius' disciple Tze Kung says: "Do not treat others in a way that you do not want others to treat you."[8] This is close to Western morality developed from Christian tradition.

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[6] 子曰.由诲女知之乎,知之为知之,不知为不知,是知也. Confucius, "Analects," in *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. 1, Book 2, Chapter 17, 151.

[7] 子曰学而时习之不亦说乎.有朋自远方来不亦乐(yue)乎人不知而不,愠(run)不亦君子乎. Confucius, "Analects," in *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. 1, Book 1, Chapter 1, 137.

[8] 子夏曰,我不欲人之加诸我也,吾亦欲无加诸人. Confucius. "Analects," in *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. I, Book 5, Chapter 11, 177.

The Domain of Practice

Education for Confucius involves (*Analects*[9] 1.15) cultivating one's character. He compared it with crafting something from raw material, e.g., cutting bone, carving a piece of horn, polishing or grinding a piece of jade etc. He also stressed the importance of *li* (the rites, ritual), which includes ceremonies of ancestor worship, the burial of parents, the rules of respectful governing and appropriate behavior between parents and children. Later, this attitude expanded to include customs, practices and courteous and respectful behavior of many different kinds. Gradually engaging in rituals, learning to perform them properly with right attitudes of respect became a kind of cutting, carving, polishing and grinding of the self. Ritual is the center of education.

Though Tagore would accept the substance of this dictum about behavior, he would differ sharply with Confucius about rituals. Through his life Tagore tried to break free of rituals. In fact, in his later years he established *Siksha Satra*, a rural school appropriate for rural development. The students of the school learned all kinds of so-called extra-curricular activities and craft work such as wood work, leather work, craving, book binding etc., along with agriculture, all of which were part of our life and never treated as rituals. This experience enabled us to understand the pain and hard work and the labor of the artisan in the process of creating an object to free himself from economic misery. Tagore thought that this understanding could create the ability to understand and to be deeply rooted in experience of the primordial world, a world that created us and not just gave birth to human beings. Tagore also strongly believed in relationships between human beings and Nature. His program of education and rural reconstruction tried to put all his theoretical ideas into practice. Tagore's program was that of self-discovery and not mindless exploitation of Nature.

According to Tagore, if you stay in Nature, Mother Nature will teach you all the necessities of life. Thus his school did not have big and lavish classrooms, classes were conducted under trees. Students stayed close to Mother Nature, got nurtured by her and learned things that they needed to know for life. Confucius also had a similar concept. He never thought about large buildings or classrooms. He used to sit wherever he wanted and taught what he wanted. Both teachers had one thing in common, namely practice. Confucius once said[10] 不愤不启,不悱不发, 举一隅不一三隅反,则不复也. It can be translated as: if a student does not get

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[9] 子貢曰,詩云,如切.如磋如琢如磨其斯之謂與. Confucius, "Analects," in *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. 1, Book 1, Chapter 15, 144.

[10] 不愤不启,不悱不发,举一隅不一三隅反,则不复也. Confucius, "Analects," in *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. 1, Book 8, Chapter 7 and 8, 197.

angry, but does not leave and still continue to try to learn; I can teach him/ her one corner of a square (aspect or theory), and the other three corners he/she has to find out him/her self.

Conclusion

From the above, we can see how both great teachers were concerned with the improvement of the quality of life through education, they not only gave us ideas but also examples how to implement their ideas in their own life time. Their insights have more significance in today's world as people do not follow the basic nature, principles and values of humanity. Through the upbringing of a person, not only can one live his own life better but also contribute to a better society and a better world.

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14.
Wittgenstein on Taste and Genius

Chen Changshen

Introduction[1]

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) was one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century. As a pioneer of contemporary analytic aesthetics, his thinking on aesthetics and arts continued throughout his whole life and has left us plenty aesthetic writings. In this essay, I will focus on his two key aesthetic concepts, "taste" and "genius." In his *Notebooks 1914-1916, Culture and Value* and especially *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief,* Wittgenstein comprised his fruitful discussions of aesthetic taste and artistic genius. His two major works, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations,* provided a general philosophical background for his aesthetic insights. The exploration of these issues can help us not only understand Wittgenstein's heritage more comprehensively but also further promote the study of aesthetics and philosophy of art in general.

In the *Oxford Dictionary*, "taste" means "ability to perceive and enjoy what is beautiful or harmonious, or to behave in an appropriate and a pleasing way," for instance someone has a good taste in clothes, arts, music, etc. While "genius" means "exceptionally great mental or creative ability," for instance in arts or mathematics. The distinction between taste and genius is that the former is concerned with the ability of appreciation, while the latter with the ability of creation.

Propositional Presentation and Artistic Expression

The two contrasting concepts of presentation and expression give a good overview of Wittgenstein's basic views on art and aesthetics in his early years. "Presentation" has a special meaning in Wittgenstein's early philosophy. Essentially, it is a linguistic activity and a way of describing facts. The nominal subject of the propositional presentation is the human being, and the actual subject is the language. Language is not a tool for people to describe the world, for language itself is the presentation of the world. In comparison with the field of linguistic presentation, free will, aesthetic taste, or religious belief are so-called "anti-representations,"

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although these fields do not make any difference between themselves. In this regard, ethics, aesthetics and religious belief belong to "mysterious fields." People cannot intervene in language presentation based on the original "self." The world is a world imaged on the level of language, and thought is the logical picture of the world. But here the "thought" is not the subjective will, but rather objective similar, and it exists in the world of ideas, similar to Plato's world of *ideas* or "the third world." Wittgenstein defines the image as logical thinking, which is a propositional presentation of the world; artistic and aesthetic transcendence from the world receives its meaning only through the unsayable "manifestation." In other words, the difference between language and art is the difference between presentation and expression.

"The miracle of art is the existence of the world and the existence of beings."[2] This sentence should be interpreted in conjunction with a famous proposition in the philosophy of logic: "It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists."[3] What the world is, is the fact that it can be pictured, that it can be described by meaningful empirical propositions, which is as common as a proposition of natural science. The so-called mystery has to do with sayability and scientificity. There is no mystery in what can be clearly said or described by propositions. For Wittgenstein, there are no longer things as shelter and disenchantment that function better than language. The real world language clearly is a paradigm of natural science, which is the sum of all true propositions, for it delineates the boundaries of saying and denying to a great extent. At one side of the boundary one can make clear factual propositions, while at the other side it belongs to what cannot be said even if only nonsense "mystical fields." There is no grey area in between these two sides.

Logically, the reality of the world is based on the premise that there is a world. Why is there a world instead of nothing? This question is the most mysterious one. Although the problem of the world logically presupposes the existence of the world, logic cannot provide a direct solution to the latter. The question of why the world exists rather than not exist can only be answered beyond the world. Inside the world, one cannot even see its boundaries, thus it is impossible to get hold of it. The world is what it is; it is dealt with by logic; but the question whether or not the world exists cannot be answered logically. This is considered as a kind of artistic miracle. There is not only the world as a whole of things but also the world as such.

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[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-1916,* 2nd edition, eds. G.H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), 174.

[3] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge& Kegan Paul Ltd., 1961), 88.

Presentation is a propositional activity, but expression is a non-propositional activity, rather a way of dealing with art and showing its own art. "Art is an expression. Fine art is the perfect expression."[4] Works by artists express a unique attitude to transcend the world, to express a kind of unspeakable mystery. The expression is irregular and cannot be controlled by rules. We cannot form the idea of art, nor can we make something like a "trial judgment." "There is some emotional expression in music that is not recognizable by the rules. Why can't we assume that this is expressed to other organisms?"[5] People with the same cultural background can communicate feelings through music; only from this shared background expression can be meaningful, because we cannot imagine that music is the expression for non-human creatures.

According to Leo Tolstoy's theory of expression, there is a peculiar emotional experience that always accompanies artists' creative process, and works of art are the result of this emotional experience by means of paints, words, sounds and so on.[6] Affected by this, Wittgenstein believes that the emotional experience expressed by artists does not exist in the real world, it is mysterious and unspeakable. When the recipient's inner experience in the face of an artistic work coincides with the artist's soul, we say that he/she has formed a correct understanding, and this aesthetic taste belongs to the category of mystery. This "expression" is a kind of transcendental attitude, it no longer adheres to the natural world of all things, to the finite rational being, i.e. the subject. In order to achieve this goal, we must switch to a new perspective with regard to art, to a kind of world outlook. Aesthetics comes from observation, and the difference between the artistic and the natural world is not that they are two different worlds, but rather that they see the world from different perspectives. We not only see art with aesthetic eyes but also see happiness with it. "To see the world with happy eyes, is this the essence of the way of art inspection?"[7] This way of seeing is the artistic and ethical relation: "art is the object seen in the timeless perspective; the good life is seen in the eternal world view."[8] "Life is serious, arts is funny, and beauty is what makes us happy."[9] Ethics and aesthetics are worlds that are seen in the same perspective. They are interlinked. We discover beauty in good deeds and, in turn, find happiness in fine arts.

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[4] Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 169.

[5] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel,* 2nd edition, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 157.

[6] Tiger C. Roholt, *Key Terms in Philosophy of Art* (Beijing: Beijing Foreign Studies University Press, 2017), 21.

[7] Wittgenstein, *Notebooks*, 174-5.

[8] Ibid., 175.

[9] Ibid.

Taste Judgements

The later Wittgenstein investigated art from the perspectives of appreciation and creation. The important turning point is that we can make meaningful aesthetic judgments. According to Wittgenstein the works of the artist are no longer an unsayable mysterious experience, but a unique character depicted by a series of outstanding virtues. One of the important thoughts of the later Wittgenstein is that we can make meaningful aesthetic judgments. A person's ability to make meaningful aesthetic judgments is a kind of taste judgment. This kind of judgment is the main requirement of aesthetic judgments, of which we can inquire about its significance and qualifications. Only when a person possesses certain abilities he/she can be qualified to judge a certain aesthetic object. Not all aesthetic judgments are real aesthetic judgments. Making an appropriate aesthetic judgment requires a person to have a minimal aesthetic cognitive ability, the necessary knowledge of the aesthetic object and an appropriate aesthetic attitude. In order to possess the disposition of aesthetic judgments, a person must constantly respond to art over a long time. One must know many of things about art, just like a person who masters a certain language can express infinite variety of meanings in that language. Appreciation of the subordinate elegance and obscurantist nonsense can be explained by social psychology, but this is not the object of aesthetic concern. There are certain criteria to test or identify whether a person can become a qualified appreciator.

For example, Wittgenstein says, someone goes to a concert and expects to get some aesthetic experience from it. "Whether he is an appreciator or not depends not on what he says, but on his choice and the way he chooses to be critical."[10] Appreciation has no fixed structure and no internal criteria for it. The so-called "form of critics" should be understood in combination with the core category of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, that is, "form of life." To test whether a person really has some kind of aesthetic appreciative ability, it is not based on whether he/she has any other ability, such as cognitive or artistic creation, but it depends on the environment in which he/she lives: in order to judge a person's aesthetic ability, we need to describe his/her whole living environment. "Words that I call expressions of aesthetic judgment play a very clear, though complex, role in the culture of an era we are talking about. To describe their use or what you mean by a cultivated taste, you have to describe the whole culture.[11] From a macro perspective, the cultural community changes with the historical and geographical environment; from a micro perspective,

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[10] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996), 7.

[11] Ibid., 8.

individual differences also exist in the cultural community with different cultural backgrounds of people. This is the reason why it is difficult to grasp individual differences quickly.

Here, Wittgenstein adopts the view of "cultural holism." Aesthetic language games are only a part of all language games. If we do not understand the whole of language games, it is impossible to understand an aesthetic language game. A language game includes the whole culture, which, from a subjective point of view, is also the form of life. "In order to clarify aesthetic terms, you must describe the form of life."[12] The aesthetic form of life is even more complex and subtle than that of other fields. There may be aesthetic barriers even among people who share the economic, political or ethical forms of life. Individual aesthetic qualities vary so much that in front of the same painting, you may say it is beautiful, but I may say it is not. In fact, your and my views do not constitute a real contradiction, because your judgment is based on your criteria, while my judgment is based on mine. Your and my aesthetic criteria have much similarities and differences, which are not easy to distinguish.

Aesthetic appreciation is the ability similar to the sense of humor. Only by understanding a culture can we recognize a sense of humor. Appreciation is inseparable from cultural background. This is a view of cultural holism. Regarding a writer Wittgenstein says "I believe that if a person appreciates a writer, he will also like the culture that the writer belongs to. If a person feels that the culture is irrelevant or disgusting, his praise for the writer will cool down."[13] The reason why life forms are important is that they are closely interwoven with language games. Language games are incomplete without life forms, and there are no meaningful language games without life forms. The same is true for the language game of aesthetic judgment. Aesthetic language games are closely related to aesthetic life forms. Wittgenstein asks, "What is the expression of love for something?" Is that just what we said? Or the words used? Or the expression on our faces? Obviously none of these. No matter how often I wear a dress and even look at it, I may not say, "It's beautiful." This kind of behavior is the best expression of the aesthetic attitude in itself, and it is our form of life. In other words, aesthetic language games are not decisive for aesthetics. In fact, a person expresses some kind of "aesthetic judgment" by his form of life. The most important thing is the aesthetic form of life, not the form of language. For example, if I just said that the dress was beautiful, but my behavior and attitude did not show this point, this aesthetic judgment may seem false and unnatural. And if I wear it all the time and look at it carefully, even though I do not say anything, I can also express

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[12] Ibid., 11.

[13] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value: A Selection from the Posthumous Remains,* trans. Peter Winch (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998), 96.

my aesthetic appreciation to this dress, namely, that I like it. Compared with the aesthetic attitude embodied in the form of life, simple language, expression and even behavior are one-sided and not essential.[14]

Language is not the standard of aesthetic judgment, nor is expression, gesture and behavior. There is no psychological entity about this tendency. There is no such psychological standard either, but only the language game standard. A puppy can be trained to perform certain actions (such as making a seemingly cheerful appearance) as long as it hears Beethoven's *Symphony of Fate*. A person who is used to listening to music can also develop a habit of showing pleasant expressions each time he/she hears music. But the learning of an aesthetic judgment is different from conditioning and living habits. A person has his/her own aesthetic tastes and appreciation habits, but these appreciation habits are different from the habits in expression, speech or behavior. Just as the research object of aesthetic psychology, aesthetic habit does not constitute the core element of aesthetic judgment. Even people who have never developed a fixed habit may have a certain aesthetic appreciation ability. If I do not know your living environment, I cannot evaluate whether you have an aesthetic judgment, let alone understand the meaning of your aesthetic judgment. For me, the most natural way to understand your environment is to share it. My understanding of you, based on the culture I share with you, is much better than that based on a culture completely different from yours. For aesthetic judgment, "the other" vision is a strange and peculiar vision.

There are different types of appreciation. Even in the same kind of appreciation, for instance the same painting, there are still subtle and important individual differences between different viewers. We can see this in our language proficiency. In *Art and Its Objects*, Richard Wollheim compares artistic creativity with linguistic competence.[15] However, a prominent symbol of artistic ability is genius, which is not required by language ability unless it is the ability to create artistic language. Closer to linguistic competence is aesthetic judgment. Wittgenstein says that understanding the meaning of a "proposition" is similar to "appreciation of art."[16] On the one hand, like linguistic competence, there is a shared cultural community for the same aesthetic object, from which people can learn to appreciate, judge each other whether there is such an aesthetic notice and then communicate effectively about the aesthetic significance of the object. On the other hand, like Donald Davidson's "individual dialect," under the premise of sharing an aesthetic or linguistic community, everyone has his/her own unique linguistic and aesthetic abilities. In the

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[14] Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations*, 12.

[15] Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 97.

[16] Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations*, 19.

same ethnic group, there are dialect differences between different tribes and groups. Within a dialect area, there are "individual dialect" differences among different people.

The subtlety of aesthetic experience lies in the fact that when, on the one hand, a work judged as "poor" by a person with strong aesthetic ability is praised by another person, thus we have doubts about the latter's qualifications for such praise. Here, aesthetic relativism must be strictly restricted. On the other hand, if two people have similar aesthetic abilities, they will have the same aesthetic relativity. If we make a completely different evaluation, we cannot simply conclude that their aesthetic ability must be higher or lower, or that at least one person's judgment is wrong. Based on an individual's aesthetic judgment such as "personal dialect," a person can completely see the beauty that others cannot see or ignore. The tension between public language and personal dialect is important. The existence of personal dialect cannot either deny the publicity of language, or be denied because of the publicity of language.

Genius as Characters

For Wittgenstein, taste is about regulative rules: "The taste is adjusting. Childbirth is not its business."[17] "Even the most exquisite taste has nothing to do with creativity."[18] These words show the limits of taste, that is, it is not creative. In other words, observation is not enough in arts, for action is more important, and one's ability to act is embodied in a person's character, which is called "genius." The role of genius in artworks is constitutive. Without genius there would be no works of art at all; people's appreciation and judgment could only be limited to the beauty of nature. The symbol of artworks is the expression of the artist's genius. Different geniuses produce different artworks. There is no aesthetic value in seeing a genius's artworks. "It can be said that art forces us to see it from the right angle. Without art, this thing, like other things, is only a fragment of nature."[19] Every artist has his/her taste and receives the influence of others to a large or small extent. His/her works show traces of such influence. However, for us, the significance of an artist is not that he/she is an excellent appreciator, but rather that he/she has a unique creative personality. The personality here refers not to the general character, but to the virtue that is indispensable to artistic creation. All he/she inherits from others is the "eggshell." "We will treat these eggshells with tolerance, but they will not provide us with spiritual nourishment."[20]

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[17] Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 68.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations*, 7.
[20] Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 27.

Aesthetic judgment does not focus on creativity but on regulation. This is a kind of value judgment, which reflects a person's aesthetic taste and appreciation. An era of aesthetic culture and artistic taste ultimately affects the artist's creation and our understanding of "beauty" and "art." In this regard, Wittgenstein makes clear that "aesthetic" (taste) ability cannot create a new organizational structure, but can only regulate the organizational structure that has been formed. Appreciatorship is the abstraction of sensibility. Receptivity does not produce anything; it is pure acceptance. For an artist, whose main duty is to create rather than to appreciate, there is no appreciation of the artistic genius. As Wittgenstein points out: "I think one of the great creators does not need any appreciation of his children in a completely formed form in the world."[21]

Genius as a character involves two questions. First, what is genius? Second, what qualities do geniuses need? For the former, Wittgenstein's answer is straightforward. On many occasions, he points out that genius is to make us forget skills and to master abilities. Only when we wear skillfully made clothes, a genius can show him/herself and vice versa. Only when we wear skillfully made clothes, we can see a person's ability. The transcendence of skills constitutes the fundamental difference between art works and other artifacts. According to Kant, genius is not a skilled skill that can be learned according to certain rules. Originality must be its first characteristic.[22] Only by imitating rules and skills can one become a skilled craftsman, but never a genius.

Another factor of genius, in Wittgenstein's view, is that genius is the product of the *sub specie aeterni*, which is consistent with his views on aesthetics in his early philosophy. The eternal perspective is the timeless transcendental perspective, which is contrary to the empirical one we adopt when facing the natural world. This eternal perspective is not only aesthetic, but also metaphysical. Wittgenstein points out that in addition to artistic genius, there is also intellectual genius: "In my view, besides the works of artists, there is another way to grasp the world under the concept of eternity. I think this is the way of thinking, thinking is like flying over the world, it is flying from the sky to observe and let the world keep its original state."[23] However, artistic and ideological geniuses have some commonalities. Wittgenstein said: "Genius is a talent in which character shows itself."[24] He uses this proposition to associate genius with the transcendence of skill and character. For him, the scale of genius is character, but in spite of this, character does not embody genius in the work of art.

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Oxford: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 307-8.
[23] Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 7.
[24] Ibid., 75.

Character cannot be called genius. In other words, genius is not "talent plus character," it is a character expressed in the form of special talent.

Genius requires many qualities, the most important of which is bravery. The virtue of bravery is not only required by art but also a necessary element of the individuality of the genius. It can be asserted that genius is a kind of talent which can be realized by bravery. "Just as one person jumps into the water with some people to show his bravery, another person writes a symphony to show his bravery."[25] Without bravery, one cannot challenge secular authority and artistic conventions, achieve true self-breakthrough, forget everything, devote oneself to the cause one loves desperately and enter the realm of "madness" in art. In addition to bravery, genius also needs to possess the virtue of perseverance, which can help an artist to avoid succumbing to various temptations and eventually losing his/her personality and creativity. As Wittgenstein says, "The difference between a good architect and a bad architect is that a bad architect can't stand any temptation, but a good architect can resist them."[26] Genius also demands the virtue of concentration. It is not necessary to concentrate on anything or everything, especially for art creation. In this regard, Wittgenstein gives the example of a lens: "Genius does not have more light than any other honest man – but he has a special lens that gathers light above the point of fire."[27] Finally, the list of genius's virtues must also include sincerity. When Wittgenstein speaks of the ceremony, he says, "we must strictly avoid all religious ceremonies (such as the loud sounding kiss of the senior monks), because this ritual soon becomes decadent. Of course, kissing is also a ritual and it doesn't become decadent. However, only a sincere ceremony like the answer is allowed."[28]

Conclusion

The early Wittgenstein emphasized the distinction between "presentation" and "expression," he believed that propositional representation could only be confined to the natural world but not touch the unsayable "mysterious realm." The significance of aesthetic activities and the field of art lies in the fact that they can be displayed by means of human emotional expression. As far as their non-propositional characteristics are concerned, they are mysterious experiences. In contrast, the later Wittgenstein adopted a new philosophy, that is, to recognize the significance of aesthetic judgment and artistic activity by way of dispelling the gap between "characterization" and "expression." The change of his view on language

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[25] Ibid., 40.
[26] Ibid., 5.
[27] Ibid., 41.
[28] Ibid., 10.

is particularly evident in his attitude towards poetry: "The poet's words may have moved us deeply. From a causal point of view, this is certainly related to the use of these words in our lives. Moreover, we follow this usage to allow our minds to wander freely in the familiar environment of these words."[29] Our aesthetic appreciation of poetry stems from the ordinary use of words. Poets use words to express their emotions and character. We borrow these words to appreciate the artistic conception of poetry and the genius of poets. However, poetry is poetry after all, the language of poetry no longer presents anything but the poet's "free wandering through his artistic personality." With the eternal perspective and unique genius of the world, the poet creates art; we make aesthetic judgments by means of appreciation and the aesthetic culture shared by poets.

It is interesting to compare Kant's and Wittgenstein's views on genius. The former is an "interior approach" based on artists' "transcendence" in technique and rules, whereas the latter could be considered as an "exterior approach" based on the artists' "excellence" or virtue. From a traditional point of view, it seems a bit strange to use such typical virtue-ethics concepts as bravery, perseverance, concentration and sincerity to regard genius as one of the core issues of aesthetics. However, this is the unique contribution of Wittgenstein's philosophy of art, which makes an excellent example in "external approach" for future generations. Today we are no longer surprised by George Dickie's "institutional theory of art,"[30] although it has gone beyond the scope of traditional aesthetic studies and been replaced with sociological concepts of art, such as system, convention and artworld. If there are any paradigm shifts in philosophy of art, then an excellent example is the shift from "internal approach" stemming from traditional aesthetics (philosophical aesthetics, aesthetic psychology, etc.) to "external approach" stemming from art ethics, art sociology, etc.

Wittgenstein himself is a good example of an intellectual genius. According to him, a major mistake of traditional philosophers is to succumb to the temptation of language in collision with its own boundaries. The most difficult philosophical problem is not the intellectual difficulty, but the effort to overcome the will in changing attitudes. He declares with sincerity that in philosophical study, we have encountered a noticeable and unique phenomenon: we may say that the difficulty lies not in finding the answer, but in recognizing something as the answer, which seems like the beginning of the answer. "We have said everything – It's not a part of it, and that's the answer!"[31]

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[29] Wittgenstein, *Zettel,* 155.

[30] George Dickie, "Defining Art," *American Philosophical Quarterly,* Vol. 6, No. 3(1969): 253-256.

[31] Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 314.

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The Transcendent Sphere and Revolutionary Morality: A Problem of Fung Yu-lan's Theory of Sphere

Bao Wenxin

Self-awareness of Life and Political Radicalism

In the field of modern Chinese philosophy, the topic of self-awareness of life is usually related to cultural conservatism. This especially applies to Modern New Confucianism, which reached its first peak in the late 1930s and the early 1940s. In different degrees, Modern New Confucian philosophers all have knowledge of modern science and politics ("西学"), all have been trained to think in the mode of Western philosophy, and all are dedicated to find the characteristics of Chinese philosophy in comparison with Western philosophy. Their common conclusion is that Chinese philosophy, unlike Western philosophy which focuses on the exploration and conquering of the outer world, emphasizes on the importance of "life." This "life" does not refer to natural life in a biological sense but to the inner spiritual life of the human being and is related to the topics of morality, value and meaning of life. It is undeniable that these topics have the tendency to go beyond secular life ("出世"). However, a common notion that both traditional Confucianism and Modern New Confucianism share is that there is a necessary internal correlation between the order and richness of inner spiritual life and that of outer social and political life ("内圣外王"). This notion reminds us that self-awareness of life not only happens in the inner realm of individuals, but also carries abundant social and political contents. It is important to keep in mind that self-awareness of life in Modern New Confucianism is usually related to political radicalism, because we are witnessing the rise of a new cultural conservatism in China. The relation between this new cultural conservatism and political radicalism needs to be observed carefully.

This paper inspects the complicated relation between Modern New Confucianism and political radicalism by way of analyzing the sphere theory of Fung Yu-lan (冯友兰). Fung (1895-1990) was a world-famous historian of philosophy. His *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* is an important book for foreigners to understand Chinese philosophy. He is a significant modern Chinese philosopher, who represents the revitalization of the School of Principle or Rationalistic Confucianism ("新理学"). While Hsiung Shih-li (熊十力), another outstanding modern Chinese phi-

losopher, represents the revitalization of the School of Heart or Idealistic Confucianism ("新心学"). It is well-known that Hsiung's philosophy has much to do with political radicalism. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Hsiung published a series of social and political works ("外王学"), in which he attempted to illustrate that the classics of Confucius imply the planning of socialism and communism and the way to realize them. We can find clues of such political views in his philosophical works ("内圣学"), for instance, the universal ontological unity which indicates social equality and the instant creation-annihilation of cosmology as the revolutionary spirit. By comparison, Fung's New Rationalistic Confucianism has a weaker relation to political radicalism. His famous theory of the transcendent sphere ("天地境界") describes a serene and peaceful spiritual state, which seems to be incompatible with political activism. This paper will argue that if we go through the logic of New Rationalistic Confucianism, we will find that a man in the transcendent sphere might be both a Confucian Sage in the traditional sense and a revolutionary hero in the modern sense. From this perspective, there is a strong relation between Fung's cultural conservatism and political radicalism, of which Fung himself was probably not aware.

Tao and the Great Whole

In his *Six Books of Zhen and Yuan*, Fung established a system of New Rationalistic Confucianism. Zhen (贞) and Yuan (元) are two concepts, describing two different phases of things in the *Book of Change* (《周易》). Zhen means finish or end while Yuan means beginning or initiation. The time between Zhen and Yuan (贞元之际) means the time between the old "end" and the new "beginning" in the traditional Chinese cyclical time concept. Fung used these two terms to indicate that China's century-long bad luck was going to end and a new China was about to be born. Fung's thought not only focuses on the problem of "eternity" but also consciously reflects the *Zeitgeist* in the sense of Hegel. These six books of Zhen and Yuan are *New Rationalistic Confucianism* (《新理学》), *China's Road to Freedom* (《新事论》), *New Treatise on the Way of Life* (《新世训》), *New Treatise on the Nature of Man* (《新原人》), *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy* (《新原道》) and *New Treatise on the Methodology of Metaphysics* (《新知言》). They cover metaphysics, theory of history and society, methodology, theory of life and ethics. This paper will mainly discuss the books of *New Rationalistic Confucianism*, *China's Road to Freedom* and *New Treatise on the Nature of Man*.

In *New Rationalistic Confucianism*, Fung established his metaphysics based on six key concepts: Zhen-ji (真际), Shi-ji (实际), Li (理), Qi

(气), Tao (道) and Da-quan (大全). It is true that Zhen-ji and Shi-ji come from classical Chinese Buddhism. However, Zhen-ji and Shi-ji as two modern Chinese philosophical terms were created by Fung. Zhen-ji means the realm of the true which refers to no logical contradiction according to Fung. There are three different kinds of objects in this realm: things that exist, things that are possible but do not exist, and the principles of things. Shi-ji means the realm of the real. It is a general term for things that exist. Since real things are self-consistent in logic, it is reasonable to say that Zhen-ji includes Shi-ji. These two terms reveal the influence of western neo-realism in Fung's thought.

Li and Qi, two Confucian terms with profound cultural heritage, are much more difficult to translate than Zhen-ji and Shi-ji. But Fung simply compared Li in Chinese philosophy to the concept of principle, and Qi to that of material force in Western philosophy. "In order to be, a thing must follow the principle by which it is what it is." And "if a thing is to exist, there must be the material force by which it can exist."[1] The Traditional Rationalistic Confucianism of Ch'eng-Chu considered the sum total of principles as the Great Ultimate (太极), but the relations between these principles remain obscure. In Fung's opinion, the Great Ultimate is not merely the sum total of principles, but their organic whole. And this whole is organized according to the order of progress: from simple to complex, from low to high. For example, before the principle of an airplane exists, the principle of a combustion engine must already exist. If we were omniscient as God, we could see the organic whole of all principles and its order in the realm of the true. However, we do not have such cognitive ability, so we can only wait for principles to be filled by material force, i.e., the actualization of the realm of the true. In other words, with the progress of the realm of the real, we can gradually recognize the logical structure of the Great Ultimate.

Tao (道) as a traditional Chinese philosophical term is also hard to translate. It is usually translated as the Way,[2] the Heavenly Way, or the Natural Law. However, all these translations are imperfect. This paper uses the transliterated word: Tao. Relatively speaking, Da-quan is a rare term in traditional classics and can be translated as the Great Whole. In

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[1] Wing-tist Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 751-752.

[2] "The concept dao (in Wade-Giles transliteration: Tao) is perhaps the most important concept in Chinese philosophy. Although its later and more philosophical meaning may develop far beyond the original significance of the word, nonetheless the original image is never wholly lost; hence we can justifiably translate it as the 'Way'." See Dai-nian Zhang, *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2002), 11.

Fung's terminological system, Tao and the Great Whole summarize the description of the realm of the true (Zhen-ji) from two perspectives. As mentioned earlier, there are three kinds of objects in the realm of true, things that exist, things that are possible but do not exist, and the principles of things; and all things that exist also constitute the realm of the real (Shi-ji). From the perspective of Tao, the realm of the true is a dynamic process in which all possible things gradually come into being, just like the process in which a huge empty tank is gradually filled with water. Fung used the Neo-Confucian proposition of "From the Ultimate of Non-being to the Great Ultimate" (无极而太极) to describe this process. We can image that at the end of this process, all the possible things will exist, that is, all the principles will be actualized, thus we can see the Great Ultimate. On the other hand, from the perspective of the Great Whole, the realm of the true is a static whole of all principles and possible things whether they exist or not.

According to Fung, there is no fundamental difference between Tao and the Great Whole, as they are two different perspectives of the same object. Here arises the question, to which moment of Zhen-ji does the Great Whole refer? Take the above metaphor of a tank as an example. During the process of putting water into the tank, the amount of water in the tank at this moment is always less than at the next. Similarly, the Great Whole at this moment is always less complete than at the next, because more possible things that are more complex and higher will come into being at the next moment. We can say that the Great Whole refers to the end of time, where all possible things have come into the realm of the real, a perfect status. However, this perfect status is still incomplete, because it lacks the incomplete status of the previous moment. The key factor of Tao as a progressive process is the concept of linear time, which the Great Whole is lacking. In this sense, Tao is singular while the Great Whole is plural. The progressive progress of Tao consists of innumerable cross-sections of time while each section can be referred to as a Great Whole. Compared with Tao, the Great Whole is incomplete. The third way to answer this question is to argue that the Great Whole refers to the entire process of time instead of a plane at a certain moment. However, the Great Whole in this sense is no more an independent perspective which can be distinguished from the perspective of Tao.

The distinction between Tao and the Great whole, although subtle and obscure, implies a deep crack in Fung's New Rationalistic Confucianism. This crack develops into a big problem in Fung's system in *China's Road to Freedom* and *New Treatise on the Nature of Man*.

Progress of Societies

In *China's Road to Freedom*, Fung developed his social-political theory based on the theory of progressive Tao. Fung argues that societies have different types and follow different principles. These principles compose a logical structure: from low to high and from simple to complex. A lower-level society follows a lower-level principle, a higher-level society a higher-level one. As a result, the whole history of human society presents a linear progress, just like the history of Tao itself.

The type of a society can be changed in order to promote its progress. As Fung notes China was a society characterized by the family-based production, while the West was characterized by a society-based one. The West was an advanced type of society, which is the reason why China could not compete with the West. In this light, China ought to change its society type in order to survive; revolution would be the action which could bring about this progress. In his discussion of revolution Fung mentioned revolutionary morality, which suggests that the revolutionary action has moral attributes. The following section will argue that the concept of revolutionary morality is inconsistent with Fung's definition of morality, because it fails to illustrate revolutionary morality, which also points to the inherent problem of New Rationalistic Confucianism.

The Problem of "Revolutionary Morality"

Fung proposed his famous theory of sphere in *The New Treatise on the Nature of Man*. Regarding the theory of sphere, he gives the following brief introduction in his English book *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*:

> In my book, *The New Treatise on the Nature of Man*, I have observed that man differs from other animals in that when he does something, he understands what he is doing and is conscious that he is doing it. It is this understanding and self-consciousness that give significance for him to what he is doing. The various significances that thus attach to his various acts, in their totality, constitute what I call his sphere of living.[3]

Fung distinguished four types of spheres: the innocent sphere (自然境界), the utilitarian sphere (功利境界), the moral sphere (道德境界) and the transcendent sphere (天地境界). A man in the innocent sphere "does what he does without being self-conscious or greatly understanding what

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[3] Fung You-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: The Free Press Macmillan, 1948), 338.

he is doing." As for a man in the utilitarian sphere, "everything he does has the significance of utility for himself." A man in the moral sphere "understands that a society exists, of which he is a member. This society constitutes a whole and he is a part of that whole. Having this understanding, he does everything for the benefit of the society. […] He is the truly moral man and what he does is moral action in the strict sense of the word. Everything he does has a moral significance." A man in the transcendent sphere will realize that "he is not only a member of society, but at the same time a member of the universe. He is a citizen of the social organization, but at the same time a citizen of Heaven, as Mencius says. […] Having this understanding, he does everything for the benefit of the universe."[4] According to traditional Confucianism, a man who reaches the transcendent sphere, the ultimate spiritual state, can be called a Sage. The following will focus on the discussion of the moral and the transcendent sphere.

Fung only gave a brief introduction of his thought in his book *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*. To fully understand his theory of sphere, it is necessary to rely on the book *China's Road to Freedom*. A key concept in this theory is "society." Fung thought that every specific society belongs to a specific type. As mentioned above, China was a society characterized by the family-based production, while the West was a society-based production.

According to Fung's description of the moral sphere, the concept of "revolutionary morality" cannot be established. If moral conduct conforms to the norms of a certain type of society the standards of morality are relative. However, revolution is a transformation of a society from one type to another, and it cannot be judged by the morality of society of a single type. We can either condemn the revolution not to conform to the moral standards of the old society or praise it to clear obstacles for the establishment of a new society. This is based on the standpoint of a certain type of society, rather than on the inherent nature of the revolution. Revolution refers to a period of time: an old society has been destroyed and a new one has not yet been established. In this sense "revolutionary morality" is impossible in Fung's system. Revolution is neither moral nor immoral. It has nothing to do with morality, because morality can only be defined according a certain type of society, whereas revolution happens in the transition of societies. Fung did not come to this conclusion. He insisted, "[i]n a certain type of society, the actions of the revolutionaries seem not to conform to the basic rules prescribed by the principle of this society, […] But at least in theory revolutionary action is not only immoral, but also moral."[5] To prove this statement, he made the following argument:

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[4] Fung, *A Short History*, 338-340.
[5] "在一某种社会中,有革命行动之人,其行动似乎是不合乎其社会所依照之理所规定之基本规律.…但至少在理论上革命不但不是不道德底行为,而

> Revolution is necessary for the existence of a nation. Since the original social system of the nation has come to an end, the social system needs to be changed, otherwise this nation will perish with the termination of the old social system. The action of a member in a group to maintain the existence of the group is moral. Similarly, the revolution against the old social system is moral because it aims to maintain the existence of the nation.[6]

To say a society as a Chinese one, which is always in progress from one type to another, we must assume a continuous substance that persistently exists at the bottom of the change, for example, the nation. However, this kind of substance is actually outside the scope of Fung's social theory. Fung said moral behavior refers to behavior that is socially beneficial. This statement actually means that moral behavior conforms to the norms of a certain type of society rather than benefits the substance, for example, the nation that exists in this type of society. A nation comes into being only if the nation is realized in a certain type of society, otherwise the nation is only pure Qi, which is non-existent. For instance, maintaining the existence of a house is different from and maintaining the existence of a pile of building materials.

How should we understand revolutionary actions? It is only in the dynamic and progressive perspective of Tao that we can regard revolution as a transition of society from the old to the new. People who have such a perspective can transcend the moral sphere and understand themselves in the context of the universe. In other words, people who have entered the transcendent sphere are the combination of sages and revolutionaries. Nevertheless, Fung did not come into this conclusion.

Tao and Revolution

In his English book *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, Fung only gave an obscure statement about the transcendent sphere, but not a definition of the universe (宇宙). From his statement in *New Treatise on the Nature of Man*, it can be inferred that Fung regarded the universe as the realm of the true. As above mentioned, there are two perspectives to understand the realm of the true (Zhen-ji), namely, Tao and the Great

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并且是道德底行为." Yu-lan Fung, *San Song Tang Complete Works*, Vol.4 (Zhengzhou: Henan people's publishing house, 2001), 111.

[6] "此种革命是为此国家或民族之存在所必须者.因此国家或民族原行之社会制度既穷而必须变,若不变则此国家或民族即与之俱穷.一团体之分子之行为之是道德底者,皆所以维持其团体之存在.一国家或民族中对于制度之革命,既系为维持其国家或民族之存在者,所以是道德底." Fung, *San Song Tang Complete Works*, 112-113.

Whole. Fung argued that these two perspectives are two parallel and effective ways to reach the transcendent sphere. A man in the transcendent sphere will realize himself as a member both in the process of Tao and of the Great Whole. In this sense, Tao and Da-quan are the same. Fung said: "A person with such consciousness can see things from the perspectives of the Great Whole, Principle and Tao."[7]

However, dynamic Tao and static Great Whole are fundamentally different. From the perspective of Tao, the Great Whole, as merely a plane of time, is definitely incomplete. It is meaningless to distinguish Tao and the Great Whole if we consider the Great Whole as the whole time rather than a plane of time. Based on the distinction between Tao and the Great Whole, we can say that Fung mainly defined the universe as the Great Whole in his description of the transcendent sphere. The transcendent sphere is a peaceful spiritual state, in which man makes peace with the universe as the Great Whole. In the context of society, to make peace with the Great Whole is to make peace with current social norms. This is an endless progressive process of social types. Hence, it is not surprising that Fung believed the practical actions of a man both in the transcendent sphere and in the moral sphere make no difference. The only difference lies in that man in the moral sphere takes actions in a moral sense, while in the transcendent sphere man takes actions in the sense of the universe as the Great Whole:

> We can approach moral conduct in two different ways, one from the point of view of society and the other from the point of view of heaven. From the former point of view, man's moral conduct consists in fulfilling one's social duty. From the latter point of view, one's moral conduct consists in fulfilling one's universal duty, that is, fulfilling the way of man. From this point of view, in doing something moral, one is serving Heaven.[8]

However, in my opinion, the transcendent sphere becomes something different in the perspective of Tao. As Tao is a dynamic and advancing progress, man's actions in the transcendent sphere lead to different outcomes in different situations. If society is stable, there are no differences in terms of man's actions in the moral sphere. Yet, if society is in transition from old to new, man's actions even in the transcendent sphere will contribute to the transformation of societies. In the latter case, we can say that a sage can become a revolutionary hero rather than just a good citizen. This conclusion can help resolve the problem of "revolutionary

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[7] "人有此进一步底觉解,则可从大全,理及道体的观点,以看事物." Fung, 2001, 562.

[8] Chan, *A Source Book,* 761-762.

morality." Specifically, revolutionary activities are beyond morality and in conformity with Tao. They are actions taken by sages.

Progress and Traditional Spiritual Life

After going through the logic of Fung's New Rationalistic Confucianism, it seems that a strong connection exists between Fung's ideal personality of the sage and the revolutionary hero. It is difficult to conceive why Fung evaded such a conclusion. If he had considered the revolutionary heroes as sages in the line of thought of his time, especially after 1949, he would have become more popular. In 1950, Fung admitted, "[b]ecoming a citizen of Heaven was no longer the highest sphere of living but escapism."[9] Perhaps Fung just opposed to this aspect of the transcendent sphere on emotional grounds. For Fung as an inheritor of Confucianism, it is easy to accept the dynamic and progressive world, but difficult to leave the traditional peaceful spiritual life (a spiritual heritage) behind.

It is meaningful to discuss the self-awareness of life in a contemporary context. However, Fung's example reminds us that a superb life might have the impulse to revolution logically, which is an aspect that needs to be paid attention to in the discussion of this topic.

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[9] Chan, *A Source Book,* 754.

16.
On Manuel Castells' Identity Theory

Yan Jing

Introduction

Manuel Castells' identity theory is the extension of his theory on the network society, which has not been valued enough. The identity theory developed from the global network society theory enables Castells to generate many insightful ideas on many problems, such as the network society, urban planning, environmental problems, feminism, etc. The way Castells deals with urban problems is positive and moderate, comparing with Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey's radical urban theory on the topics of space justice and the right to the city. Rather Castells stresses the persistent transforming mechanisms of society, especially the formations of the network society and identity problems in urban times. The transformation from legitimizing identity through resistance identity to project identity is a theoretical construction, which breaks through the limitation of nation states towards the global network society. This makes Castells ideas worth special attention.

The Fading away of the Sovereignty of the Nation-state and the Disintegration of the Legitimizing Identity in the Context of the Global Network Society

Since the 1970s, information production has gradually become the dominant mode of production, and has caused social reconstruction on a global scale, including globalization of capitals, populations, trades and even criminal activities. Society is being organized at both global and local levels, forming "a new form of society, the network society, made up of specific configurations of global, national and local networks in a multidimensional space of social interaction"[1] named the network society. The network has become the basic way to reconstruct society and redefine its boundaries. The conflict between "the network and the self" has become its core contradiction, reflected in the fact that a specific society is being organized according to two conflicting logics, that is, "globalization and localization." On the one hand, production, capital, power, cultural expression and other dominant human activities are independent of con-

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[1] Manuel Castells, *Communication Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 19.

straints of specific societies in exchange of "the space of flows"[2] of the global network. On the other hand, human daily experience is still generated in the local space, dominated by activities in "the space of flows."

Globalization has had a serious impact on social boundaries. In Castells' view, under the great challenges, the nation-state has to maintain its control by spreading its sovereignty among various international institutions and local governments, but it still has increasingly lost its monopoly on social power. "The nation-state, as historically created in the modern age, seems to be losing power, although, and this is essential, not its influence."[3] The role, the structure and the function of the country have changed dramatically. "The state becomes just a node (however important) of a particular network, the political, institutional and military network that overlaps with other significant networks in the construction of social practice."[4] It manages society by manipulating specific networks and their association with other networks, and develops into a kind of multi-level "network-state" including various international structures, NGOs and local governments at all levels. The scandals caused by the rise of information politics have greatly affected people's trust in the nation-state and internally disrupted representative democracy as well.

Social power is reduced from sovereignty to social networks and functions through four mechanisms:[5] 1) networking power, which means that actors and organizations in the global network govern the power, excluding individuals and groups with less values outside the network. This is the core power relationship in the network society. 2) Network power, which means the power relationship formed in a specific network among its social members. 3) Networked power, which means that different networks exert their dominant power through alliances with each other. 4) Network-making power, which refers to the power to form networks and manipulate the relationships between different networks. This is the highest form of power in the network society.

The network of power relationships promotes a new combination of power and capital, exacerbating the exclusion of the local space from "the space of flows" based on the global network society, and also the systematic disconnection between the local and the global. Sub-Saharan Africa, the declining countryside of developing countries and the slums of metropolises in developed countries all belong to such areas, and constitute a significant exclusion map of the network society. In fact, according to

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[2] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society. The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Vol. I, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Wiley, 2010), 407.

[3] Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity. The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Vol. II (Oxford: Wiley, 2010), 303.

[4] Castells, *Communication Power,* 19.

[5] Ibid.*,* 24-27.

Castells, the network society is highly exclusive. Informationalized production is the dominant mode of production of the network society, in which information is both the production material and the product. This makes the boundaries between production and life more and more blurred. Thus, the daily communication of human beings is increasingly entrapped by capital. Living conditions of people are getting much worse. Due to the lack of corresponding mechanisms with capital, it is difficult to impose restrictions on capital through institutional means. The deterioration of material conditions and the legitimacy crisis faced by rulers in charge of public affairs have jointly promoted resistance capital and power on a global scale.

Under the framework of the global network society, Castells has formed urban identity theory. People become more isolated in the information production, constantly form resistant groups by interpreting traditional or modern cultural resources and specific cultural principles into their actions. The process redefines the contents of "meaning," "as the symbolic identification by a social actor the purpose of her/his action."[6] "Meaning" is a kind of subjective judgment for different people and groups, which may vary significantly on meaningful things. Castells aims to grasp the social process of the construction "meaning," which is actually formed in a specific social form and power relationship.

In the research of urban identity movements, Castells points out that the founders of identity movements and the forms of power relationships are crucial to define social movements, because they "determine the symbolic content of this identity, and its meaning for those identifying with it or placing themselves outside of it."[7] Accordingly, Castells proposes three forms of identity movements: 1) legitimizing identity movements, 2) resistance identity movements, and 3) project identity movements. Among them, legitimizing identity is introduced by the dominant system and constructed by social elites; resistance identity is organized by the marginalized people around the traditional cultural resources against the dominant logic; and project identity means that marginalized people organized around any accessible cultural resources to, "on the basis of whatever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure."[8] Castells argues out that the basic relationships between different forms of identity movements are as follows: the disintergration of the legitimizing identity would lead to the rise of the resistance identity, while the latter develops into project identity, and under certain conditions, in turn project identity might become the legitimizing identity.

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[6] Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 7.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 8.

Generally speaking, in the process of urbanization now, on the one hand, the legitimizing identity is disintegrating as the fading of the sovereignty of nation-states. On the other hand, the resistance identity has become the most common model of the three.

For Castells, the legitimizing identity is mainly "introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination vis à vis social actors."[9] Before the formation of the global network society, nation-states monopolized the social power and the legitimizing identity was constructed on the basis of this structure. Castells' analysis on the legitimizing identity reveals its internal logic that this kind of identity mainly relies on the top-down compulsion of the dominant system. As far as the dominant system is concerned, "violence and discourse" are the main sources of the sovereignty of nation-states. The legal use of violence is the support and ultimate guarantee of the sovereignty, but the construction of meaning is regarded as the more decisive and stable source of power. Therefore, under the guarantee of a coercive force, the concept of nation-states has been implemented into various social institutions from the top down. Castells also pays special attention to civil society in the sense of Antonio Gramsci's, which is considered to be the social basis for the formation of the legitimizing identity. According to Gramsci civil society has dual characteristics: "civil society is formed by a series of 'apparatuses', such as the churches, unions, parties, cooperatives, civic associations and so on, which, on the one hand, prolong the dynamics of the state, but, on the other hand, are deeply rooted among people."[10] This makes political parties, trade unions, churches, civil organizations possible. The "machines and organs" of civil society are rooted in the masses while carrying and sustaining the state's coercive power, because the appeals of the people could be expressed in an organized manner and interact with the will of the state in public spaces. Although there is mandatory logic in the legitimizing identity, it still belongs to the rational mode.

The resistance identity is "generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society."[11] They are constructed around traditional cultural resources such as religion, ethnicity, family, etc. in the resistance to global capitalism. Castells has discussed and defined two types of the resistance identity: fundamentalism and extreme nationalism. In these identity movements, the interpretations of specific cultural resources is monopolized by the authority which, as the constructor of the identity, determines the content

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., 9.
[11] Ibid., 8.

and the construction of meaning. With the monopoly of the power of cultural interpretation, the leaders of the social movement further weakened the sovereignty of the nation state and the subjectivity of the individual. The resistance identity with the anti-modernity and anti-globality as its flag is not traditional in its essence, "for all the efforts of exegesis to root Islamic identity in history and the holy texts, Islamists proceeded, for the sake of social resistance and political insurgency, with a reconstruction of cultural identity that is in fact hypermodern."[12] Moreover, due to the exclusiveness of the resistance identity, it often uses violence as the ultimate means. This can be seen from Castells' argument that the essence of the resistance identity is to imitate and follow the violent logic of the legitimizing identity and to abandon its rational side. In a global network society, these identity-based organizations often unite with other organizations, especially with the global criminal networks, to develop into a global identity organization. They can expand their influence worldwide and avoid the control of specific countries in difficult times. The disintegration of the former global order does not directly mean the emergence of a new one. This globalized human society seems to still live in all kinds of opposition and hatred in addition to capitalism which once again reigns over the world of information technology across the globe.

In the 1990s, Castells proposed that the resistance identity is the most common form of all the identity types; to a large extent it is also instructive for the current era of populism and conservatism. At that time, Castells believed in the power of human reason and the possibility of developing a specific plan and forming a new identity out of the resistance identity. Although Castells cautiously pointed out that this transformation is not inevitable and cannot be predicted by theory, it is a transition from legal identity to project identity, that is, from the national identity to the global network social identity. As we may see, the resistance identity still prepares conditions for a new form of identity. First, the resistance identity further disintegrates the manipulation of the legitimizing identity. Although social construction has not completely shaken off the influence of the state, it has made the state and politics no longer a prerequisite for it. Social independence is not only possible but necessary. Second, the resistance identity is not enough to form a social autonomy mechanism, but its resistance actions exercise people's ability to gather and act around new ways of communication, and are the necessary foundation for project identity. The resistance identity is not necessarily a negative form of social movement. As long as it guides and constructs the law, it can be transformed into project identity.

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[12] Ibid., 17.

The Constructive Meaning of Project Identity Theory

In his book *The Information Age* published in the 1990s, Castells systematically outlined the programmatic identity and the possible conditions for the transition of resistance identity to project identity. It is speculated that resistance identity will present three trends in its development: either it remains a defensive community, or becomes an interest group, or those who are excluded may also develop a project to transform society as a whole and to redefine their social position. The last direction is what Castells called project identity. In the following ten years, in *Networks of Outrage And Hope Social Movements in The Internet Age*, Castells further elaborated the constructive significance of project identity, pointing out that "the symptoms of a new revolutionary era, an age of revolutions aimed at exploring the meaning of life rather than seizing the state, were apparent everywhere."[13] The significance of identity is mainly reflected in the fact that people use the urban cultural resources to construct the special meaning to them, while forming a reflective and flexible network group, which promotes the integration of local and global.

Culture is the inner strength that brings people together. In general, social movements are seen as having the potential to "solve individual problems rather than general problems" but not to change society as a whole. David Harvey holds this view.[14] For Castells social movements can only discover the universal normative power they possess. The way of understanding them is from their inherent culturality. The first to discover the normative potential of the new social movements in 1960s is Castells' mentor, Alain Touraine, who explained this normativeness from its cultural characteristics in a historical perspective. According to Touraine, the meaning of social movements can be recognized by the new social culture they create and generalize. However, Touraine's theory is based on the post-industrial society, in which cultural and industrial production have not been substantially distinguished. The new social movements based on culture are in essence based on the characteristics of economic and political facts. Social movements are still indistinguishable with class struggles.

Henri Lefebvre's insightful research on urbanization has valuable influence on Castells. Castells begins to understand the role that culture plays in social movements from the perspective of urbanization. For him, new social movements particularly become manifest in the efforts of new immigrants trying to create their own urban life in the process of urbaniza-

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[13] Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), X.

[14] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso Books, 2012), 7.

tion. Urban life is obviously not limited to the demand for material consumption, but also includes the development of a local sentiment and identity. In this sense, the goal of social movements shifts from dominating or changing the city to the construction of the meaning of urban life. Castells argues that this is best reflected in the medieval Italian cities. Weber had developed self-government "political-administrative" model integrating new economic needs and subverting the "unjustifiable domination" of traditional aristocratic patterns. Social movements consolidate urban autonomy and form the internal dynamics and mechanisms of urban development. In this regard, the foundation of social movements is not based on people's economic needs, but on inner values, that is, what is a good free urban life for them. The root of social movements is in its cultural nature, that is, the aim to change socially dominant values, such as environment, gender, etc. The German Green Party as social movements are barely politicized.

The cultural characteristics of social movements are truly reflected in the network society and become the core principle of the network identity. This is because in the network society the transformation of the media and the development of the urban spatial form have encouraged the networking of social relations, maximizing the communication of individuals' urban life experiences and the networking of urban life. Its global extension has deepened the understanding of cultural principles in local space and strengthened their identity networks.

Castells uses the environmental movement as an example to illustrate his ideas on project identity. In the process of globalization the environmental movement has become an influential social power since 1970s. Castells divides the movement into five types according to their different enemies and aims: the preservation of nature, the preservation of their living space, deep ecology, saving the earth and green policy. By using the internet as its main tool, the environmental movement broadcasts its influence through the world and facilitates the changes of laws and institutions. The environmental movement has formed a flexible network with the diverse branches under new social conditions, which Castells calls the "rise of the Network Society." In the network society social structure is reconstructed around the network logic from the perspectives of economy, organization forms, working process as well as culture. The new economy that has emerged is informationalized, global and networked, which makes the network enterprises the dominant units in the global markets and transforms social organizational forms into the network structure. Working process has become much more flexible in the force of global network. Culture presentation has been organized by the internet.

Castells has insights about the changes that are taking place in our times. According to Castells a series of changes in economics and information technology have created social conditions for project identity. The

2008 financial crisis caused the bankruptcy of neo-liberal myths and disintegrated legitimacy. The further restructuring of capitalism also prevented the resistance identity. Informatization is gradually penetrating the daily life of the city and its social interaction process. Capital has become the main driving force for people's informationalized and emotional communication. The transformation of the information media has made "mass self-communication"[15] universal characterized in both mass media and individual communication. The new media established the principle of individuality in a global network society which was originally monopolized by capital and power, and created material conditions for people to rebuild their networks and to develop network associations.

Based on "mass self-communication," a global public space has become increasingly influential. Castells notes that global public space is being formed with the help of NGOs, global public opinion actions and social movements. It is essentially a global communication space with a dynamic communication order. Different modes of communication constitute the corresponding public space, which nurtures and promotes social movements. Social movements or rebel politics emerges and survives in public spaces. Convenient and efficient communication in public spaces allows individuals to overcome their anger, fear and irrational understanding. The purpose of social movement is to reconstruct the local public space through the development of the identity network and to raise it to the global level in order to confront capital and power. Castells thinks that project identity is obviously non-violent, because its legitimacy represents the general interests of the people and differs from the violent characteristics of the dominant system. "Since the goal of all movements is to speak out on behalf of society at large, it is critical to sustain their legitimacy by juxtaposing their peaceful character with the violence of the system."[16] The media network spreads its intentions and resistance dynamics, and strives for global public opinions and practical support, and thus promotes social construction in a sustained and extensive manner while avoiding state violence.

The driving forces behind the changes in social movements come from the combination of urban living experience and networking of social relationships. The change of urban life leads to the renewal of individual life experiences, which promote the constant collision of knowledge and experience. In the re-interpretation of the differentiation of living experiences an internal network with different identity movements gradually develops. To Castells, the differences between different principles of identity are unreducible for project identity. Social movements define themselves. Through a historical investigation of the same social movement, Castells

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[15] Castells, *Communication Power,* 55.
[16] Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope,* 226.

finds that these different identities together constitute an interactive system. In the spiritual connotation, the principles of different identity enrich and deepen the understanding of the same subject. In terms of practice, different networks of identity echo and support each other. In the period when a particular movement is suppressed, it is gained by means of the same kind of movement. Taking feminism as an example, in the 1970s, the theme of the identity network was "female rights." In the last few decades, it continuously developed different themes, such as female values, female culture, sexual consciousness and female practice. Castells emphasizes that the dynamic nature of project identity for networking makes social movements flexible and connected. It continues in time and forges intergenerational interactions. In not only accommodates its historical achievements but also extends infinitely in space, intertwining with each other, thereby maximizing their influences on sociality and authority. For the network helps maintain its continuity under suppression.

Unlike resistance identity, which attempts to create closed communities, project identity presents great inclusiveness and dynamic characteristics. Such identities collaborate with each other, expressing their common aspirations and imposing pressures on the government. For instance, in the process of facing the challenge of urban air pollution led by women, the unity of environmentalism and feminism has been achieved. Project identity also unites similar movements in different regions and transcends the regionality of the city to the global level. Today, the city is increasingly becoming the "base" of the global network society. This means that urban life is undergoing reconstruction from the network society as well.

The global network society dominates the urban physical space and forms the "space of autonomy,"[17] which is a new type of space belonging to the urban social movement. Project identity exists in two types of material spaces, one is the media network as public space for discussion, the other is "space of autonomy" dominated by the former sphere but existing as a base for social movements for actions. Such places usually have specific historical and cultural significance. For instance, the social movement in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, has taken its revolutionary historic building as its base. The iconic blocks and plazas in the city, such as the Wall Street, can also be used as such kind of spaces. By occupying the real urban space and conveying its values to society, so as to directly challenge the power, "social networks develop into real social movements."[18]

Project identity constantly updates its own understanding by absorbing new people and generating new practices, thus presenting a kind of spiritual "highly reflexive" and organizational flexibility feature. The reason why reflexivity is the fundamental feature of contemporary social

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[17] Castells, *Communication Power,* 222.
[18] Ibid.

movement is because of the networking of the social movement. However, Castells thinks that intellectuals also play an organic role in it. Although the network has the characteristics of decentralization, compared with the ordinary people intellectuals are still the main body of the network society. They occupy a large "weight" in a particular network and play an important role in guiding people's emotions, raising awareness and formulating action strategies. With the networking of social power, the project identity promotes the formation of global public space and urban space of autonomy, and enlightens people and develops the democratic practice of society. Castells' identity theory, through a historical investigation of social movements, has made a general grasp of the different social movements and revealed that in the current social form built around the networks culture has become the driving force to develop the city.

Project Identity and the Nation-state

In the theory of project identity and under the framework of the global network society, Castells unifies "the social structure and the subject" that was in split in his previous works. "The social structure" means that dominant activities of human beings under the guidance of informatization production gradually show the characteristics of networking and globalization. This process is the reconstruction of social relations and the result of the active participation of people. The production of information and culture also makes the revival of the local space possible. These cultural elements are not completely created, rather they lie in specific history and ethnic region and have important influences on people. As the product of a specific historical period, these cultural elements weaken the cohesion of the state which makes possible to highlight the social and political significance of cultural principles. However, cultural principles can and must be re-interpreted in order to exert their cohesive force, to realize social reconstruction through cultural activities in specific power relationships, and to promote the formation of different flexible identity networks. The subjects of this identity network are not what Giddens' has called the reflective individual subjects in late modernity,[19] but the collective subjects that try to give meaning to personal life in a specific social structure, because "the network society is based on the systemic disjunction between the local and the global for most individuals and social groups."[20]

From the weakening of the legitimizing identity to the reconstruction of the global network society and the rise of project identity these elements mark the basic development path of Castells' identity theory. As far

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[19] Castells, *The Power of Identity,* 10.
[20] Ibid., 11.

as the internal relationship of the three types of identity is concerned, the tendency of the disintegration of the legitimizing identity is the premise of the formation of new identity. The dual logic of "rationality and violence," as the basic contradiction in the structure of the identity theory, promotes the emergence and development of identity movement. Both "rationality and violence" are the characteristics of the legitimizing identity. Rationality is what to aggregate people's heart while violence is the ultimate recourse of power controlled by the state. In the resistance identity, rationality has to obey the logic of violence, that is, violence is the dominant logic. And the project is that the identity is controlled by rationality with the obvious characteristics of non-violence. For the whole identity theory, the legitimizing identity and its disintegration plays a theoretical presupposition role, which shows Castell's deliberate neglect of the role of the nation-state. Castells is not only influenced by the realistic background of the nation-state, but also by Alan Touraine's idea of "the sociology of action" which excludes the role of the state in the research of society as to distinguish itself from the classical sociology.[21] Under neo-liberalism and its global capitalist space, the nation-state seems to be subject to international institutions, local governments and other aspects of restraints and controls, while capital and power seem to be forming a force that transcends the nation-state.

Castells does not entirely deny the influence of nation-state on the global network society. For him the nation-state not only retains the power to use violence, but the stable operation of the social network system also "depends on the state and its politics." The state has become both a part of the social network and a total power that unites all parts of society. But what is puzzling is that how do nation-states continue to integrate and manage society while losing their sovereignty? The trend of anti-globalization in recent years has shown that the nation-state is actively participating in and promoting the construction of a global network, and is strongly involved in and controlling the global network society. It also indicates that the nation-state has not declined due to the rise of the global network society. In this context, it is imaginary and simplistic to re-examine Castell's thoughts on the nation's state.

Castells' understanding of the nation-state is mainly derived from Weber's idea, that is, nation-states' sovereignty is based on specific boundaries: "we restrict the concept of the state to the set of institutions holding the legitimate monopoly of the means of violence, and by nation-state the territorial delimitation of such a power."[22] The impact of globalization on social boundaries inevitably affects the corresponding form of

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[21] Alan Touraine, *The Return of the Actors,* trans. Shu Shiwei (Peking: The Commercial Press, 2008), 42.

[22] Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 343

power. However, the space theorist Henri Lefebvre argues that the power of the nation-state is the "abstract power" formed on the basis of "moving property (money, then capital)" compared with ancient countries. In this regard, manipulating boundaries can be seen as a way for nation states to control flows in certain historical periods. Lefebvre further points out that the nation-state which manages the economic growth of civil society internally will participate in world competition and expand globally. Therefore, the nation-state must develop into a world system eventually. On the basis of Marx's theory on the fading away of the nation-state, Lefebvre claims that there are inequalities in the "world system of the State (of States),"[23] some are in decline and some on the rise. Thus, the global network and its exchange space cannot be separated from the capital and power space of the nation-state, rather to be seen as a nation-state's initiative effort to promote and control the flows through the production of abstract space. The initiative of the nation-state in globalization has been affirmed in the latest research on social theory. For example, in his investigation of the role of the state in the rise and expansion of information capitalism, Dan Schiller argues that it was Nixon's administration that had profoundly changed the structure and policies of the development of the network system.[24]

The interpretation of the nature of the nation-state and its world system poses a challenge to the premise of Castells' theory of identity, for it negates the universality and decentralization of the world network formed by capital and power. However Castells' description of the development mechanism of the world network is still valid, and his theory of identity movements is insightful too. The process of cultural construction of meaning should be put under the framework of the nation-state and its world system, and the identity theory should be reinterpreted in the following way: where the nation-state is in a state of extinction, the legitimizing identity is no longer dominant to organize society, and social movements play a pivotal role in both daily life and political life, especially in local social autonomy. Although local governments can effectively respond to the demands of social movements, the central government still controls the taxation and thus the possibility of fulfilling local governments' promises. Therefore, local autonomy has its limits and even runs the risk of bankruptcy. In addition, in a certain period of time, the appeal of social movements and the way of its expression affects society through resistance or projects, and to some extent is decided by the status and en-

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[23] Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World Selected Essays,* eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, trans. Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 97

[24] Dan Schiller, *Digital Capitalism: Networking the Global Market System* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 20.

counters of the nation-state in the competition of the world systems. The challenge from other nation-states is not unrelated to the social movements in the particular nation-state.

Where the nation-state is still in a dominant position, the legitimizing identity is still the dominant force in the organization of society. However, because the nation-state exists in its world system, the construction of society is also developed in a global network society. Thus, there is a certain mutual exclusion between the legitimizing identity and the social identity, which refers to the resistance and project identity. It is also possible to develop more complex interactions in a specific environment and form new legitimizing identity based on social autonomy. Research on immigration shows that after experiencing the initial confrontation and estrangement with the city, the specific mobile population is developing into a mature social network centered on local identity. By virtue of the core link of the network, it is often a fellow business owner in association with the power sector, to form a model of informal power relations based on autonomy.

Overall, Castells has provided a project identity theory and programed a global network society with project identity as its dynamic. Because project identity is socially constructed around cultural elements, it distinguishes itself from the so-called "cultural politics," which obviously emphasizes different cultures held with the dominant culture. In terms of the identity, the foundation of its social structure is emphasized, but to what extent can project identity in the construction of global network society weaken the nation-state? There is still a need for realistic and in-depth analysis and evaluation on the nation-state. Today's global capitalist development has already had a certain tendency to reverse globalization. This is a revival of the logic of the powerful nation-state, essentially in the West. In this context, China as the largest developing nation state must build its development on the requirements of its own nation, that is, on Chinese nation's renaissance.

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Michael ZICHY studied philosophy and Catholic theology at the University of Salzburg. After some interim assignments for the European Commission in Brussels, he resumed his academic career which brought him to the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich, the New School for Social Research in New York and back to the University of Salzburg, where he is currently Associate Professor of Philosophy. His fields of research are philosophical anthropology and ethics. Recently, he published *Menschenbilder: Eine Grundlegung* (2017), *Menschenrechte in der Güterabwägung* (2018), *Menschenbild und Ethik* (2019). He is co-founder and co-editor of the *Zeitschrift für Praktische Philosophie* and Associate Editor of *The Journal of Ethics*.

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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.

Projects

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501c3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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